PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 178

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1989-90

COMPRISING PERIOD
22 OCTOBER—1 NOVEMBER 1990

ISBN 0 10 681178 9

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

CAMBRIDGE REFERENCE LIBRARY

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, JULY 1990)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. John Major MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. David Hunt, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. Peter Lilley, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Alan Rodger, Esq, QC

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Tim Renton, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. David Mellor, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Caithness
Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. John Patten, Esq, MP
Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH—
Minister for Health—Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Tim Eggar, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
Michael Forsyth, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—
Minister for Public Transport—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
Minister for Aviation and Shipping—The Lord Brabazon of Tara

MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY—Minister for Social Security and Disabled People—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Scott, MBE, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities—Michael Portillo, Esq, MP
Minister for the Environment and Countryside—David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Minister for Housing and Planning—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP

MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. John Cope, MP

MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Baroness Trumpington

MINISTER OF STATE, WELSH OFFICE—Sir Wyn Roberts, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Tim Sainsbury, MP
Minister for Industry and Enterprise—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, QC, MP
Minister for Industry and Consumer Affairs—The Lord Hesketh

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Baroness Trumpington
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES—
David Maclean, Esq, MP
David Curry, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—The Rt. Hon. David Mellor, QC, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP

Civil Service, Office of the Minister for the—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. David Mellor, QC, MP

Defence
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—Kenneth Carlisle, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Earl of Arran

Education and Science
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Tim Eggar, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Alan Howarth, Esq, CBE, MP
Michael Fallon, Esq, MP

Employment
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Jackson, Esq, MP
Eric Forth, Esq, MP
The Viscount Ullswater

Energy
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Tony Baldry, Esq, MP
The Hon. Colin Moynihan, MP

Environment
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities—Michael Portillo, Esq, MP
Minister for the Environment and Countryside—David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Minister for Housing and Planning—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
David Heathcoat-Amory, Esq, MP
Robert Atkins, Esq, MP (Minister for Sport)
The Baroness Blatch, CBE
Robert Key, Esq, MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Caithness
Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—The Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, MP

Health—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—
Minister for Health—Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Baroness Hooper
Stephen Dorrell, Esq, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. John Patten, Esq, MP
Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Alan Rodger, Esq, QC

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Cope, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
The Lord Skelmersdale

Paymaster General—
Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. David Mellor, QC, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
Michael Forsyth, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP
The Lord Strathclyde

Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—
Minister for Social Security and Disabled People—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Scott, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Henley
Mrs. Gillian Shephard, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. Peter Lilley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Tim Sainsbury, MP
Minister for Industry—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, QC, MP
The Lord Hesketh
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CORPORATE AFFAIRS—John Redwood, Esq, MP

Transport—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE
Minister for Public Transport—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Minister for Roads and Traffic—Christopher Chope, Esq, OBE, MP
Minister for Aviation, Shipping and Public Transport—Patrick McLoughlin, Esq, MP

Treasury—
PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—John Maples, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Tim Renton, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
John Taylor, Esq, MP
The Hon. Tom Sackville, MP
Sydney Chapman, Esq, MP
Greg Knight, Esq, MP
Irvine Patnick, Esq, OBE, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
Nicholas Baker, Esq, MP
Timothy Wood, Esq, MP
Neil Hamilton, Esq, MP
Timothy Boswell, Esq, MP
Timothy Kirkhope, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. David Hunt, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Sir Wyn Roberts, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Ian Grist, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—
LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, KT, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Viscount Ridley, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—Alastair Goodlad, Esq, MP
COMPTROLLER—Sir George Young, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—David Lightbown, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—The Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Lord Reay, The Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, The Baron Cavendish of Furness, The Viscount Astor

---

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—The Rt. Hon. Michael Alison, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP

SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL—

Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Dame Janet Fookes, MP, James Hill, Esq, MP, Norman Hogg, Esq, MP, Geraint Howells, Esq, MP, Sir John Hunt, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Michael Latham, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Geoffrey Lofthouse, Esq, MP, John McWilliam, Esq, MP, Michael J. Martin, Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Robert Rhodes James, Esq, MP, Sir Giles Shaw, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, Sir John Stradling Thomas, MP, Nicholas Winterton, Esq, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Dr. John Cunningham, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Barney Hayhoe, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP

SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION—W. A. Proctor

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—

Sir Clifford Boulton, KCB (Chairman), Sir Alan Urwick, KCVO, CMG, D. Menhennet, DPhil., G. A. Roberts, I. D. Church, W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—B. A. Wilson

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—P. J. Kitcatt, CB

ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO THE SPEAKER—Miss S. Holt

TRAINBEARER—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER—P. L. Warwick

DIARY SECRETARY—Mrs. S. Norvell

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon D. C. Gray, TD, PhD

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—H. Knorpel, CB, QC, G. E. Gammie, CB, QC

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—R. I. S. Phillips

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—Sir Clifford Boulton, KCB

CLERK ASSISTANT—J. F. Sweetman, TD

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—D. W. Limon

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—
H. M. Barclay (Public Bills)
W. R. McKay (Journal Office)
C. B. Winnifrith (Table Office)
R. B. Sands (Overseas Office)
G. Cubie (Select Committees)
A. J. Hastings (Select Committees)
R. J. Willoughby (Private Bills)
J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)
D. G. Millar (Financial Committees)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—S. A. L. Panton, M. R. Jack, PhD, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt, D. L. Natzler, E. P. Silk, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, D. F. Harrison, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans

SENIOR CLERKS—S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, S. J. Priestley, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, Mrs. E. J. Flood, Ms. P. A. Helme, D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. B. Ingram (acting), J. Darling (acting), J. M. Hope (acting), H. R. Neilson (acting), D. Steel (acting)

CLERK OF SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEES—K. J. Brown

ASSISTANT CLERKS—J. S. Benger, Miss E. C. Samson, N. P. Walker, M. D. Hamlyn, P. C. Seaward, DPhil, C. G. Lee, C. D. Stanton, A. Y. A. Azad, C. A. Shaw, P. M. Hensher

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—G. E. Clayton, Miss R. J. Challis, P. G. Moon

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—L. L. Kaye, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader, Mrs. S. M. Barrett, Miss F. L. Allingham, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, J. A. L. Dresner

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—M. P. Hillyard, M. J. Cremin, Dr. L. M. Rosborough, Mrs. K. Lewis, E. Thompson, Mrs. J. Evans, I. G. Henderson, J. K. Wheatley

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright, MBE, DEPUTY—B. Tidball, ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, K. B. Wood, P. D. Howlett, Mrs. L. R. Shade, P. A. Jack

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—R. J. Willoughby, M. G. Pownall

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—A. J. Hastings

TAXING OFFICER—R. J. Willoughby

SUPERVISOR OF BROADCASTING—J. F. Grist (temporary)

TECHNICAL CO-ORDINATOR (BROADCASTING)—R. Longman, OBE (temporary)

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—R. A. Broomfield

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—M. P. Oxborough, N. P. Wright, Mrs. B. Ward, Miss D. E. Symes, Ms. C. M. Genis, J. Hole, P. R. Coppack (acting)

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Sir Alan Urwick, KCVO, CMG

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright; J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss S. J. Scott Thomson

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren, A. J. Spencer

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. T. Warboys

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. H. Usher

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, C. E. Gray, J. C. W. Cooper, D. L. Hurley, D. Shiels

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, BEM, K. R. Dickason

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Division)—G. F. Lock, Miss J. B. Tanfield

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Section)—S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, PhD, Mrs. C. B. Andrews, R. C. Clements, Mrs. J. M. Lourie

LIBRARY CLERKS, SENIOR—Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Miss M. Baber, Ms. A. Muir, Mrs. G. L. Allen (period). ASSISTANT—A. J. L. Crompton, E. J. Fishwick, MPhil, Mrs. K. Greener, Miss P. Strickland, Miss V. A. Miller, Ms. M. J. Quiney, Ms. N. R. Donlon, Ms. H. M. Jeffs, J. R. Lunn, PhD, R. S. Dewdney, Ms. L. E. Sloman, D.Phil, Mrs. P. Carling (period)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—S. A. Wise

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA (acting)

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. C. Weeds ASSISTANT—Mrs. C. C. O'Connor

PROJECT MANAGER, NEW BUILDING—Miss J. Seaton FLA

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. P A. Bozdan, E. L. V. MacGregor

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA, G. Haig, Miss B. Mee, MIInfSc, Miss G. L. Cooper, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, Ms. F. Whittle, R. Freebury (acting)

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

EDITOR, WEEKLY BULLETIN—Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Miss S. Holland, A. D. Parker, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall, ALA, T. C. Holmes, P. E. M. Ward, Mrs. J. M. Smith, ALA, C. M. Sear, Miss J. Lyall, Ms. Z. A. Smallwood, Miss C. Owens, Miss C. M. Blair, ALA, S. A. H. Jones, Miss D. J. Gillings, Miss L. K. Fleming, Mrs. S. J. Priestley (acting)

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss N. Harland, D. B. Inns, Mrs. A. J. H. Mara, D. A. Brown, J. P. Brevitt, M. Greenhill (Head Library Attendant), B. Smith, Miss A. J. Hatton, Ms. J. Fessey, A. J. Fuller, Miss J. M. Perkes, Mrs. H. Onyskiw, Miss N. Sutherland (acting)

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—C. D. Lister

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—Mrs. S. Fuzio, B. G. Underwood, A. J. Ashton (Sales Office)

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. S. Wilson, G. E. Howard, C. P. Williams, P. Hannett

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—G. A. Roberts

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—A. R. Marskell

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl, M. Fletcher, R. H. A. Russell

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. G. Crowther

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. N. Norman, Mrs. D. C. Hill, Miss P. J. Hurford, Mrs. J. S. Peach, Mrs. G. M. Baker, Miss R. Harrison

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss D. E. Johnson, D. M. Allen, D. J. D. Woods, Ms. M. R. Morris, G. L. Turner, Miss P. R. Mills, Mrs. J. D. Mead, P. F. Dawson, Mrs. S. E. Caffrey, Miss S. A. Weaver, P. H. Olden, A. D. Rowlands, P. J. S. French, Miss T. D. Ruewell, C. J. Bumstead, Miss M. Oliver, Miss D. M. McGuire

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—B. A. Wilson

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. R. A. White, V. H. Stocker

PERSONNEL OFFICE MANAGER—N. P. Crawley

PERSONNEL OFFICERS—P. C. Kingsley, MBE, R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner, M. Page

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc

ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICERS—Mrs. S. C. White, S. J. Lewis

EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. J. M. Cleveland

INTERNAL AUDITOR—A. A. Cameron

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

WELFARE OFFICER—Mrs. A. Mossop

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—I. D. Church

DEPUTY EDITOR—P. Walker

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, J. Withers, W. G. Garland

ASSISTANT EDITORS—Vee Grainger, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—D. Crosswell, Mrs. A. Roberts, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, C. Fogarty, Mrs. H. J. C. Natzler, Miss M. Babington, Mrs. A. Street, L. Gilmore, Ms. G. Hardgrave, P. Oglethorpe, P. Hadlow, Miss C. Hanly, M. Watson, Miss K. Stewart

REPORTERS—Mrs. E. J. Gregory, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, Miss E. Morris, J. Ransley, Miss J. Goodman, Ms. J. Dall, Mrs. P. Pickford, Miss K. Myers, Ms. J. Burden, J. Robinson,

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington, MBE

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. M. J. Harding, Miss J. L. Brown

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—J. Brake

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—G. Carpenter

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

ASSISTANT MANAGER—P. Gale, MHCIMA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. M. Nicholls, FHCIMA, MIPM

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER—B. C. Sewell

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent G. K. Dark

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—A. Blake

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 178**

SEVENTEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1989-90

House of Commons

Monday 22 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRANSPORT

Private Bill Procedure

1. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the proposed reform of private Bill procedure in so far as it affects his Department.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): We have received nearly 100 representations so far in response to the consultation paper that was published on 21 June. Most of those who have offered views have supported the principle of the Government's proposals for establishing new procedures for authorising the majority of rail, light rapid transit and harbour works projects.

Mr. Stewart: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Is he aware, however, that, contrary to an EC directive, the new Humber port is to go ahead without an environmental impact study having been done, and that, as a result, 10 million tonnes of coal will be travelling to and from Nottinghamshire power stations, causing an environmental blitz on villages along the route? Does my right hon. Friend agree that Nottinghamshire community charge payers should not be left to pick up the bill for the resulting road damage, as happened at the end of the miners' strike? Should not the proposals to which my right hon. Friend referred be made to apply retrospectively to all Bills passed in 1990?

Mr. Parkinson: As my hon. Friend knows, the House is quite properly suspicious of retrospective legislation, and the point that he made was considered by the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure. I am sure that he knows, too, that the Government have accepted the recommendations of the Select Committee that an environmental assessment study should accompany future private Bills.

Mr. Skinner: Surely, what is being requested is not retrospective at all. Are not we merely calling upon the Government to do the decent thing and ensure that an environmental impact study is undertaken by the Department of Transport, in consultation with the Department of the Environment, in respect of these massive changes, which would result in up to 30 million tonnes of coal being brought into the British coalfields and in our miners being displaced? If that study were made, and if the proper planning requirements were adhered to, the Humber port and the other associated ports would not go ahead.

Mr. Parkinson: The whole point of the new procedures is to widen the discussion and give more people a chance to register their objections, while preventing unreasonable objections and preventing small minorities of hon. Members from blocking Bills. The point that the hon. Gentleman has made was considered by the Select Committee and the argument was rejected. The Committee felt qualified to reach its decision without an environmental assessment and the House approved the Committee's thinking when it gave the Bill its Third Reading.

Mr. Gerald Bowden: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is an unfairness inherent in the private Bill procedure and that, in the drafting of the King's Cross Railways Bill, which presumed a rail link from the channel tunnel to central London, there was no mention whatever of the

alignment of that route, which denied to those who might be affected, by implication, the opportunity of making any representations? Was not British Rail's draftmanship too clever by half?

Mr. Parkinson: I think that the whole House recognises that our present arrangements for approving major infrastructure projects by the private Bill procedure are unsatisfactory. That is why we came forward with a consultation paper. That is why we shall consider carefully the points made to us and I suspect—although I cannot commit the Government—that we shall come forward with primary legislation in due course.

M66

3. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about progress towards the construction of the M66 from Denton to Middleton.

The Minister for Roads and Traffic (Mr. Christopher Chope): I expect work on the first construction contract at the northern end of the scheme to commence early in 1992, subject to the successful outcome of the remaining statutory procedures.

Mr. Bennett: I thank the Minister for that reply. Is he aware that my constituents are extremely concerned about the traffic congestion at the Denton end of the existing piece of motorway and are keen that he should publish as soon as possible the side road orders in connection with the proposed link from Denton to Middleton because they fear that the whole process is being delayed by the proposals of North West Water to develop a business park at Kingswater? We should like an assurance that the Department will not delay in getting the motorway link in place, because it is essential to the safety of my constituents.

Mr. Chope: I share the hon. Gentleman's concern to see the project completed as soon as possible. I can assure him that the Kingswater park scheme will not be allowed to interfere with that very important motorway project. If the Kingswater park scheme cannot be implemented at the same time it will have to wait until after the M66 has been completed. That important scheme will cost about £250 million and we are proud to have it in our roads programme.

Mr. Sumberg: When the motorway is completed, will my hon. Friend the Minister bear it in mind that it will relieve some of the congestion on the M62 and will therefore make unnecessary the unloved and unwelcome extension to the M62, which would seriously damage and decimate parts of my constituency? That extension is totally opposed by every constituent whom I have met and know, including many who met my hon. Friend the Minister when he was kind enough to come and see the site for himself during the recess.

Mr. Chope: As my hon. Friend recognises, I went to have a look at the proposed site and to listen to some representations about it. Obviously, I cannot anticipate what proposals might be made later and only at that stage can I go into the merits of the scheme.

Channel Tunnel

4. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department intends to respond to the proposals contained in the draft European Community directive for investment to provide high-speed rail links between Scotland and the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Roger Freeman): The draft directive for a high-speed European rail network makes no such proposals, but a full electric service between Edinburgh and London is expected to start next year, and British Rail's plans for the channel tunnel include services between Scotland and the continent.

Mr. Salmond: Can the Minister explain why the European Transport Commissioner is more concerned with fast rail links to Scotland and the continent than is the Department of Transport? How did the Secretary of State for Transport have the brass neck to announce at the Tory party conference some £2,500 million of additional rail spending in London while the Edinburgh-Aberdeen line has not been supported for electrification? The Government are not running a transport policy; they are running a regional and political policy directed to the south of England where they want to spend their way to the next election.

Mr. Freeman: I do not accept that for one moment. The hon. Gentleman knows that British Rail's investment programme totals £3·7 billion over the next three years, and that includes the completion of electrification to Edinburgh involving £450 million for an excellent service up the east coast main line.

Mr. Adley: Will my hon. Friend confirm that any of the costs of the improvement to high-speed rail links between Scotland and the south-east of England will have to be borne by British Rail out of its operating revenue, including all or any costs for environmental work? Will he further confirm that any environmental roadworks between Scotland, the south-east and the channel tunnel will all be funded by the taxpayer? Why do we have double standards between road and rail for environmental protection?

Mr. Freeman: In response to my hon. Friend's question about British Rail having to finance its investment programme out of its operating revenues, that is not the case. British Rail's investment programme of £3·7 billion over the next three years is financed through the receipt of grants from the taxpayer, the receipt of proceeds from the sale of surplus land and borrowing from the taxpayer. With regard to the difference between road and rail appraisal, I should be glad to meet my hon. Friend, to go into the details and explain how British Rail appraises its projects.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Is the Minister aware that the demand for a fast rail link between Scotland and the channel tunnel has increased since last week? Is he further aware that one of the two links between Northern Ireland and Great Britain—the Belfast-Liverpool ferry—was closed down last week and that the remaining link between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom is the Northern Ireland-Scottish link between Larne and Stranraer? Will the Minister take into account the new

circumstances and accept that everyone in Northern Ireland fully supports the demand by Scotland for fast rail links between Scotland and the channel tunnel?

Mr. Freeman: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that I shall pass on his comments to British Rail. It plans investment and it runs the railway. In respect of high-speed rail links, the first priority must be the line from Folkestone to London. British Rail is presently evaluating alternative routes into London. When it has completed that appraisal—I hope in the spring of next year—it will then, in due course, come to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State with specific proposals for a new high-speed rail link, which the Government accept is needed.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: I am sure that my hon. Friend is well aware that my constituency attaches considerable importance to the King's Cross project. There was much dismay there when the private Bill procedure was delayed by the absence of Labour Members, which made the Committee inquorate. Will my hon. Friend use his best endeavours to ensure that when British Rail makes use of the impressive investment that he referred to, some of the money goes to places such as Lancaster to give us a good freight and passenger service?

Mr. Freeman: Perhaps I can reassure my hon. Friend. She may have read in the press a very misleading account of an alleged postponement or nigh cancellation of west coast main line improvements. That is absolutely untrue. The west coast main line investment, which will be substantial—about £750 million, I understand—is still in British Rail's plans. Improvements cannot be built overnight. When British Rail comes forward with a specific investment proposal, that is a matter for it. *[Interruption.]* I am sure that it is as interested as the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), and we are interested in looking at such a proposal. When it comes forward we shall give it sympathetic consideration.

Mr. Prescott: Is not the Minister aware of the despair that is felt by British Rail management that they have to postpone plans for the north-west high-speed rail link because of the inadequacies of the corporate plan of which we warned last December? Will the Minister and the Secretary of State now review that decision, come to the House and give us a further statement on the changes before any further damage is done to our inadequate and deteriorating railway system?

Mr. Freeman: I find the hon. Gentleman's question difficult to comprehend. In the light of what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be able to say following the autumn statement and the updating of the external financing limits both for British Rail and for London Regional Transport, I am sure that British Rail will come forward with updated plans and proposals not only for the next three years but for the next decade. It is right that it should look beyond the three-year public expenditure survey planning period. One cannot build major railway lines within the three-year PES planning period. We look forward very much indeed to positive proposals from British Rail.

Accidents, London

5. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the latest available statistics for traffic accidents involving *(a)* vehicles and pedestrians and *(b)* vehicles and cycles for Greater London.

Mr. Chope: In 1989 there were 12,148 personal injury accidents involving motor vehicles and pedestrians, and 4,986 personal injury accidents involving vehicles and pedal cyclists.

Mr. Corbyn: Is the Minister aware that one of the great problems in London is the lack of transport planning because of the abolition of the Greater London council? The Government are calmly presiding over a massive increase in the number of commuter cars in central London, which increases the number of accidents involving cyclists—they went up by nearly 30 per cent. in 1988-89—and the serious number of accidents involving pedestrians. Does not the Minister agree that the time has come to control the growth in commuter car motoring in London, to increase the grants available to public transport, and, in planning red routes and other routes, instead of being obsessed with increasing the number of cars, actually to make life safer for pedestrians and cyclists? Under present plans there is no proposal for cycle routes on major road junctions. We need safety first for pedestrians and cyclists, not an increase in the number of cars.

Mr. Chope: The fact is that there has actually been a reduction in the number of cars commuting into London. There has been an increase in the number of cyclists, and I welcome that. The Government are investing a lot of money in road safety and transport supplementary grant, and we have given local authorities substantial sums to spend on road safety schemes. If the hon. Gentleman encouraged more people to pay the community charge, instead of discouraging them, there would be more money to spend on road safety.

Mr. Bowis: Does my hon. Friend agree that far too many accidents involving pedestrians are caused by rat running and that the welcome news about red routes will go some way to deterring that? Does he further agree that we also need road humps and restricted road widths, and that that should be encouraged by local government? Finally, does he agree that far too many bicycle accidents are caused by cyclists travelling without lights at night?

Mr. Chope: I agree with all my hon. Friend's points. The borough that he is fortunate enough to represent has set a good example and has shown what can be done to improve traffic flow on the roads and road safety and to ensure that there is less rat running.

Mr. Cohen: Is the Minister aware of the early-day motion that I tabled about six months ago about the horrifyingly high number of deaths and injuries on pedestrian crossings? That early-day motion, which was signed by many hon. Members, called on the Department of Transport to take action to try to reduce the number of deaths and injuries. However, we have heard nothing from his Department and very little from the police about prosecuting the motorists who cause those deaths and injuries. When are we going to get some action?

Mr. Chope: There is plenty of action, but there is a limit to what the Government can do because safety depends on pedestrians, cyclists and other road users using their common sense and applying the rules that they should know about. However, we are spending £1·5 million to promote child safety this year and we have encouraged the private sector to contribute £8·5 million towards that same campaign. The Government are not complacent about that, but we look to people such as the hon. Gentleman to support us.

London Underground

6. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on investment in London Underground this year and in 1984-85.

Mr. Parkinson: London Underground alone plans to invest approximately £400 million in 1990-91. In real terms, that is two and a half times the future for 1984-85, the last year that the Labour Greater London council set funding levels for London Transport.

Mr. Marshall: May I assure my right hon. Friend that his statement will be warmly welcomed by commuters in London who deeply deplore the attempts of certain Opposition Members to use the private Bill procedure as a means of frustrating improvements to London's transport? Will my right hon. Friend spend substantial sums to improve existing routes such as the Northern line, on which the trains are all to often graffiti-ridden and irregular and where the standard of service is not what it ought to be?

Mr. Parkinson: London Underground plans to invest about £1,700 million in the next three years, £1,200 million of which will be spent on the existing underground. The Northern line will, in due course, come forward for modernisation, and the Central line modernisation is already under way. In addition, as my hon. Friend pointed out, we can put the Opposition's commitment to improving London Underground's system to the test by asking them to support us both with the London Underground Bill and the Heathrow Express Railway Bill, which deal with the Jubilee line and the east-west crossrail.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Does the Secretary of State recognise that people south of the river feel that, over the years, investment has been made disproportionately north of the river? Will the right hon. Gentleman affirm that the key immediate tests of the commitment of both the Government and London Underground to transport south of the river are their commitment to the stations that he already knows about, such as Southwark and Bermondsey on the Jubilee line, a commitment to the south extension of the east London line, and their commitment to improvements on the Northern and Bakerloo lines, because we shall then begin to feel that we are at least getting fair treatment?

Mr. Parkinson: As the hon. Gentleman knows, one attraction of the Jubilee line is that it brings south London more favourably into the underground system. He should also remember that we are planning to take the Jubilee line to the Greenwich peninsula, which will bring that part of south London into the system. We accept the hon. Gentleman's complaint that south London has not had its fair share of public transport investment, but we are doing our best to make up for that.

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: My right hon. Friend may be aware that the Northern line, which serves much of my constituency, celebrates its centenary in a couple of weeks, which I believe, makes it the oldest tube system in the world. Will my right hon. Friend give the line, which, unfortunately, has been dubbed the "misery line", some really good news to celebrate on its centenary?

Mr. Parkinson: As I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall), a substantial programme for improving the existing lines is in hand. The Central line is at present in the middle of a £750 million modernisation programme and, as it is completed, the Northern line will be the next to get the treatment.

Ms. [illegible]dock: Given what the Secretary of State said about in[illegible]ment, will he tell the House why he believes that ridership on the underground is falling when, in its annual business plan, London Underground predicted a 4 per cent. increase in the current year? Does he intend to bail out London Underground's £40 million deficit or to inflict further pain upon the travelling public in London?

Mr. Parkinson: I wish that the deficit on London's underground was only £40 million. The loss that London Underground expects to make this year is £120 million, so its investment programme will be funded virtually entirely by the taxpayer through a grant of more than £434 million to the Underground. I am sure that the hon. Lady will be pleased to hear that over the next three years London Underground will receive another £1·75 billion. That is how it will pay for the rest of its capital programme.

Traffic Congestion

7. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are currently being considered by his Department to help reduce traffic congestion in London and other large cities.

Mr. Parkinson: We are tackling urban traffic congestion with a range of measures, including better public transport, road improvements and better management of the road network.

In and around London, Network SouthEast and London Regional Transport are investing £3·4 billion during this and the next two years in public transport, and I have just announced the £1·4 billion east-west crossrail project, which is in addition to that.

I have also announced a major series of measures to overhaul traffic and parking controls in London.

Mr. Evans: May I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply and congratulate him on his imaginative and bold schemes—schemes that this country can afford, thanks to the prosperity achieved under the Government? Is not that in stark contrast to the crackpot spending schemes of the Labour party, which would quickly find itself bankrupt as it bankrupted the country in the late 1970s, just like a certain building in the Walworth road and the unions are bankrupt? In other words, no money and no ideas.

Mr. Parkinson: It is a fact that, in spite of all the claims of Labour Members, when the Labour party was in government it ran the country's economy into the ground

and the result was a huge cut in every capital programme. My hon. Friend is right to point out that we have record investment in the underground, the railways and Network SouthEast and we have plans for clearing space on our roads to get better use out of them. All that we hear from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and his colleagues is whingeing and wild promises.

Ms. Abbott: Is the Secretary of State aware that at least some of the traffic congestion in Hackney is caused by the fact that we are the only borough in London without a tube station? Is he aware of how much some of us in Hackney have pinned our hopes on the Chelsea-Hackney line? Can he give us some assurances about the future of that scheme?

Mr. Parkinson: As the hon. Lady knows, we had to make a choice between east-west crossrail and Chelsea-Hackney. We concluded that London simply could not stand the simultaneous construction of two major lines. It would bring the capital to a grinding halt, a fact that the newspapers now appear to be getting hold of. Therefore, we have approved the plan for east-west crossrail and we have kept the option of Chelsea-Hackney open by protecting the line at an initial cost of £15 million.

Mr. Sayeed: Is my right hon. Friend aware that one way to reduce congestion is to encourage the use of bicycles by people who commute in the inner cities? As one who bicycles to and from the House fairly frequently, I find that one of the problems is the state of the road surface. Can my right hon. Friend tell me what the Government are doing to encourage the public utilities, which usually cause the problems with the road surface by digging it up one after the other and leaving it in a poor state, to return road surfaces to the standard that we have every right to expect?

Mr. Parkinson: First, I congratulate my hon. Friend on his courage in cycling around central London and daily to Westminster. The good news is that, all being well, we hope to present a Bill in the next Session giving us much more control over public utilities and their activities in digging up roads and setting higher standards for resurfacing repaired roads. We shall probably also include a power to charge and penalise such utilities if they do the job badly.

Mr. Cartwright: Does the Secretary of State accept that traffic congestion in London will not be improved if the new Networker trains from Kent and south-east London do not come in as planned at the end of 1991? As these are to operate on some of the most crowded routes in Europe and British Rail accepts that the present service is below an acceptable standard, can the right hon. Gentleman assure us that those trains will come in on time?

Mr. Parkinson: The order was placed in September last year, the new trains are due for delivery in September next year and they are scheduled to come into full service in January of the following year. It is now in the hands of the manufacturers. Resignalling is under way and the necessary work on the stations is to begin.

Mr. Hill: Is my right hon. Friend aware that Southampton is becoming known as the city of a thousand traffic lights? The eastern docks road, to which we looked forward for many years, is extremely dangerous—narrowing from four lanes to two every few hundred yards. Is my right hon. Friend also aware that a private Bill—the Southampton Rapid Transit Bill—will increase congestion? That railway will start and end in the city centre and all the motorists will have to converge on the city centre. Does my right hon. Friend propose in future to leave it entirely to local authorities to control these great areas of congestion or will he send people from the Department to investigate as soon as possible all the problems of traffic safety in Southampton?

Mr. Parkinson: As my hon. Friend knows, the Department of Transport owns 4 per cent. of the roads—the motorways and national trunk roads—while the other 96 per cent. are owned and controlled by local authorities. Southampton has taken a fairly major step in the right direction as a result of the recent reshuffle. We now have in the Department a Minister—my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope)—who is determined to make sure that the problems there are properly addressed.

Mr. Rooker: May I remind the Secretary of State that not all Britain's transport problems are in London? One clear way to reduce congestion is through the use of mass transit and light rail networks. Can the right hon. Gentleman cite even one instance in which the Department has offered concrete, solid financial assistance to any of the proposed light rail systems? When will Birmingham get the benefit of the electrified north-south route that he announced during the Mid-Staffordshire by-election?

Mr. Parkinson: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's first question is yes—the Manchester Metrolink is being backed by substantial Government funds. I was in that area a couple of weeks ago and good progress is being made on what looks like an interesting scheme. Other schemes are being considered.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about electrification. We wish to get ahead with that as quickly as possible because we think that the cross-Birmingham route from Redditch to Lichfield, which will use the new rolling stock that has been ordered and approved by my Department, will be a major boon to Birmingham. There are a variety of answers to the problems of our different cities. Some will have light rail and some will have improved electrification of existing lines. Both systems are under way.

London Underground

8. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are being taken to improve the Central line of London Underground.

Mr. Freeman: The Central line is currently undergoing modernisation costing more than £700 million and involving 85 new trains and complete resignalling. The first of the new trains is expected to run in early 1992 and the whole programme is scheduled for completion by 1995.

Mr. Greenway: I thank my hon. Friend for outlining those welcome improvement programmes. In the meantime, is he aware that for many of my constituents the Central line has become the new misery line? There is gross staff rudeness, graffiti all over the place, unpunctual trains and trains turned around without the people waiting

for them being told. Other failures relate to the use of public address systems. Will my hon. Friend address himself to those problems and do something about them?

Mr. Freeman: I shall certainly pass my hon. Friend's comments on to London Underground, which tries hard to meet quality targets. The east-west crossrail will bring substantial benefit to the Central line between Paddington and Liverpool street stations at the end of the decade, when it is completed. I hope that my hon. Friend will join me and my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) in inaugurating, in Ealing, the new anti-graffiti paint that London Underground is shortly to introduce. The end of graffiti man is at hand.

Mr. Tony Banks: Has the Minister seen the recent speculation in the press that due to a squeeze on London Transport, particularly as a result of the fall in the price in land, it will not be able to proceed with the Central line upgrading or the crossrail? Will he give an absolute assurance that both the improvements to the central line and those to Stratford railway station will go ahead?

Mr. Freeman: I can give that assurance. The fall in property receipts, to which the hon. Gentleman rightly refers, applies not only to London Underground but to British Rail. However, it will not affect progress on the Central line or on the east-west crossrail which, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, will be financed in the conventional way, largely by Government grant.

Suburban Railways

9. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy on investment to increase the use of suburban railway lines.

Mr. Parkinson: I am always ready to approve investments in local rail services that are financially sound or can be justified by cost-benefit criteria.

Mr. Stern: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that reply. May I draw his attention to the lines that run from Severn Beach to central Bristol, through Avonmouth and Shirehampton in my constituency? Does not study of that line show that what the area needs is not so much investment as a willingness by British Rail to publicise the existence of the line and protect the frequency of services, which could do so much to get people to their work on Severnside and in central Bristol without using the roads?

Mr. Parkinson: The problem with the line in question is that it is using out-of-date, worn-out rolling stock because of late deliveries from manufacturers, running up to two years late, of new stock which would replace the old and unreliable stock. One of the reasons why the service is not marketed actively is that British Rail regards it as unreliable and is determined to get a better service before it starts encouraging people to use the line.

Mr. Doran: This is the fifth successive question dealing with transport in the south of England. People in the north-east of Scotland react with a hollow laugh——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There are other suburban railways in Scotland.

Mr. Doran: I had always assumed that Bristol was in the south.

People in the north-east of Scotland react with a hollow laugh when we hear all these discussions about transport problems in the south and promises from the Secretary of State of huge sums of money to improve them. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is a genuine fear, particularly in the Grampian region, that we shall become isolated because of our transport problems? British Airways has refused to give us a shuttle service, British Rail has refused to invest a meagre £80 million in electrifying the east coast line, and all the 17 miles of single carriageway between Aberdeen and Rome are located between Aberdeen and Dundee. When will there be a real direction in transport policy to help not just the south but the rest of the country?

Mr. Parkinson: As the hon. Gentleman knows, roads north of the border are the province of the Scottish Office. However, I can deal with his point about the railways. We shall be completing the electrification of the east coast main line through to Edinburgh. The new 158 services were introduced between Glasgow and Edinburgh, the first of those services using air conditioned, modern diesel units. ScotRail has had at least its share—most people south of the border would say more than its share—of investment. As to the roads connecting Scotland——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is about railways.

Mr. Parkinson: I will just make this last point. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is pleased that the A1 is to be upgraded to motorway standards.

Sir David Mitchell: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the widespread welcome for his announcement that British Rail will have the go ahead to put new rolling stock and new trains on the services from Exeter, Salisbury and Andover to Waterloo? Does he accept that that announcement is long overdue and that British Rail should have brought proposals forward much earlier?

Mr. Parkinson: I am glad that my hon. Friend is pleased about the announcement. He has led the charge for that investment. I am pleased to tell him that as the new trains come forward for delivery, and as the 18-month gap is closed, we expect to see some of the regions with more new stock and a great improvement in the service.

Mr. Snape: Is the Secretary of State aware that, whatever he says publicly, the reality of travel on Britain's suburban railways is a saga of delays, cancellations, overcrowding and high fares? None of his speeches, plans and promises have made any difference to that. Does he accept that after the Government's 11 years in nominal charge of British Rail and nearly five years in charge of the London Underground system, none of us is surprised that he did not get a standing ovation at the Tory party conference? If he does not put up some money instead of just wind and talk, he will be lucky to get a clap next year.

Mr. Parkinson: As one compliment deserves another, I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on not being elected Opposition Chief Whip. The figures may disappoint him, but I should like him to listen to them. Since we took over in 1979, £6,000 million has been invested in British Rail. A further £4,000 million is to be invested in the next three years, so cheer up—good news is on the way, the service will get better and the hon. Gentleman will become redundant.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Bolton

61. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next expects to visit Bolton.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Kenneth Baker): I have it in mind to visit Bolton next year, but no plans have been drawn up at present.

Mr. Thurnham: When my right hon. Friend visits Bolton, will he meet the villagers of Affetside? They would be pleased if details of any future local government boundary changes were pinned up in the pub so that they might know about them.

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend will be aware that my responsibilities as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster do not extend to the Boundary Commission for England. I understand that the commission has made a proposal which would involve 600 people being transferred from my hon. Friend's constituency of Bolton, North-East to the constituency of Bury, North. As is usual in these matters, strong feelings are aroused. I am sure that the commission will take note of the local reactions to its proposals and the reasons for them, both historical and practical. I would hope that any changes will be taken only after careful consideration and widespread consultation.

Dr. Cunningham: When the Chancellor next goes to the north-west, will he apologise to the head teachers of independent schools and to the parents of children on assisted places schemes for inviting the head teachers, in a letter from Conservative central office, to break a confidence and identify, for the use of the Conservative party, the names and addresses of parents who have children on assisted places schemes? Is not that a flagrant breach of the confidentiality associated with these matters and should not he withdraw the letter now?

Mr. Baker: What I have done is within the powers of any person to do. I wanted to highlight for the parents who send their children to private schools the fact that the Labour Opposition wish to withdraw the assisted places scheme, which benefits about 27,000 pupils. That would be extremely damaging. The Labour party wants to withdraw help from those pupils who deserve it most and to undermine private schools altogether. It wishes to restrict choice by abolishing grant-maintained schools and city technology schools. That is the negative education policy of the Labour party.

Official Transport

62. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by his office on his official transport in the current financial year.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: In the current financial year my office has spent £21,060 on official transport.

Mr. Banks: The Chancellor will know that in the past year he spent £34,000 on official transport. How can he possibly justify that expenditure when he has said that he spends about a quarter of his time on official Duchy business? Is not this an example of the taxpayer subsidising the right hon. Gentleman's increasingly ineffective activities as chairman of the Conservative party? Would not it be better for Conservative central office to reimburse the money that has been taken? Finally, if the right hon. Gentleman intends to continue using his official car as chairman of the Conservative party, may I suggest that he has a commode inserted in the back seat?

Mr. Baker: All my Conservative party engagements around the country are paid for by Conservative central office. An official car is provided for my official business as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and as a member of the Cabinet. There is no greater expert on official transport than the hon. Gentleman, who is a former chairman of the Greater London Council and had an official car which I am sure he did not use for party purposes.

Mr. Yeo: Will my right hon. Friend devote as much official time as possible during the next year to visiting schools and warning those parents currently taking advantage of the assisted places scheme about the Opposition's intentions?

Mr. Baker: I should be delighted to do so, not only in my capacity as a Cabinet Minister, but as chairman of the Conservative party. I am surprised that the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) raised the issue at all, as it exposes how negative the Opposition's education policy is and how damaging it will be. They talk about choice for parents, but all that they believe in is reducing choice for parents.

Magistrates

63. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he proposes to visit north-east Lancashire to discuss the appointment of magistrates.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I recently discussed the matter at a meeting of the south Sefton advisory committee on Merseyside. I have no plans to visit at present.

Mr. Pike: Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise the growing concern of many people in Lancashire and the north-west that magistrates benches are increasingly less representative of the communities that they serve? Is not it time that they were made more representative of local communities?

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that many magistrates are becoming increasingly concerned about having to apply the poll tax legislation and liability orders against people in the north-west who they know cannot afford to pay the poll tax?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman's first point raised a serious matter. I am concerned that there should be proper representation on the magistrates bench, covering all parties and all strata of society. My advisers and I are anxious to ensure that that happens.

With regard to payment of the community charge and the role of the magistracy, I remind the hon. Gentleman that according to a survey last week by the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation, district councils received payment from 87 per cent. of those required to pay the community charge. The figure would be higher if some Labour Members of Parliament, Members of the European Parliament and councillors would also pay up. I understand that five Labour councillors in Burnley are refusing to pay, and that only last week a Member of the European Parliament had to be ordered by Accrington

magistrates to pay his fair share towards the cost of local services. Many people in Burnley are paid a great deal less than a Member of the European Parliament, yet they have to subsidise his non-payment.

As for Labour Members of Parliament who joined the poll tax demonstration in London last Saturday, the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) claims that there is no support in the Labour party for non-payment campaigns, so which is the true voice of the Labour party —the empty rhetoric of the Opposition Front Bench or the rabble-rousing activities of Labour Members of Parliament on Saturday?

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Commission Meetings

66. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission when he next expects the Public Accounts Commission to meet.

Sir Peter Hordern (Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission): No date has yet been fixed for the next meeting of the Commission, but I expect that it will take place in December.

Mr. Allen: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the tremendous work of Nottinghamshire county council in attracting industry and other bodies, including the Inland Revenue, English Heritage and Toray, to relocate to its area? At the next meeting of the Public Accounts Commission, will the hon. Gentleman discuss the possibility of the National Audit Office also seeking to relocate in the Nottinghamshire county council area?

Sir Peter Hordern: The hon. Gentleman will be glad to know that the Comptroller and Auditor-General has it in mind to move some of the functions of the National Audit Office to regional offices. I understand that he is planning to do so to some considerable extent to the north of England, and also to the west country, but I cannot help the hon. Gentleman as to whether any relocation will be to Nottinghamshire.

Mr. Latham: When considering salaries paid at the National Audit Office, will my hon. Friend and the commission bear in mind that it is probably the only branch of the public service that makes a profit for the taxpayer by identifying instances of waste and inefficiency in other Departments?

Mr. Hordern: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that comment. The National Audit Office has to recruit from the market generally and cannot be tied to a rigid salary structure imposed by anyone, even the Government.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I recognise the right of journalists to publish any material that comes their way if they believe publication to be in the public interest, but will the Public Accounts Commission nevertheless wholeheartedly condemn the activities of hon. Members and others who leak the reports of Select Committees and undermine the work of those Committees?

Mr. Hordern: So far as I know, there has been no leak of any kind from the Public Accounts Commission. Perhaps our affairs are not considered sufficiently important or newsworthy. In any event, I think that this is probably a matter for the Committee of Privileges.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Written Questions

64. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many written questions he has answered since he last answered questions in the Chamber.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Three, Sir.

Mr. Winnick: That does not seem very many. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he appears to have become the Prime Minister's fall guy in all the Government's present difficulties? Is he happy with that role, or does he fear that it will not be long before Mr. Ingham starts a whispering campaign against him? Many of the right hon. Gentleman's former Cabinet colleagues know full well how Mr. Ingham works in this regard.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman should know that I am very happy in my work, and that I intend to preside over a campaign in which he will lose his seat in Walsall, North just as he lost his seat in Croydon, North.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Bicycle Mileage Allowance

67. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will bring forward proposals for a bicycle mileage allowance for Members.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): The Government have no such plans at the moment. However, both logic and common sense give some support to the idea. I shall therefore arrange for it to be examined.

Mr. Tony Banks: That is an excellent idea. In view of the cost of the Chancellor of the Duchy's car, perhaps the Lord President should suggest that he take up bicycling —although, knowing his right hon. Friend, it would probably be a tandem with a member of the working class struggling to pedal at the front.

I am grateful to the Lord President for his answer. He must be aware that civil servants receive the allowance, so it is surely appropriate that Members of Parliament should receive it as well. Bicycling is both health-giving and environmentally friendly. I can see the Lord President now, cycling around London like the clappers with his clips and tin helmet. It will, indeed, be a good thing for Members of Parliament to receive this allowance.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is deploying his rhetoric against an open door. I have noted that civil servants enjoy the allowance and that to grant it to Members of Parliament would be an environmentally-friendly gesture. Only a handful of our colleagues currently take advantage of the two-wheeled vehicle, but no doubt more will follow their example if I ensure that the matter is examined.

Mr. Dickens: Is it possible that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) has forgotten his days as chairman of the GLC, when he drove in a palatial car at the ratepayer's expense? Perhaps he now wants to pedal a cycle at the taxpayer's expense.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Perhaps it is as a consequence of being deprived of his former office that the hon. Gentleman has adopted a more modest means of transport.

Dr. Cunningham: While we are discussing allowances, may I ask whether the Leader of the House saw yesterday's "Insight" articles about the avoidance of taxation—on a huge scale—by very wealthy members of society? As he is responsible for the legislative programme, will he at least hint that this loophole will be closed in the Queen's Speech?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It would take a considerable stretch of the imagination to relate that question to the subject of mileage allowances for right hon. and hon. Members.

New Parliamentary Building

68. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Lord President of the Council how many offices, bathrooms, bedrooms, cloakrooms, shops and recreational facilities are expected to be available in the new parliamentary building; when phase 1 will be available to hon. Members; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The main facilities in phase 1 will include offices for 60 right hon. and hon. Members and office space for 100 secretaries, a substantial part of the Library, catering facilities, and two small shops. Present forecasts suggest that right hon. and hon. Members will be able to move into phase 1 not later than the next summer recess. The House should before long have an opportunity to consider the initial design brief for phase 2. The New Building Sub-Committee is drawing up proposals, which it hopes to place before us during the forthcoming Session.

Mr. Greenway: Can my right hon. and learned Friend say what the two small shops are to sell? Will they include House of Commons goods such as humbugs and fudge? As chairman of the parliamentary friends of cycling, may I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to reconsider the absence of any recreational facilities as part of phase 1? If we cannot have an indoor hockey pitch, perhaps there could be squash courts, to keep right hon. and hon. Members fit for cycling—or is my right hon. and learned Friend afraid that that might lead to too many by-elections?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend always makes imaginative suggestions on these occasions. He will recollect that the gymnasium is being redeveloped, is to re-open in larger premises as a consequence of changes made during the Recess.

As to the retail facilities, phase 1 will include a bookshop selling Her Majesty's Stationery Office publications and other items of parliamentary interest. That bookshop will be open to the public, as will two small shops in Bridge street. There will also be a kiosk and shop inside the phase 1 building selling light refreshments, groceries and other miscellaneous goods.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Will the Leader of the House give an undertaking that the new building will include suitable accommodation for the catering staff? It is disgraceful that the House of Commons, which makes laws about health and safety, should itself increasingly neglect its own staff, who are not provided with suitable accommodation in which to change or take rest periods.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise the hon. Lady that phase 1 will address that particular problem. The specifications were drawn up a number of years ago, and there is a limit to the flexibility that they can embody. I agree with the hon. Lady that phase 2 should take account of considerations such as those that she has mentioned. They and many similar propositions deserve more sympathetic and effective consideration in the management of this place. That is one reason why the Commission was pleased to order the Robin Ibbs review of the entire way we manage these premises.

Mr. Holt: Will my right hon. and learned Friend note that security in this building and in the whole Palace of Westminster is very poor? If we are to have shops and other amenities which will be open to the public, will he ensure that there are ample opportunities to screen everyone who uses them and everything that they take in and out with them? Only thus can we ensure that there is no repeat of the kind of recent incident whose victim was the subject of a memorial service that some of us attended earlier today.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I appreciate that my hon. Friend is concerned about security matters, for very understandable reasons and you, Mr. Speaker, are aware that it is a topic that is never far from the minds of those of us who have responsibility for such matters. The shops that will be open to the public will not be part of these premises as such. The amenities that will be available to right hon. and hon. Members and to staff will be designed to satisfy a long and frequently expressed need to meet certain minimal requirements at all hours of the day and night. However, even in respect of those facilities, we shall take account of security considerations.

Register of Members' Interests

69. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will propose new rules for the Register of Members' Interests; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I myself have no proposals to make at this stage.

The Select Committee on Members' Interests has, however, undertaken to report in the near future on the resolutions agreed by the Defence Committee in relation to the declaration of interests of Chairmen and members of Select Committees; to conduct a broader review of registration and the declaration of interests; and to consider whether to define the requirements of the register more precisely, so that Members' interpretations of the rules would be more consistent and their entries more comprehensible.

Mr. Skinner: Is not the parliamentary register far weaker than that applying to local authority councillors? Is not it a scandal that, at a time when 19 Tory ex-Cabinet Ministers in the past 11 years have picked up 59 directorships between them, we do not have an appropriate register to deal with the matter? Surely it is time that we had not just a register but a system of full-time Members of Parliament with one job and one job only? It seems strange to many people outside the House

that Members of Parliament cannot get by on £26,000 per year when many old age pensioners and others do not have two ha'pennies to rub together.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As so often, the hon. Gentleman starts off by referring to a topic with which the House as a whole is concerned—the management and consideration of Members' interests, which is being considered in the ways that I have described—but goes on to destroy what began as a tolerable case by putting his points so intemperately as to lose any credibility whatever.

Recycled Paper

70. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Lord President of the Council, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) of 16 July, *Official Report*, columns *430-31*, if he will make a statement on the progress of the experiment in the use of recycled paper for House of Commons stationery.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: A selection of recycled stationery is now available from the Serjeant at Arms stores. The Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee will be considering the results of this experiment in due course. My own view is that we should seek to proceed on the assumption that recycled paper will become the norm.

Mr. Tredinnick: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for his reply. I am sure that the decision to offer recycled paper has been widely welcomed in the country because it shows that the House is setting a good example. Will he give an assurance to both sides of the House that the stationery will be available in all sizes so that the experiment can be conducted properly? Can he give some indication of hon. Members' response to this initiative and can he say what initial demand appears to be?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have some sympathy with my hon. Friend's point of view. He will recollect that the decision taken by the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee on 21 May this year was to proceed on an experimental basis along the lines that I have described. As I said in my original reply, I should like us to proceed to a more general basis than that, but we shall have to await the first report on the experiment. I shall take into account the matters that my hon. Friend has raised.

Points of Order

3.33 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that I have been in correspondence with you in your capacity as president of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association about the monitoring of the elections in Pakistan, which are due to be held on Wednesday this week. You also know that concern has been expressed about the way in which meetings and rallies of political parties in Pakistan, especially the Pakistan People's party, have been banned, and about the way in which the judicial process seems to be manipulated to hamper certain politicians and parties.

Would it be possible for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to prepare a report on the way in which the elections have been conducted, as I understand that British diplomats from Islamabad are monitoring the conduct of the elections? It is important that the House has access to full information. In your capacity as president of the CPA, would you agree to ask for a report to be prepared?

Mr. Speaker: When I received the hon. Member's letter about this matter, I got in touch with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I am sure that the executive officers of the CPA will have taken note of what he has said.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it within your power to protect Members interests in the following respect?

Over the weekend I had occasion to intervene with the immigration authorities on behalf of a constituent who faced deportation. As you will remember, the rules have changed in recent years and some powers are given to officials rather than to Ministers or their private offices. However, for some time yesterday evening the appropriate duty officer was not available, he was taking a break—and of course people must have breaks. Later in the evening no contact could be made with the Minister's private office. Only as a result of the extremely helpful attitude of a senior immigration official was my constituent taken off the aeroplane, although there had been an entirely appropriate request—any hon. Member could have done the same—for intervention to allow consideration of the case for deportation.

Will you, Mr. Speaker, please alert the authorities and the Home Office to the concern that I think you would express on behalf of all hon. Members, that at all times there should be an immediately appropriate channel so that we may communicate and make representations, as we were assured that we should be able to do?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot see that that is a matter for me. I sympathise with the hon. Gentleman, but I have never experienced any problem concerning my constituents with the new regulations. Apparently, contact was eventually made with the immigration officials in this case. I am sure that what has been said will have been noted by Ministers.

Orders of the Day

Employment Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 1

REFUSAL OF EMPLOYMENT ON GROUNDS RELATED TO UNION MEMBERSHIP

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 2, line 16, after "employment" insert "of any description".

3.35 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Eric Forth): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 2, 9, 10 and 11.

Mr. Forth: All the amendments that the House is to consider were approved by all sides in another place. It will, therefore, perhaps be for the convenience of hon. Members if I suggest that as all the amendments either follow from issues raised by the Opposition during the passage of the Bill in this House and in another place, or are otherwise entirely consequential or technical, they should be dealt with briefly. Unless Opposition Members or any of my hon. Friends ask me to do so, I do not propose to speak at length on them. The exception is Lords amendment No. 7. I should like to say a few words about the new clause. The House will want to hear a brief explanation of the background to that new clause and why I shall ask the House to support its inclusion in the Bill.

I am conscious of the fact that I am taking up the excellent work done on the Bill by my hon. Friends the Members for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar) and for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls), whose absence I regret, but I hope that we shall see him soon. I shall do my best to follow in their eminent footsteps and to do justice to all the work that they did on the Bill prior to this stage.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): May I place on record recognition of the debt that the House owes to my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans), who drew the Government's attention to the drafting defects? The Opposition accept these amendments. They were accepted, as the Minister pointed out, in another place as an improvement to the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, North agrees, so we do not intend to oppose them.

Nevertheless, it is a shame—a fact that the Minister should take on board, new to his post though he is—that the amendment contains a major defect. The Government maintain that it confers equity between trade union and non-trade union members. However, because the Government have failed to act against the blacklisting of trade unionists, the protection offered to trade union members is severely weakened. Nevertheless, as I have already pointed out, the Opposition do not intend to resist these amendments.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 4 agreed to.

Clause 6

RESPONSIBILITY OF TRADE UNION FOR ACTS OF OFFICIALS, &C.

Lords amendment: No. 5, in page 7, line 19, leave out "six" and insert "three".

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Forth.]*

Mr. Tony Lloyd: We welcome the fact that the Government were persuaded by the amendment moved by Labour peers, but the clause is probably one of the more obnoxious features of the Bill, as it operates against trade unions and, taken as a whole, their members. It must not be construed that, because we are happy with the amendment, we are happy with the clause. However, the amendment is an improvement because at least the Government have recognised the need to move from six months to the more acceptable period of three months.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 7

CALLING OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION WITH SUPPORT OF BALLOT

Lords amendment: No. 6, in page 8, leave out lines 28 and 29 and insert

"ballot ceases to be effective in accordance with section *(Period after which ballot ceases to be effective)* below."

Mr. Forth: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 7 and 16.

Mr. Forth: This is the matter on which the House should dwell briefly, and, as it is a new development since the Bill was in another place, I should place its background on record.

During debates in this House, and in another place, the Government always made clear our willingness to consider changes to the law on union industrial action ballots which could allow a union, in certain circumstances, to make its first call for industrial action more than four weeks after the date of a ballot. We recognised the concerns that had been expressed about the way in which court proceedings, or an injunction which was eventually lifted, might create a situation in which it might be reasonable not to expect a union, as a matter of course, to re-ballot its members even though its first call for industrial action would take place more than four weeks after a ballot.

However, we also made it quite clear that the crucial principle to be preserved in such circumstances was that no such extension should be allowed if it could not be assumed that the ballot continued to represent the views of relevant members. While making such a change to the present law, the amendments also preserve this principle. To understand how they would work, it may be helpful if I describe their provisions in a little more detail.

Amendment No. 6 is a technical requirement. It replaces a reference in clause 7(3)(b) with words stating that the call for action, and industrial action itself, must take place before the

"ballot ceases to be effective in accordance with"

the new clause proposed by amendment No. 7.

Amendment No. 7 sets out the provisions of new clause 8. That clause provides that a ballot will normally "cease to be effective" for relevant purposes at

"the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the date of the ballot".

That means that if a ballot produces a majority in favour of industrial action, it will be assumed, as a matter of course, that the result continues to reflect members' views for up to four weeks after the date of the ballot.

However, the remaining provisions of the new clause allow for the period of four weeks to be extended in certain circumstances. Those are where the calling or organising of industrial action is "prohibited" for the whole, or part, of the four-week period following the date of the ballot under a court order which subsequently lapses or is discharged, or by virtue of an undertaking given to a court from which the person concerned is subsequently released. In such a case, the trade union may apply to the court for an order providing that the period during which the prohibition has effect shall not count towards the four weeks.

In other words, the new clause recognises that, in certain circumstances, there may be no need for a union to hold another ballot. In relevant circumstances, a union may have the "privilege" of first calling for industrial action to which a ballot relates more than four weeks after the date of the ballot without having to re-ballot its members.

The new clause solves the difficulties that were highlighted in the other place and goes all the way to meeting the points that were made there. I hope that the House will see it in that way and therefore will support the amendments.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: The Minister bears no responsibility for this because he was not present in Committee or on Report. Clause 7 was passed on Report, and in reality there was little debate on this important new clause, the Government having failed to anticipate the need for it in Committee.

Clause 7 as drafted is objectionable. It is unacceptable to the Opposition because it makes it extremely difficult for legitimate industrial action to take place. The Minister would be wrong to think that the fact that we accept the new clause as constituting an improvement means either that we endorse clause 7 generally or that we consider the present proposal to be the best available. The new clause has not been debated in this place, and I think that I am right in saying that it was not introduced in the other place until Report, so even there the debate was fairly limited.

3.45 pm

We should pay tribute to those in the other place who, on a number of occasions, sought to persuade the Government of the need to recognise the defects in the existing balloting procedures. The issue first arose when the Transport and General Workers Union found itself in difficulty during the docks strike. The union balloted its members properly and in accordance with existing statute. Its members voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action. Then, as a delaying tactic—it was no more than a tactic—the employers took the TGWU to court and sought to use tortuous legal processes and the court mechanism to frustrate the democratic will of the TGWU's members, itself enshrined in legislation introduced by the Government.

Once the court process had been gone through, the four-week period specified in the legislation was up and the original ballot was deemed no longer valid. The union was then forced to go to all the expense and inconvenience of consulting its members again. Anyone who has any experience of industrial relations, however peripheral, will realise that the trade union and its members were thus put at a serious disadvantage, and that had been the employers' intention in using the court process. To that extent, at least, they succeeded in frustrating the interests of the TGWU's members.

Against that background, the new clause represents an improvement. It seeks to override the automaticity of the four-week period by putting an end to the validity of a ballot.

I hope that the Minister will comment in detail, as this is the first opportunity that we have had to probe the Government's intentions. We welcome the fact that a ballot will no longer automatically be deemed invalid at the end of the four-week period, but, none the less, the new clause leaves considerable discretion out of the hands of the trade union members and with the unelected and undemocratic courts system and those who sit in judgment.

I draw the Minister's attention in particular to subsection (4)(b) of the new clause, which lists the circumstances in which the court should not make an order allowing the original ballot to be considered a mandate for industrial action. Subsection (4) provides that the court shall not make such an order if it appears

"that an event is likely to occur as a result of which those members would vote against industrial action if another ballot were to be held."

On what basis can the unelected judges of the British courts divine what the members of the TGWU—or any other union—are likely to believe at any given time? Nothing inclines me to the view that the judges are in a position to make a decision about the likely voting intentions of the members of a trade union.

This is not a trivial matter. Had the new clause come before the Committee, which took some time to examine the Bill, many of its provisions would have been subjected to considerable scrutiny. Because of the procedures that apply this evening, we are forced to consider the new clause en bloc. It is impossible for us to vote against it because it provides some benefits for trade union members. Its overriding benefit is that the four-week period will not apply automatically.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): My hon. Friend said that automatic closure would not apply and that the matter would go to court. I take it that he is saying that, according to the new clause, the union would have to take the matter to court and spend a lot more money trying to get a further delay if that was possible. What would happen if the union ran into a judge like Justice Harman, who did not even know who Gazza was? What chance would the union have if it ran into a bloke like him rather than someone who knew something about trade unions? Someone is going to be stuck up there like Lord Almighty and he will have to adjudicate on a very important industrial matter. As a result of the new clause, a lot of money could be spent and at the end of the day the trade union might still face the same predicament as it faced before it went to court.

Mr. Lloyd: My hon. Friend has raised an important point. Once court proceedings are under way, we are all aware who will be the ultimate beneficiaries: they will be the members of one of the more efficient trade unions in Britain, the national union of barristers and solicitors, who generally manage to make a fair amount out of court proceedings.

There is considerable concern that trade union members would have to pay for the legal procedure. I draw the attention of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) to the fact that there is no appeal against a court decision. If the judges, in their wisdom, decide that as working class judges they would have voted against industrial action and therefore members of the trade union would have felt the same way, there is no mechanism for an appeal against the court's decision. What the court says goes, and if the court says that the union has had its four weeks, that four weeks will have well and truly been had.

Those concerns lie at the heart of the new clause. We must accept the new clause as a whole or reject it. Although it is defective, it is better than the former provision according to which after four weeks there was no possibility of a ballot maintaining its validity. Even with regard to cost, time and the overwhelming discretion of the court, the new clause offers something marginally better than the former provision.

The Minister is new to his present post and I hope that he will consider my points. We are told that there are areas of employment law which the Secretary of State is still considering. He may feel that it is prudent to rattle a few skeletons, and the Bill was introduced to put the trade union movement on the defensive. The Government have failed to do that with this Bill. If there is to be another Employment Bill next Session, I hope that the Minister will dwell on the points that have been raised about this new clause with a view to taking remedial action to improve the provision.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) has raised an important point about subsection (4)(b) of the new clause, which refers to

"an event . . . likely to occur as a result of which those members would vote against industrial action".

Might such an event be the probable reinstatement of someone whose dismissal had caused the industrial action in the first place or, in the case of a wage demand, the announcement by an employer that it was willing to reconsider and increase the offer to the employees?

Subsection (5) states:

"No appeal lies from the decision of the court to make or refuse an order under this section."

Does that include no appeal to the employment appeals tribunal, which is often seen and can be used as the last resort in industrial relations matters?

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Amendment No. 7 is the most substantive amendment that was carried in another place. Although I certainly would not wish to vote against the amendment, it underlines the fact that, in trying to bring more and more legalism into this aspect of the law, in an effort to take the sting out of unofficial disputes, more problems will be created than solved. In some circumstances, the amendment could lead to unofficial disputes becoming official, and being supported by a ballot to try to get out of some of the legal difficulties that are now being put in the way. Much trust

[Mr. James Wallace]

has been put into the speed of the judicial process. Subsection (6) of the new clause makes it clear that, unless an application is dealt with within 12 weeks, even after 12 weeks, regardless of what the subsection or the court may say, the ballot ceases to be effective.

Assuming that a union is not able to get its application in until, say, the seventh week after the date of the ballot, one hopes that the courts will be up to it to make sure that the application is heard as quickly as possible so that the application is not defeated by the expiration of time.

My next point was dealt with at some length by the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) and was referred to by the hon. Members for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). It relates to the necessity for a union to apply to the court. The circumstances set out in the amendment will allow the court not to make an order allowing an extension of time. One wonders why it would not have been possible, after the order which was prohibiting the union from calling for industrial action, for the time to be added automatically. Expense will be incurred through having to go to court.

It is important also to concentrate on the fact that the court will be allowed not to make an order

"if it appears to the court—

(a) that the result of the ballot no longer represents the views of the union members concerned, or

(b) that an event is likely to occur as a result of which those members would vote against industrial action if another ballot were to be held."

I take the point made by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West that some clear event might have taken place—for example, that the original demands promoting the call for industrial action had actually been met. That would be obvious. Hon. Members would accept that many other factors can come into play that are not quite as obvious in their impact on union members as that factor would be. That seems to be committing a great deal to judicial knowledge.

As the hon. Member for Bolsover pointed out, it would appear that a member of Her Majesty's judiciary was not aware of who Paul-Gazza-Gascoigne is. During my own student days, a judge once asked, "Who are the Beatles?" In difficult aspects of industrial relations, it is too much to expect so much to be within judicial knowledge, or for judges, even if they have the benefit of statements by barristers or advocates appearing before them, to interpret them and make decisions upon them.

In matters of procedure, will information be made available to the court through ex parte statements on behalf of the union and employers, or will there be scope for evidence to be led with regard to what the current views of union members are or what they are likely to be, or what events are likely to occur in the next few days? As the amendment improves the Bill, I shall not vote against it.

4 pm

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): I do not wish to delay the House, but I should like clarification on a couple of queries. Broadly speaking, amendment No. 7 is a sensible change which, I am sure, will be welcomed by hon. Members of all parties. I shall concentrate on the point that was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) and by Opposition Members. Clearly, circumstances can change and it is right that the court should be able to take any change into account. The court is probably as good a judge of that as anybody, as long as the information is presented sensibly.

To avoid endless legal arguments in the future, I seek clarification on the words "is likely to occur". Presumably they incorporate something that is occurring when the court is sitting, and not just a future change. What will happen if what is deemed "likely to occur" does not occur? Is there some way back to enable the status quo ante to be re-enacted?

I apologise to my hon. Friend the Minister if this next point was raised earlier. It relates to the introductory section of the new clause, which was part of the old clause. I am referring to the phrase

"at the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the date of the ballot."

Perhaps my hon. Friend would clarify that, so that we can ensure that it does not provide scope for endless litigation or for endless lawyers' fees. Is the date of the ballot the date when the ballot starts or the date by which the last ballot paper must be received, because in practice ballots often take place on more than one date?

Mr. Skinner: This is really a debate about class in our society. Here we are, once again, discussing in the last stages of our consideration of this Bill the way in which trade unions and their members are being treated by the Tory Government and the way in which the law is being used against them despite the fact that on most occasions the people in the City of London and the establishment do not have to put up with such laws.

From the new clause it appears that the Government have decided that even in the courts it might be better if a little leeway were given. I am worried about the fact that, when a case gets to court, those who are running the outfit —85 per cent. of whom are from public schools and Oxbridge—will have a completely different view of trade unions and how they work. As my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) has said, although the net result will be a marginal improvement—I have to agree with that, because that will probably be the case—we must wait and see what happens when a case goes to court. My chief worry is that if the first decision was set against a trade union in respect of the four weeks, and if it was decided that the ballot was all right and would have to stand, notwithstanding that there had been some difficulties, that might set a precedent for many other unions that might want to extend the time so that they would not have to hold another ballot. In such cases, the victory would be with the other side.

Does the Minister believe that any further representations to a court would be varied as a result of the setting of such a precedent? We know that when a matter goes to court judges look back at what happened previously and use that as a pattern.

In any case, I am disturbed by the way in which trade unions are always being attacked by the Government. The other day I was reading about Maxwell. Apparently, there was a discussion and ballot at the Derby County football club in which only two people spoke and voted in favour of Maxwell continuing at Derby because they said that he had his fingers in other pies, such as Tottenham. However, nothing happened. Apparently, somebody with a lot of money came along and put a stop to it, so that was the end of that. That is one side of business, but the people who are the wealth creators—the trade unionists—are continually

being told, "You must have a ballot for this, that and the other." They are dictated to by the Tory Government and their henchmen and women in the media, with the result that, once a result is found to be inadequate or only partly adequate to the Tories, they propose different provisions. As my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford said, in this case they are not too sure about whether they can sustain it in view of what has happened previously.

I am also worried that, as my hon. Friend said, there is no appeal procedure against these decisions. It will be a tidy state of affairs if someone says to the courts, "We are making representations under the new clause passed at the last minute by people in the House of Lords and then verified in the House of Commons" but is told, "We are awfully sorry, but if you lose you cannot appeal." Why cannot trade unionists have a proper appeal procedure to enable them to challenge a decision?

There are laws for trade unionists and laws for other people. Sir Jack Lyons is a current good example. He admitted, among all the other things, writing to the Prime Minister and God knows what else in the Guinness affair. He said that he had made £3 million out of that scandal. What was he fined?—£3 million. So it was not a bad day's work for Sir Jack Lyons. That will not apply to people taking part in industrial action, for example, trying to obtain more than 7 or 8 per cent. against the Government when the going rate is 10·9 per cent. Who knows, in a short time we may have inflation of more than 11 per cent. That is what the ballots are all about in the main. They are not about £3 million, as in the case of Sir Jack Lyons. They are usually about someone on £150 a week or less who is trying to keep up with the rate of inflation but is being hammered by the Government.

The Government say that they have no incomes policy, but the incomes policy is contained in this legislation. Over the past 11 years, to hamper trade unionists in their attempts to keep up with inflation, the Government have introduced trade union laws backed by a massive dole queue. The dole queue is even greater now than it was in the early years when the Government brought in the most punitive legislation to force through their form of incomes policy. Today we are discussing the Government's latest attempts at an incomes policy. There will probably be another attempt in the next Session of Parliament.

There have been 11 years of dirty work against the wealth creators of Britain—the people who work for a living, as opposed to those who do not. Those who do not are represented by the Establishment and all those people on the other side of the fence, in the Tory party—all the 200 Back Benchers who have outside jobs. They do not have any problems with ballots. All the jobs were itemised in *The Observer* magazine. Unfortunately, all the information is not in the Register of Members' Interests. Conservative Members are not subjected to ballots. They do not have to appear before judges. They will not be subject to new clauses or further legislation. These people can make money on the side by moonlighting. But woe betide someone working in a factory, school or some office somewhere trying to keep up with the rate of inflation, which the Government are supposedly trying to control.

Mr. Wallace: What is the hon. Gentleman's view of his party's policy review, which does not seem to want to undo much of the so-called "dirty work" of the past 11 years?

Mr. Skinner: If the hon. Gentleman had been listening on previous occasions, he would know that I believe that all the dirty work of the past 11 years should be undone by a Labour Government. He would also know that I believe that there is only one freedom at work. It is the freedom collectively to organise together to stop the bosses from exploiting, in this case, trade union members and would-be trade union members. It is as simple as that.

In Labour's proposed new legislation there are some new rights, they tell me. I am not knocking new rights but merely saying that I want to see undone all the work that the Tory Government have done. When we get a Labour Government I shall remember what the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) has said. There is half a chance—no more than that—that he will be returned. We might win the seat. If he comes back as a Liberal, or whatever may be the current name of his party, I shall call upon him to support in the Lobby those of us who want to overturn Tory legislation. The hon. Gentleman can have a word with his gaffer chap, Paddy Backdown, to see whether they will do that. The Liberals are handy at giving the impression that they are on everybody's side. In view of the hon. Gentleman's intervention, is the parrot twitching on trade union legislation? Has the Liberal party extended its great history of liberalism and freedom to the fact that there is only one freedom at work—the freedom for people to band together in trade unions and collectively organise? That is the great natural freedom from which I and every Labour Member have sprung.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Skinner: I give way to the bookie's runner.

Mr. Holt: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, if a person feels strongly enough about it, it is his right not to belong to a trade union and not to be blackballed from a firm because he wants to be an individual and not a member of a trade union? Would an individual have that right under your future Labour Government?

Mr. Skinner: Not "your" Government. You mean the hon. Member for Bolsover. I know that you find some difficulty getting it out, and that applies to many hon. Members. There is a way of doing it and you should listen closely to the way that I deal with the matter. The hon. Member from up north, who represents Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt)——

Mr. Tony Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman is not from up north.

Mr. Skinner: That is right. He is a southerner who got a seat up north, but he will be replaced by a Labour Member at the next election. Somebody who is prepared to take an 8, 10, or 12 per cent. pay increase that has been gained by collective action should expect to be part of the organisation that won that increase. If he wants to be a freeloader and imagine that he is doing it on his own, he should have to pay any price arising from that action. He has the freedom to do what he wants, but he should be smart enough to understand that he will not get such an increase on his own. There are plenty of examples.

Mass unemployment has been deliberately engineered by the Government to reduce the will of those who are engaged in collective action. The Tory Government brag about there not being many strikes. They purposely

[Mr. Skinner]

created a dole queue of 3 million or more to try to reduce the number of strikes and the ability of people to organise. In 1989, unemployment dropped slightly and in one or two areas people manged to get a little bit above the odds. That applies to the National and Local Government Officers Association. Even the BBC got an extra 2 per cent. I am sure that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh is pleased about that.

The Government are now pushing up unemployment and introducing other employment measures. That is what they have been about from the beginning. That is why I have opposed such Bills and why I call upon the next Labour Government to undo all this dirty work so that we may give freedom, which is limited, to the wealth creators collectively to organise to improve their lot. They have a hell of a long way to go before they catch up with the 19 ex-Tory Ministers who have lined their pockets with 59 directorships in the past 11 years. They will also have a big job to catch up with all the Tory Back Benchers who are making money on the side.

I support the efforts of the wealth creators. This legislation is designed to stop their freedom and that is why we have opposed it from the beginning. My hon. Friend the Member for Stretford says that the new clause is a marginal improvement. I am worried that when the matter reaches the courts and the judges examine it they may set a precedent that will hamper us even more. I am pleased that the issue has been raised in this way because it gives us an opportunity to state a few things that will be important in the next five years when we have a Labour Government.

4.15 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): This is a useful debate, not just because it gives my hon. Friend the Minister an opportunity to explain what this clause means but because it gives us a chance to note something about the Labour party. Over the years that I have been in the House, it has made great play of the fact that it elects its party chairman and has claimed that that gives it an infinitely more representative chairman that has the Conservative party, which has an appointed chairman. It is valuable that a recent chairman of the Labour party, who was so clearly representative of the Labour party, has given us an exposition of his view that all the industrial and employment legislation of the past 11 years should be undone. I am sure that the public will be extremely reassured to know that that is the policy of the Labour party.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): My hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) gave a qualified acceptance of Lords amendment No. 7 because, he said, it is an improvement on the original. It says that a court may find

"that the result of the ballot no longer represents the views of the union members concerned".

How will a court determine this? The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) mocked my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), but the Labour movement has elections and the one thing that the Conservative party seems most reluctant to have is elections. The chairman of the Conservative party is certainly not elected and there is no balloting over company contributions to that party. The board simply donates money and notifies the shareholders of what has happened—just like that.

What worries me is that even when the Government pass legislation on balloting, and the processes set out in that legislation are followed, employers still have the whiphand in the workplace. I can give a demonstration of that and the Under-Secretary may wish to check with his officials about the letter that I wrote in August about a company in my constituency—John Stanley in Willenhall.

In this company, several ballots were held in accordance with Government legislation. There was no doubt that they were carried out according to the law of the land. There were resounding majorities in favour of action being taken by the employees over a wage claim. As a result of those ballots a large number of people were dismissed and the dispute continues. I wrote to the Secretary of State asking him how he could possibly explain to the workers why, after they had observed the requirements of the legislation, they were treated in this way. The trade union official concerned, in Wolverhampton, which is near to my constituency, wrote to ask whether the Secretary of State or any of the Ministers in the Department of Employment could explain in person to the workers why they had been dismissed in this way, but the Secretary of State did not take up the invitation.

There is a contradiction between the way in which the Government handle trade unions and their attitude to employers. That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover was right to say that there is inbuilt prejudice against trade unions. I can give an example of this. A Government Whip, the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown), who is not present—I am not saying anything about the Whip who is here—has been quoted in the local press as saying that he would rather see his factories closed than accept trade unions. That is one illustration of a member of the Government who has a strong prejudice against trade unions. Are we to believe that the Minister who is to reply is not hostile towards trade unions? We remember him as a Back Bencher, when he mocked and baited trade unions on numerous occasions. Can he be regarded as impartial and as someone who wants to see fair play between employers and employees? Of course not. The Minister is on the side of the employers. He probably does not believe that it is right that trade unions should exist in the first place. He is certainly not in favour of trade unions being able to organise industrial action.

Perhaps I speak for myself, and my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover will disagree with me, but I do not want to see industrial action at every opportunity when there are difficulties. I believe that it should be used as a weapon of last resort. If the right of industrial action is taken from the work force, however, a fundamental freedom is removed from it. It is interesting to bear in mind some of the first actions that have been taken in eastern Europe. The countries concerned have been doing away with the Communist dictatorships and introducing free speech and free Parliaments. One of their first actions was to permit free trade unions to be formed that would have the right to take industrial action. My right hon. and hon. Friends have been trying to maintain freedoms which were established over many years, which the Tory Government have undoubtedly undermined to a large extent.

There is so much hypocrisy surrounding these matters. Yesterday, *The Sunday Times* supplied us with information about the way in which the very rich try to evade their income tax liability. We read about offshore tax havens. I do not know whether there are any Conservative Members present now in the Chamber who take advantage of those loopholes, but one or two Conservative Members were named in *The Sunday Times*. The Government talk about the rule of law and fair play and say that trade union officials should not encourage their members to ask for too much in wage claims. The same Government tolerate loopholes that give the rich extra money. The rich have done so well out of the Government, yet, despite pressure from the Inland Revenue, it seems that over the past two or three years the Treasury has refused to take action to close such loopholes that they know exist. There is a contradiction when the Government talk about fair play yet allow loopholes to remain open for the rich. At the same time the Government try to undermine in every conceivable way the right of working people to organise effectively and to take industrial action.

I have given an example of the way in which a group of employees in my constituency have been treated badly. Having listened to my hon. Friends the Members for Stretford and for Bolsover, I also take the view that there is not much purpose in voting against this provision. We must be under no illusion, however, the Government are dedicated to supporting only one part of society. Time and again they have helped the rich and the near-rich. Even their natural supporters, such as those at Eastbourne, have decided that enough is enough. They are fed up with the Government, as are millions of others who voted for the Conservative party at the general election. They have come to the conclusion that the Government do not represent ordinary people. Instead, they represent the rich or the well off. They will do everything possible for a small minority. That is why the Government have lost so much support in the past few years. I have referred to Eastbourne, but in the Mid-Staffordshire by-election the swing against the Government was even greater. That was in the region of which I represent part—the west midlands—and so I am pleased about that. It is clear—[*Interruption.*] The hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King), who is making idiotic comments while sitting behind the Minister, will undoubtedly lose his seat at the next general election.

Mr. Holt: I had no intention of contributing to the debate, but, having listened to some of the cant and nonsense from Labour Members, I find it necessary to intervene.

I represent many working people. Most of the Conservative voters in my constituency are working people. Most of them would find much to resent in the remarks of the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), who I believe has never done a day's work and dirtied his hands. He is a Member of Parliament who has been thrown out on one occasion, and I think that he will be thrown out again.

Reference was made to my antecedents. I think that the reference was prompted by the Opposition Whip. As usual, the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) did not get his facts right. I was not born in the north of England, but I was educated there. My opponent during the general election was not born in the north of England either. He was born in India. I do not think that that should necessarily disbar anyone from becoming a Member of Parliament. If candidates must live, work and have been born in the area, the Labour party's national executive committee will have great difficulty selecting a candidate for Eastbourne at the general election. It threw out its good local man because he did not conform to the Mandelson image. Of course, Mr. Mandelson—the man who really runs the Labour party, with the puppet Kinnock up front—is seeking a seat in the north of England. He has been selected as a candidate for an area that he had never previously visited. He is fighting a good local Conservative candidate who was born and raised in the area. He will beat Mr. Mandelson at the next general election——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know that such matters have been mentioned, but the debate is about a ballot ceasing to be effective in accordance with the relevant subsection. I know that general elections are about ballots, but I ask the hon. Gentleman to relate his remarks more closely to the Lords amendment.

Mr. Holt: I am just coming to the connection that you are seeking, Mr. Speaker. We are discussing ballots. The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) referred to the dock strike at Tees and Hartlepool. It was, "All out boys, all out", but it was not very long before it was, "All back boys, all back." The union leader said that the strike would last for six months and would break the port employers, but in fact it lasted for about six days and almost broke the union. It is the workers from the Tees and Hartlepool port authority who will elect the Conservative candidate, Mr. Graham Robb, to this House rather than Mr. Mandelson, the carpetbagger from the south of England.

Mr. Forth: I have at long last achieved one of my life's ambitions, which is to be acknowledged by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) as a member of the Establishment. It is something that I have always wanted to be, and now I have it from the most impeccable authority in the House, if I may refer to the hon. Gentleman thus, that I am a fully fledged, bona fide member of the Establishment. I thank him for that because it has made my day.

The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) implied that the matter had not been fully and properly debated, but that is not strictly true. The principles underlying this important clause were debated throughout the Bill's proceedings both in this House and in another place. Although the exact clause had not been debated here, it was debated at length in Committee and on Report in another place and was widely welcomed on all sides. It had a fair amount of coverage.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether we could conceive of or suggest any events that would meet the requirements of clause 7(4)(b). Almost immediately, my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) gave examples of two such events—first, the possible reinstatement of an employee whose dismissal had given rise to the balloted action, and secondly, a new pay offer being made during the proceedings. Those are two obvious circumstances which could give rise to the requirements under the clause. It is not as unlikely or as obscure as the hon. Member for Stretford suggested.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Although those are relevant circumstances, if they were likely to arise

[Mr. James Wallace]

the union probably would not have returned to the court on an application. The sting would have been taken out of the potential dispute. It is more likely that the circumstances will be much greyer and less obvious to define than the clear circumstances suggested by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel), which would probably result in the union not wanting to make an application.

Mr. Forth: The hon. Gentleman may well be right. However, the thrust of this late change to the Bill comes in response to points raised—quite legitimately—in the other place. They were considered very carefully, and were prompted largely by the events involving the Transport and General Workers Union which were outlined by the hon. Member for Stretford. We intend to prevent a recurrence of those events.

4.30 pm

I shall not attempt to envisage in detail the circumstances that may arise; I feel, however, that the clause provides a mechanism that will allow the unions to prevent a recurrence of the TGWU problem by going back to court. I shall say more about that in a moment.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West asked whether an appeal to the employment appeals tribunal would be possible. As a division of the High Court, it hears appeals from the industrial tribunals, so it would not be possible in this instance. Besides, we feel that allowing for such appeals would introduce yet more potential for delay and uncertainty. I should add that employers have no chance to appeal either; to that extent, the position remains evenly balanced.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) queried the ability of the judicial process to respond quickly enough to the events that we are discussing. I can give him two assurances—one quite serious, the other entirely serious. Given the dramatic fall in the incidence of industrial action that we have observed over the past few years, the number of occasions on which this machinery will be needed have also been dramatically reduced; it will therefore be invoked in only a few cases. I am confident that a quick enough response will be possible, although, if I am proved wrong, we shall re-examine the position as a matter of urgency.

My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) asked whether the term "likely to occur" related to the future. If something is happening or has already happened, the court can already take it into account under subsection (4A); subsection (4B) would not be applicable. I do not believe that his fears are well grounded, but, if he is not satisfied with my reply, we can consider the matter again if necessary. My hon. Friend also asked what was the applicable date of the ballot. The applicable date is the last date on which voting can take place.

It is remarkable that the hon. Member for Bolsover should still criticise the Government over the level of unemployment. Of course, any level of unemployment—even the present level, much reduced though it is—is unacceptable. Is not it significant, however, that our current rate of about 5·5 per cent. is below the rate in socialist France and socialist Spain, below the rate in Germany—that much-vaunted example of industrial efficiency—and, certainly, below the rate in many other countries that allege to have socialist Governments?

Presumably the hon. Gentleman still claims to be a socialist. I do not know whether that can now be said of any other member of the Labour party, but I suspect that, if there is one party member who still wishes to regard himself as a socialist, it is the hon. Gentleman. Given that that is the case, it is remarkable that he should criticise the present Government for the level of unemployment that an unacceptable number of people are still suffering: even his friends in the Socialist International—no doubt he, too is an active member, although he does not possess a passport—would consider that unfair. I hope that he will think again.

The hon. Gentleman and other Opposition Members expressed suspicions about the courts. I regret that, because, although those of us who do not participate in court proceedings may find them difficult to divine from time to time, by and large it is a fair and impartial system. We should accept it as such, and we shall not make any progress by constantly criticising court procedure and those who dedicate their lives to this country's system of justice.

Mr. Skinner: The system of justice in this country is bent. I believe that the judges, by and large, mirror the views of the Establishment. When a Tory Government are in power, the judges, by and large, support that Government's views. There may be odd little exceptions, where the judiciary throw a sprat to catch a mackerel, but I do not believe that they act independently. A good example of that is the way that judges came back from their holidays and opened up the courts on Saturdays and Sundays to imprison miners. They do not do the same in the case of people from the City. Cameron-Webb and Dixon got away to America with £40 million without even having their collars felt.

When the judges were nearly tackled by the present Government two years ago, the judges threatened to go on strike and to have a big march down the Strand. As a result, the Prime Minister—the so-called lady who is not for turning—caved in, because the judges were her friends and she did not want to strike at them. I am sorry that the judges did not strike, because I had already made a placard and intended to join them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Interventions should be brief.

Mr. Forth: The hon. Gentleman has just answered the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland, who complained about the judiciary's lack of speedy response. The hon. Member for Bolsover offered the best example that anyone could of the judiciary's speed of response. I wish that I had thought of it myself.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland queried whether the courts could respond quickly enough when unions referred a matter to them under the terms of the clause. The court will already be dealing with the matter, so such a request would only be an extension of existing proceedings rather than anything new. Therefore, there is no reason why any obstacle should be placed in the way of a union in that respect.

I will not deal in detail at the Dispatch Box today with the specific case raised by the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), but I undertake to study again the

correspondence that passed between him and my Department. If there have been any significant or relevant changes in the circumstances, perhaps the hon. Gentleman will advise me. However, that case does not change the substance of the amendment and the clause.

Mr. Winnick: I thank the Minister for agreeing to review the correspondence. I think that he will find that a rather useful exercise.

As the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) would not give way earlier, may I ask him now whether he agrees that it would be more useful to proceed by argument and not by smears? Apart from two years' national service and a further two years in higher education, I have been in paid employment of one form or another since the age of 15. To say that I have not worked is a Tory lie. I have worked all my life. Despite the wishes of the Tories, I hope that I shall have an opportunity to work for many more years to come. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh should acknowledge that he told a lie, and withdraw it.

Mr. Forth: I do not want to pursue those matters, but I hope that I have replied adequately to the substantive points made during our useful debate.

Mr. Holt: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In view of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), I may point out that in response to the claim by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) that only people who get their hands dirty are workers——

Mr. Skinner: I did not say that.

Mr. Holt: He did, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In response to that remark, I said that the hon. Member for Walsall, North had never done a day's hard work. I stick by that.

Mr. Winnick: What work has the hon. Gentleman ever done? Acting?

Mr. Skinner: Bookies' runner?

Mr. Holt: It is not a question of what I have done but of what work those two hon. Gentlemen have done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. None of this has much to do with employment.

Mr. Forth: I ask the House to support the amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 7 to 11 agreed to.

Schedule 1

Further Provisions Relating to Access to Employment

Lords amendment: No. 12, in page 17, line 15, leave out sub-paragraph (5).

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Forth.]*

Mr. Tony Lloyd: By way of clarification, will the Minister be good enough to confirm that subsection (5), which has been deleted as a result of the Lords amendment, was unnecessary in the first place? Will he place it on the record that health service employers, and those working within the health service, are covered by other sections of the schedule, and that, therefore, there is no question of their not being given the benefits of this legislation?

Mr. Forth: Yes, I confirm that what the hon. Gentleman said is correct.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 13 to 16 agreed to.

Landlord and Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill

Lords amendment considered.

Clause 1

LICENSED PREMISES: APPLICATION OF LANDLORD AND TENANT ACT 1954, PART II

Lords amendment: In page 1, line 18, at end insert "and section 24(3)(b) of the 1954 Act (which, in certain cases, preserves the effect of a notice to quit given in respect of a tenancy which becomes one to which Part II of the 1954 Act applies) shall not have effect in the case of a tenancy which becomes one to which that Part applies by virtue of this subsection."

4.45 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, as amended in 1969, will offer more protection to tenants of licensed premises if the Bill is passed. I know many people will welcome the amendment. I believe it is common ground with the Opposition that the extension of protection offered by this legislation will be beneficial to the tenants to whom it will apply and I welcome their support for the measure.

The amendment has arisen out of consultations during the passage of the legislation. We believe that it represents a further improvement in the protection which the legislation will afford to affected tenancies. As the words of the amendment show, it disapplies a section of the 1954 Act, which could otherwise call into doubt protection for tenants where notice to quit might already have been served—something that the National Licensed Victuallers Association, among others, is worried about. I hope that the Opposition will agree that this amendment is welcome and strengthens the protection that the Bill offers.

Mr. Doug Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): The Opposition have reservations about the Bill, but we support the amendment, as was made clear by the noble Lord Williams in another place, and I repeat our support on this occasion.

I commend the National Licensed Victuallers Association, which has been extremely diligent and meticulous both in this matter and in assisting politicians throughout the passage of the Bill. It was due only to that diligence that we were able to modify the wording on this subject so that the Bill could achieve the common ends agreed between the Government and the Opposition.

The amendment provides further minor protection for a tenant. However, I regret that the Government, during the preparation of the amendment in another place, were unable to incorporate a commitment given in both Houses on compensation, which is also relevant when a tenant may be forced out of a tenancy. I refer the House to the original commitment given by the Minister in response to a probing speech from a Conservative Back Bencher when the matter was considered in Committee. The Minister said:

"I shall re-read what has been said by hon. Members on compensation and give it further thought".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G*, 25 January 1990; c. 71.]

I am pleased to be able to acknowledge that further thought was given to the matter by the Government, and when it was considered in another place the noble Lord Trefgarne gave a further commitment when he said:

"I can announce that after further consideration the Government intend to bring forward an amendment which will recognise that special arrangements for compensation should apply during the period of adjustment to a more open market. The amendment will provide that for a transitional period additional and separate compensation will be payable to tenants of un-licensed premises to which the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 Part II will apply because of the Bill, and where the landlord wishes to use them as on-licensed premises himself."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 March 1990; Vol. 517, c. 413.]

That commitment was welcomed by all those participating in the debate in another place. It was with some amazement that the Labour party spokesman on trade and industry in another place reported to me that, following discussions which had taken place with the noble Lord Trefgarne, it was found impossible to amend the Bill in a way that would accomplish what had been agreed.

In another debate in another place on the same issue on Report on 17 July this year, the report was accepted only with the proviso that there was regret that it had not included mention of compensation although the Government entered into a commitment in Committee in the House, which had been reinforced by a further commitment given on two occasions in another place.

I wish that the Government had given more careful scrutiny to the Bill when they were preparing the title and drew up the clauses. A crucial part of the Bill was found not to be in order by the House of Lords. It means that the protection that Members on both sides of the House want is not in the Bill.

The Landlord and Tenant (Licensed Premises) (No. 2) Bill is in another place, and it covers this ground. It has been supported by the spokesman of the Labour party and the Government in another place. I understand that procedurally it will not be possible for that Bill to come before the House, which would enable it to have an opportunity to become law during this Session.

While agreeing to support the amendment, I ask the Minister how he intends to proceed with the question of compensation, which the industry agrees is desirable and which the House has acknowledged all hon. Members would like to achieve.

There was virtual unanimity among all those who took part in the debate in another place. Although there are timetabling problems, the issue will not go away. The Minister ought to tell the House how the Government propose to honour their commitment. Are they prepared to consider introducing a short Bill next Session on lines similar to those in the No. 2 Bill that was introduced in another place? Alternatively, would it be possible for the Government to table an amendment for inclusion in other miscellaneous legislation to cover the important question of compensation?

Mr. Stan Crowther (Rotherham): As my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Henderson) pointed out, the Opposition accept the amendment. It is needed to close a small loophole in the Bill. I am the parliamentary adviser to the National Licensed Victuallers Association which drew the Government's attention to a loophole that they had

overlooked. I, too, praise the NLVA for spotting this error in the original drafting of the Bill. I am pleased that the Government have acted upon the association's advice.

However, it is tragic that this is the only amendment to come to us from another place. Important though it is, the amendment does not implement the solemn undertaking that was given by Lord Trefgarne on behalf of the Government on Second Reading in another place. He said that the Bill would be amended to provide better compensation for tenant licensees whose houses are taken back by the brewers for management in the transitional period before the full protection of the Bill becomes available to them. Many tenants are already affected, partly because of the Government's other legislation on the matter, which has resulted in many of the large brewery companies taking back houses for management in order to reduce the number of tenanted properties. Many licensees will, I fear, be denied the protection that Lord Trefgarne tried to promise them.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): The hon. Gentleman rightly points out that the beer orders that the Government pushed through the House will result in a significant number of tenanted houses being taken back for management or being put on the open market. Why did not the hon. Gentleman at that time join me in the Lobby to oppose those two orders?

Mr. Crowther: I shall not attempt to answer that question. If I did, we should be straying a long way from the business before the House. It would not be sensible to reopen a debate that has long since gone. I am concerned with the position as it is now and as it will be in the near future.

I hope that the Minister will respond favourably to the point put to him a few minutes ago by my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North. Licensees were given to believe that an amendment would be tabled on the lines to which I have referred, but it has not arrived. Lord Trefgarne gave that undertaking in the other place on Second Reading. I do not blame him for the fact that he was unable to table the amendment that he had promised. It appears that the Government's advisers on procedure, whoever they may be, had failed to detect that the Clerks in the other place would rule that such an amendment would be out of order.

Lord Trefgarne was therefore placed in the embarrassing position of having to tell their Lordships that he could not implement the promise that he had made. In Committee, however, on 23 April, he said:

"I undertake to consider very carefully what has been said during the debate and to do my best to resolve the matter between now and the next stage."—[*Official Report, House of Lords;* 23 April 1990, Vol. 518, c. 354.]

Exactly three months later, at Third Reading on 23 July, he had still failed to resolve it, although other suggestions had been put to him—for example, a short No. 2 Bill to take care of the matter. Why Lord Trefgarne did not do that no one seems to know.

Lord Williams of Elvel showed the way that it could be done by introducing his own Bill which would have implemented the Government's promise, if only the House of Lords had had time to do so. If that Bill had been introduced by the Government in April when Lord Trefgarne found that he was unable to amend the first Bill, everything would have been taken care of and the protection that had been offered to tenant licensees would be about to be implemented. It is tragic that that has not happened.

The amendment is important. It improves the Bill. However, it remains a modest little measure which falls a long way short of the high hopes that were raised at the time of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's original recommendations, which would have improved the protection given to tenants.

I do not intend to comment on the other matters in the MMC's report. They are not before the House. I am concerned only with the MMC's recommendations for the protection of tenants. They have not been implemented in full, although Lord Young said originally that he intended to implement them in full. It is a tragedy that that has not happened. Consequently, we end up with half a loaf which is, no doubt, better than no bread at all. I hope, however, for better things in the next Session. I suppose that we have to be thankful for small mercies, but time will tell just how small this one is.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I had not intended to speak in the debate until, when I was sitting in the Tea Room, I saw the Bill's title on the Annunciator. It struck me that the Bill was relevant to a case in the county of Cumbria which I decided to bring to the attention of Parliament at some stage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman recognises that we are debating not the Landlord and Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill but a specific and particular Lords amendment thereto.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It is precisely that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It relates to the position of a particular licensed tenant and the lack of protection for his interests during an argument that he had with the brewery. I understood that when the Bill was discussed in the other place it would lead to an amendment that would safeguard his position.

There is a pub in the county of Cumbria which some eight years ago was turning over approximately £35 a week —a very small sum indeed. A well-known brewery in the north of England owned the pub. It removed the tenant and a new tenant was brought in who increased the turnover of that pub from that small sum to more than £300,000 a year. The brewery developed the business, the barrelage and a food business to go with the sale of drink.

The pub has become well known in Cumbria. Some months ago the brewery informed its tenant that it wished to take the property for itself and, in effect, to evict him. That is what it means in practice. The brewery informed the tenant that it intended to install one of its own managers. It wanted to do that because it was rationalising its estate. That company, which is a reputable local company, wishes to secure the highest possible return for its shareholders and for its internal investment in its brewery operations. Therefore, it felt that it needed a turnover injection of that scale to help to improve its profitability.

The tenant felt most aggrieved and looked to Parliament and the law for a means by which he could be properly compensated—that is what we are considering in the amendment—either by the state, which was not really his priority, or by the brewery. Having taken legal advice, he discovered that he had no rights in law. The only thing

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

that supported his position was a code of conduct that had been drawn up by the breweries and with which they are expected to comply.

5 pm

The result was that an argument broke out about the compensation that should be paid to that tenant, who was about to be evicted. I am unaware of the final settlement, but I know that it runs into very few thousands of pounds. We must take into account that, over a period of seven years, that man and his wife had built up the business until it had a turnover of £300,000. One would expect them to receive compensation in excess of £100,000 to enable them to purchase another public house.

I expect that, in future, the Bill will protect people in that position and enable them, if a brewery must take a commercial decision based on the need to rationalise, to acquire another public house so that they can rebuild their business. I do not see how, in natural justice, a principle can be reasoned or defended by which a man's livelihood can, in effect, be terminated because a brewery wishes to rationalise.

If the Minister checks his facts, he will find that that matter has been referred to by a Member of Parliament for Cumbria, but I do not intend to identify the pub or constituency. The Minister should reply directly to the point that I have made. No doubt that publican will see the Minister's reply reported in the newspaper, and in so far as it directly relates to the substance of the amendment, and indeed the substance of the Bill, perhaps the Minister will take the opportunity of replying.

Mr. Redwood: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, North (Mr. Henderson) for offering the Opposition's support for the amendment. We all agree that it is a welcome improvement in the protection afforded to tenants under this legislation.

I express gratitude to the hon. Member for Rotherham (Mr. Crowther) and echo his words, because the National Licensed Victuallers Association has been helpful to me and to other hon. Members during the passage of the Bill. It found something that needed improving and the Government responded. I hope that the hon. Gentleman agrees that the dialogue between us was useful.

I said in Committee that we would carefully consider compensation to see whether there are ways of improving it further. I gave a cautious pledge to improve it further because I well knew that there were many technical and other problems barring the way to achieving a better compensation regime to which I needed to give further thought. My noble Friend in the other place thought that those obstacles had been cleared and that he could see a way of drafting something that would meet the requirement. He offered that in good faith, and he and the Government are sorry that it was not in order in the other place. This House understands the rules of procedure, which are not a matter for the Government. Like the Opposition, the Government should live within the rules of order and accept all the judgments of the proper authorities. Unfortunately, this matter was not in order and so we were not able to make progress in the way that my noble Friend had thought possible when he made his pledge. He apologised for that in the other place, and I echo his apologies on behalf of the Government. We are sorry that it was not possible, but that is how the procedure had to work, given the nature of the short title of the Bill.

The Bill already contains compensation provisions which are important to the industry. The Government believe that it is important that the Bill should go through in a timely way to make that protection available.

Mr. Crowther: We all accept that Lord Trefgarne gave in good faith an undertaking which he was unable to implement. I do not understand—and I should like the Minister to try to explain this—why the Government did not adopt one of the other options open to them of introducing a short Bill on the lines of the Bill introduced much later by my noble Friend Lord Williams of Elvel. If they had done so, there would have been ample parliamentary time for it to go through both Houses and to meet, in a different way, the undertaking given by Lord Trefgarne.

Mr. Redwood: Lord Trefgarne gave his undertaking on the basis that he would be able to amend this Bill, which would have been the shortest and simplest way of proceeding had it been in order. When the Government considered the other possibility we realised that new legislation would have required substantial allocations of new parliamentary time and we did not feel that that would be possible within the limited time available. We felt that it was important not to jeopardise the substantial protection that the legislation offers.

Mr. Henderson: Will the Minister confirm that the Opposition offered a clear run through the other place and through this House if the Government were prepared to introduce a short Bill?

Mr. Redwood: The Opposition said that they would help, but such a Bill must go through all due procedures and at each stage there would need to be scrutiny of the drafting. No one can foresee whether legislation will cause problems or not.

As to the No. 2 Bill, although the Government stated that they would welcome a further strengthening of the compensation provisions, we indicated that goodwill was not the right way to achieve that. There are all sorts of problems with defining and calculating goodwill in businesses, and the reasons behind those complexities led to the dropping of the goodwill basis for compensation in the 1954 legislation, as reaffirmed by the 1969 legislation. That is the problem that the Government have had with the method chosen for the No. 2 Bill. That Bill, because of its drafting, offers protection to few people and that, too, is a technical problem.

I accept what the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) said about his constituency case. It does not sound like a terribly nice situation for him or the licensee, but the purpose of the Bill is to improve tenants' protection and to offer compensation to those eligible under the Bill. We believe that that is a substantial move in the right direction, and it is all that we can do within the time available to the House. I urge the House to accept the amendment and, on the wider issue, to accept the Bill as a welcome step in the right direction.

Question put and agreed to.

European Company Statute

5.8 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8404/89 on the proposal for a European Company Statute; and supports the Government's intention to seek to ensure that if there is to be a European Company Statute, it should contain a minimum of regulation consistent with the aim of providing adequate protection for those who may be involved with a company formed under the statute.

An extensive inquiry has been conducted in the other place into the draft regulation and the draft directive for a European company statute. It has produced a good report, which I hope hon. Members who are interested in the subject have had a chance to read.

The report makes it clear that in their Lordships' view a fundamental revision of the proposal will be required before it produces something worth while. The Lords also support the Government's view that the voting base chosen by the Commission in its draft proposal is not the correct one, and I shall expand on the reasons for that.

The United Kingdom Government are negotiating—and will continue to negotiate—in good faith on the general issue of whether it is possible to find a form of European company which would transcend national laws in some respects and which might be useful for businesses thinking of operating across the borders of the 12 European Community member states.

There are several problems with the present proposal and they may well account for the fact that the negotiations with our partners have taken so long. The first proposal was introduced as long ago as 1970. There was another proposal in 1975 and there has been extensive reworking and discussion since then. The Commission's original drafts have been replaced with the present proposal, which is more modest in scope and extent. Even though the proposals have been changed in many respects and even though their authors have tried to make them less ambitious—and thus find more agreement among the member states—we have found considerable difficulties standing in our way at each stage in our attempts to reach agreement on them.

The Government do not believe that the adoption of the proposal is now imminent. We have brought it before the House on a take-note motion so that we can have a good debate because we believe that negotiations will get under way again and that they may pick up speed. As the Minister likely to handle the negotiations, it is most important to me to have in my mind the views of hon. Members on both sides of the House and to have the Government's attitude to the proposal tested in the House.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Most of the House is not here.

Mr. Redwood: My hon. and learned Friend says that most of the House is not here. In a democracy, one can only offer people an opportunity. One cannot force them to debate something, although I hope that others will join us so that we may be made aware of their views as the debate progresses.

The Government went out to consultation with a substantial number of those who are not fortunate enough to be Members of Parliament but who are in business and can therefore give us good counsel on this matter. Of the 41 bodies that responded to the consultation document—not itself a high figure—only three favoured the proposal with the attached worker participation directive as it stands. The overwhelming majority felt that the proposal was flawed both as a prospective piece of company law and particularly with respect to its employee participation provisions, which are not in sympathy with the style of employee involvement and the voluntary system that we have traditionally favoured in this country.

The employee participation provisions are one of the most important matters that we shall be debating today. The British system is based on voluntary agreement within companies. Many styles have been evolved and those adopted by some companies have provided much better results than have the statutory or mandatory system adopted by some of our continental fellow members. Some of the best examples are set out in the Department of Employment booklet "People and Companies", which refers to the United Kingdom's achievements in this respect, based on the voluntary principle.

In the negotiations, the United Kingdom Government will continue to press for that essential principle of voluntarism in all our work on employee participation. We do not believe that the Commission and the European Community should attempt to prescribe and enforce a style or styles of employee participation. We are reluctant to have potentially divisive issues dragged up under Commission proposals, especially now that we have a much better record on strikes and labour relations following legislation that the House has passed and following highly successful experiments with voluntary systems of participation chosen by companies in consultation with those whom they affect.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): My hon. Friend will recall our debate on non-executive directors. It was argued on that occasion that such a system might detract in some way from the unitary board principle and structure, which places equal responsibility in the members of a board. I suspect that the same concern and principle may be at stake in our reaction to the present proposal. Is there perhaps a middle way? There are, after all, a number of proposed models for employee participation. Could not we adopt and embrace the principle—and perhaps enshrine it, to a limited extent, in our company statute in an attempt to comply a little more with the spirit of the proposals—while ensuring that we do not destroy the unitary board structure, which is a matter of heritage and which has worked successfully in Britain?

Mr. Redwood: My hon. Friend is right that there are already several options on offer and that not all of them make a frontal assault on the unitary board principle. We are worried not so much about the principle of the unitary, as opposed to the two-tier board, but about the principle of whether a particular form of participation should be mandatory or voluntary. As soon as a system is made mandatory, it has to be defined in legislation and enforceable in the courts. The statutory imposition of a particular style of consultation or participation may force companies to create the necessary structures but it cannot force them to enter into the spirit of the thing.

To work a system, we need agreement. We need a system that works harmoniously because people want it to succeed. Our worry is that if we accept a mandatory

[Mr. Redwood]

system, we shall lose that agreement and we shall not gain what the authors of the proposal want, which is improved participation in companies.

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): Will the Minister explain his objection to the second model, under whose terms

"an employee representative body could be set up which would have rights to specific information, to require reports from the board and to be consulted before certain decisions . . . implemented."

Surely that would make for the better running of the company and would not interfere with the role of the board as the controller of the company.

Mr. Redwood: I have already explained my objection to the principle of making such participation mandatory. The British Government welcome various styles of participation in companies but we believe that companies are in the best position to judge what makes sense for them. If we impose arrangements on them from above, we may succeed in achieving the form of participation specified —by force of law—but we shall not necessarily engender the spirit of participation that we seek to achieve. A similar argument applies in respect of non-executive directors—the question to which my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) referred. The Government welcome the strengthening of boards with non-executive directors and the work of audit committees and so on. We have not thought it right, however, to make provisions mandatory, because that would not necessarily guarantee the appointment of independent men and women of repute who would make the kind of contribution that I am sure my hon. Friends could make, were they offered such important work.

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): I am listening carefully to the Minister's explanation of what he is for and what he is against. He says that he does not want mandatory provisions because he does not believe that that would encourage the spirit of participation and co-operation that he seeks. The Minister is very proud of the self-regulatory system in the City, where we have a statutory framework and, within that framework, self-regulation, choice, variation and participation in many different forms. Such a structure would be in accordance with the directive and, judging by what the Minister has said, he would be happy to adopt it.

Mr. Redwood: There is a difference between imposing a regulatory system for the protection of investors—where, in extreme cases, one is worried about fraud and malpractice—and encouraging companies to adopt best practice in employee relations. The two are rather different matters and I do not accept the hon. Lady's analogy.

Mr. Lawrence: There is another important difference. In the case of the City, the British legal system, the British Government and the British Parliament have control. With a European statute operated from Brussels, we shall have minimal control.

Mr. Redwood: My hon. and learned Friend makes a powerful point, which leads me to another question that is central to the debate. The proposal before us is not a proposal for a single European company—far from it. We have before us a proposal for 12 different types of company. If the regulation and directive were passed unamended, a different type of European company would be formed in each member state, for the simple reason that there is not a big enough corpus of European law, compiled at EC level, for each of the companies to satisfy the legal requirements without reference to national law in the member states. In a few modest respects, a European company in Spain would be similar to a European company formed in the United Kingdom. However, in most other respects, the European company in Spain would be answerable under Spanish law and the European company set up in the United Kingdom would be answerable under United Kingdom law. It is not foreseeable for some time to come that we will have a sufficient body of European law to resolve that problem. In the foreseeable future there will always need to be recourse to national law to cover most of the issues that arise in any companies formed under a statute of this nature.

As it stands at the moment, we are worried that far from this proposal being a simplification for businesses trying to conduct business across frontiers among the 12 member states, it could become another major complication. Were some companies to decide to form a European company in one or more member states under such a proposal, there would be more legal complexities for their counterparties than if they had simply set up a company under a given national law and had taken advantage of the opportunities for open trading, passports in financial services and so forth which would enable them to trade across frontiers without needing to set up the separate form of incorporation suggested by this European company statute.

That point was borne out in our consultation. The companies that we asked told us that they did not see any great interest in forming such a company. They believe that their cross-border business can already be conducted taking advantage of the general corpus of international law and the national laws of individual countries. They can already form companies where they wish and can optimise their business arrangements by choosing the country for that company's formation which they think is most effective for their business purposes.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The Minister said that he has not had a great response about this. Was there any response from some of the big American companies which carry out a great deal of business in several countries in Europe? I am thinking in particular of Hewlett-Packard which has a big factory in south Queensferry and has expressed concern about certain aspects of this very important matter. Has the Minister heard of any particular concerns expressed by American-based companies?

Mr. Redwood: I have not read of any complaints of that kind and I cannot remember any crossing my desk. However, I cannot speak for the whole Department. The overall impression in the consultation replies that I have seen is as I have described it; there is very little demand for such a company and I have been aware of no difference of concern in terms of the nationality of those who responded. Of course we are most likely to have United Kingdom-based companies responding to our consultation documents, but, as the hon. Member for Linlithgow

(Mr. Dalyell) has said, the responses may also come from large American companies that have large United Kingdom interests and subsidiaries.

The European company statute includes a tax proposal and we believe that it is wrong to use company law proposals to try to introduce certain tax advantages for a European company by the back door when such matters should be discussed more generally under the proper unanimity provisions concerning taxation, and a sensible tax regime—if one is needed—should be achieved by agreement across the member states with regard to the measures that may be necessary to improve the company tax regime across border trading. A few welcome improvements in that regard have been made, but we do not believe that we need tax harmonisation or common rates across the Community to have a free and open market. It is more important that we all play by the same rules in any given market place within the member states. Other barriers got in the way in the past and those are being removed by the single market campaign.

The British Government have difficulties with the legal base proposed by the Commission. The mixture of article 100A and article 54 is quite incorrect. For example, the Commission seems to imply that this is a harmonising measure to further the single market. It is not. It attempts to set up a new entity outside the existing member states' national law and it should be treated differently.

Because the measures before us include both tax and employee participation provisions, we also believe that unanimity is a more appropriate way of proceeding than qualified majority voting. Therefore, the British Government would like to see the correct legal base which we believe must require unanimity and that is the legal base of article 235 or other measures rather than that for specific single market measures for which we have agreed to qualified majority voting to expedite their progress.

Other hon. Members wish to participate in the debate and I shall be brief. In summary, the British Government will continue to negotiate with our partners to discover whether a suitable vehicle can be found to meet the Commission's ambitions. We do not believe that this vehicle is currently in anything like the right shape. We believe that there should be changes with regard to the voting base, the introduction of taxation provisions and the form of employee participation included in the draft. There should also be some resolution of the difficulties inherent in creating 12 entirely different types of company which might well complicate and make business life more difficult in the Community instead of simplifying it. If hon. Members can propose a better way forward, the Government would be grateful to hear from them.

5.25 pm

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): As I rose to speak, I wondered whether the Minister would consider a better way forward in other policy areas. If he is looking for advice in that regard, I am sure that we can help him out in other areas. It was also interesting that the Minister thought it necessary to state that the Government were negotiating in good faith on this European company statute. He seemed to imply that some people might doubt whether the Government negotiated in good faith in Europe and that we would think that the Government would do otherwise with regard to directives and regulations. However, we shall take the Minister's comments at face value.

We understand some of the difficulties that the Minister faces with the negotiations. We agree in principle with the European company statute. The directive and the regulation are important to the future of Europe. However, we take into account some of the worries and doubts that have been expressed about how the negotiations are taking place.

The negotiations have continued for a long time and, in an attempt to reach agreement, more and more host nation or country rules are coming into play. The Minister made the point that nation state rules are coming into play and that we shall have 12 different pieces of legislation or different forms of European companies and will end up with a statute that is not worth having. Therefore, the provision's final downfall is built into the way in which the Minister and others have approached it. That is unfortunate.

We are particularly worried about some of the host nation and national laws that will come into play because of varying standards between different European countries whether they be in relation to auditing, accounting or bankruptcy. I will leave the latter subject to the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley), but those areas may cause us difficulty in future.

The Minister was slightly disingenuous when he talked about his concerns. From previous debates on this and other topics I guess that the Government are primarily opposed to the statute because of the element of worker participation. We have been told that there should be unanimity of voting on the issue and not a simple majority. We know that the Government are not happy with the worker participation element of this statute and it is clear that they will choose whatever channel possible to broaden the debate to make it look as if they are interested in other factors. The Government do not want workers in this country who work in a European-based company to have a basic right. We are not asking for something under the social charter which does not or would not exist in any other European country. We are asking for workers in a particular company to be informed and consulted about decisions. Our European colleagues do not find that a particularly demanding part of the statute. Only this Government find it so objectionable.

It would be useful if the Minister could clarify a point which occurs on page 5 about the proposals for a European company statute, tabled by the Department of Trade and Industry. The Minister that the Government are opposed to worker participation in the three forms that are being recommended in the company statute and that it is mandatory that one of the three forms will have to be taken. Page 5 of the Department of Trade and Industry's document on worker participation states:

"If no agreement"—

that is, no agreement on any of the three models—

"could be reached, or where the parties to the negotiations so decided, a national model would apply. This would have to provide for at lest the same information and consultation as would be required if a model were agreed by collective bargaining."

That document is saying that, if a company based in the United Kingdom has basic levels of information and consultation that most people would accept as reasonable, common sense and rational, the three mandatory models do not have to be adopted. It is not as though we are being

[Ms. Marjorie Mowlam]

forced to have the German or French models of worker participation; all we are being asked is to have basic levels of informnation and consultation with the work force.

I do not wish to broaden the debate outside the auspices of the statute, but, when the Government call for wage restraint and are not prepared to talk to people and ask managers and others to have wage restraint, people will not respond. That may be a lesson for the Government to learn. The statute will help them to learn that, in relation to European companies, if we have a level of information and consultation, the problems that the Minister mentioned about the mandatory enforcement of one of three models would not exist. I should appreciate it if the Minister would clarify that point.

Mr. Redwood: There would still be mandatory enforcement of the standards of minimum levels which would have to be prescribed in statute and would mean that the law got involved in matters that we have left to individuals to decide. The Government are against that.

I should be grateful if, in turn, the hon. Lady would clarify a point. She says that she welcomes the European company statute and thinks that trying to get agreement by putting more and more national law into the solution is unhelpful because it destroys the principle. Is she saying that the Labour party would like to see a comprehensive company and insolvency law at European level, and, if so, how long does she think it might take to get it?

Ms. Mowlam: I shall respond with pleasure to the Minister's second point. As I pointed out, the difficulty is that we are now faced with host or national law regulation because we have been unable to get agreement on the European company statute. That position would not have been reached if the Government had been negotiating with a little more willingness. We ask why our colleagues in Europe have doubts about the Government. To answer the Minister's point head on, the reason why the Government went into the ERM was to gain political ground from the Labour party after our good conference. Also, they had no hope of going to the intergovernmental conference in November and convincing anybody that they could negotiate for the hard ecu when no one believes that they are committed to Europe in the first place.

On the Minister's point about national law, company insolvency and the length of time, the rest of Europe is quite clear on Labour's position. Labour Members have stated their position. The Conservative party is so badly divided that one of the difficulties that Europeans have when they sit around the table is that they do not know what position will be adopted, whether the Government will be able to deliver it, whether there is a commitment to the principle, or whether there is just a paper-thin view that could collapse halfway through the negotiations.

The Minister says that information and consultation would have to be mandatory. I do not see what difficulty the Government should have in setting a basic level, as we want to do with the minimum wage, of information and consultation. Working people in this country should not be denied the legally enforceable right to participation in the form of consultation and information. Clearly, the detail of that should be left to specific situations. We do not disagree with that. Individual companies will want to do things differently, but it should be essential and correct to have a legally enforceable right.

Mr. Redwood: Is the hon. Lady saying that the Labour party's official policy is that all United Kingdom company law should be replaced by a law harmonised with our partners who have rather different company law systems?

Ms. Mowlam: No. If negotiations had taken place differently—I gave an example of negotiations in other matters in which the Government are having difficulty—we would not be in this position years down the road and unable to get agreement because the Government are dragging their feet. Europe is left with no other option, as it has been with so many other directives and regulations, but to go to the lowest common denominator—in this case, national laws. As a result the ludicrousness of that option becomes clear. We do not have one set of regulations for European company statutes; we have 12, and we may have more in future. Again in answer to the Minister's point, it is a matter of negotiation and discussion. We would not have been in this position because we would not have had——

Mr. Redwood: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Mowlam: I have answered the Minister twice. I will not do his job any further. He has asked for advice on two pieces of legislation, and he has asked us for advice on where he goes forward because he has no ideas. I shall make progress because other hon. Members wish to participate.

The right to consultation and information to which workers in this country should be entitled should be a legal base. The difficulty is that the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Chartered Accountants seemingly object—in particular the CBI—for the same reasons that the Minister gave. The CBI's press release on this matter states that these proposals would be more a back-door attempt to introduce legislation on mandatory worker participation. Clearly the objection is of the same nature, but the point that we made this afternoon in line with Labour party policy would begin to answer it. Our position is very clear.

The Minister argued for unanimity and said that majority voting is the basis for this legislation. It would be interesting to see, if the legislation on worker participation was not perceived by the European commissioners as an essential part and that the two aspects had to travel in unison, whether the same objections on voting rights would still hold. Opposition Members doubt whether they would. We agree in principle——

Mr. Tim Smith: (Beaconsfield): Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Mowlam: The hon. Gentleman has plenty of time in which to participate. I shall conclude my remarks. I shall come back later if the hon. Gentleman wants any particular points answered. *[Interruption.]* I have said that the hon. Gentleman can participate later in the debate.

If the Government's position on Europe had been clearer and the present confusion did not exist, their negotiating position would have been made much clearer and we would not face such difficulties with the statute.

5.37 pm

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): I regret the Government's attitude to workers. I do not think that that should be the real thrust against the proposal. I have participated in such debates in Strasbourg, and my views are well known. I should not like the people of Europe to think that the British working classes would not be in the same position as they would be in regard to their legitimate rights. After all, no United Kingdom person should be ashamed of the history of workers in this country and the fight that they put up for basic rights. It was a fight for basic liberties, and all parties agree that those liberties are inalienable rights. I regret that the Minister denied that by placing such great emphasis on his vigorous objection to worker participation. Those are not the grounds on which we should object to the proposal, because we should be concentrating on far more serious matters.

Both the Conservative and the Labour parties are in considerable difficulties over this matter. There was a time when the Labour party was very much opposed to Europe. When I was first elected a Member of the European Parliament, many Labour Members took the same view as I, whereas many Tory Members were more pro-European than the Tory party itself. I am glad that Tory Members now recognise Europe's threat to our sovereignty. We should consider that important matter, because the long arm of Europe could reach into our country and be effective in overruling the democracy of the House of Commons that has been won for the British people.

I am glad that the Government are not happy about the proposal, but regret that they are objecting to a matter on which we should be united. The best way forward for the British people is to show Europe—as we have shown Europe in the past—that, notwithstanding the European structures and Mr. Delors' mad schemes, we can give leadership, have unity in industry, and move forward in the way in which we should move forward. I nearly said "Ulster people" instead of "British people" because I am so used to addressing my own Province, as hon. Members well understand.

I therefore trust that the debate will not follow the line that has been taken up to now. I have no difficulty with the second model, under which

"an employee representative body could be set up which would have rights to specific information, to require reports from the board and to be consulted before certain decisions are implemented."

As that is what is happening in some companies today, we should not be seen in Europe to be resisting it. I should like to think that the United Kingdom's European opponents on this matter would recognise that far more important matters are at stake, some of which have already been mentioned.

Obviously, there are difficulties in terms of the laws of the 12 countries, many of which differ greatly. I cannot see how one European Act could straddle all the 12 countries. The hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) did not really tell the House how she proposes that that could be done. I think that she was in a little difficulty—in fact, a colossal difficulty. Far be it from me to diminish her wisdom in any way, but wiser minds than hers cannot find the answer to that question. It is right for the Government to ask, "How are you going to do it?" because I do not think that it can be done.

We need to look carefully at what is being proposed. We should not allow Europe, via this directive, to get its hands on our tax system. The directive should not be the back door through which Europe can proceed to tax harmonisation. I think that this is one of the back doors that Delors wants to use for his own ends.

The House would do well to take the stance that it does not accept what has been proposed. We should say that we are opposed to it. I should not like anybody to think that the United Kingdom's opposition to this matter is on the ground of worker participation. That would be a bad message to come from the British House of Commons. It would look as though many of us were not prepared to ensure that the working class in our country has its full rights. Even we in this country have more rights than the people of some other European countries. Those rights have been hard fought for and achieved after immense struggles. They came before many of the rights accorded to workers in the rest of Europe.

Finally, there is something wrong with the way in which this material is presented. My copy of the report was a completely unreadable photostat. That is what is being presented to hon. Members, yet we are supposed to take an interest in it and to try to read it. I had to get the original because I was told that all the copies were the same. If I were suspicious, I would say that there was a dark conspiracy down in the bowels of the House and that a person in the pay of Mr. Delors was inking the copies as thoroughly as he could so that hon. Members could not read them. I notice that one of the Whips is a former Member of the famous Strasbourg Assembly. I hope that he will be an anti-Guy Fawkes investigator and will discover why hon. Members cannot be given decent copies before debating these important matters. Hon. Members are blamed for not reading things, but how can we read unreadable material and pass our comments on it?

5.46 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I, too, was a Member of what the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) referred to as "the famous Strasbourg Assembly". I was also a member of the budget committee and the budget sub-committee of that famous Assembly, which were supposedly the equivalents of the Public Accounts Committee, and which looked into fraud and malpractice. In general, over those years, it was my considered opinion, when serving on those Committees under the chairmanship of Heinrich Aigner from Bavaria and his expert officials, that there was comparatively little fraud and malpractice in relation to the European funds. The hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) might agree that blanket criticisms of the Brussels bureaucracy are often ill-founded and ill-directed. In my experience, the European funds were used pretty honestly and the budget sub-committee found that, generally, there was little fraud and malpractice.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): In the hon. Gentleman's day, the European Parliament was not using its powers as strongly as it might. Budgetary control, for example, has been greatly tightened. However, the fact still remains that inspection is weak. Many things have happened to give the Community a bad name. If we had an international inspectorate, things would be much better because we obey the law. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman remembers serving on committees in which the French and the Italians took the view that it did not matter which regulations were being considered because they had

[Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman]

no intention of observing them, whereas the Danes and the British wanted every i dotted and every t crossed because we wanted to observe the regulations. Inspection is the key to ensuring that there is no fraud.

Mr. Dalyell: My party decided—rightly, in my view—that Members of this House should no longer be Members of the Strasbourg Parliament. Therefore, as my experience is out of date and the hon. Lady's experience is far more up to date, I shall certainly not quarrel with her on this matter.

There are two sets of exceptions to article 24 and the other documents. The first relates to European companies' trade with Cambodia. I have been drawn first in Question Time on 31 October. I shall ask the Minister's Department about trade with Cambodia. Under the cloak of privilege—because law suits are flying and this is what House of Commons privilege is for—I shall ask about the Government's view of allegations made in front of millions of people by John Pilger about Anthony de Normann and Christopher MacKenzie Geidt on trading in arms and other materials with the Khmer Rouge and other people in Cambodia. I am entitled to ask that question in this debate because we are talking about fraud and malpractice. It is strictly in order. I am rather careful about these things.

I ask the Government directly to say what is their relationship, if any, with Anthony de Normann and Christopher MacKenzie Geidt and what they know about them. I am careful about bandying names around the Floor of the House of Commons, but those people have been named in front of millions of people. No answer has been forthcoming from Mr. Pilger. I talked to him both before and after the programme and he gave me the impression that it was extremely carefully researched. The programme was on television. Libel lawyers were involved. Therefore, I am entitled to ask the Government on the Floor of the House what they know about the matter.

I am also entitled to ask the Department of Trade and Industry whether it has had any dealings, either in the form of licences or end-user certificates——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman and tried to reconcile his assertion that he is in order with the proposal before the House. The motion appears to be about the Commission's proposal to permit the creation of a legal structure for supranational companies. It is difficult for me to reconcile what the hon. Member says with that.

Mr. Dalyell: We are dealing with supranational companies, because the matter crosses international frontiers. I understand that European firms were involved. The Minister, not I, raised the question of fraud and malpractice. My question has been clearly put and I am sure that the Minister would like to answer.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): We always await with huge enjoyment interventions from the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman does not have the right to speak for the Chair.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: We always await your interventions with huge enjoyment, too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We await with even greater anticipation the hon. Gentleman's interventions. Will he tell us why John Pilger should be looked upon as almost a holy grail of truth? Why is it that what such gentlemen say in all these programmes become facts? Why does the hon. Gentleman suddenly say that all the things that we hear on television are facts? Is not it possible—I know that it sounds entirely unlikely—that even the wonderful things that the television says are true are not always true? Why are this Government, or any Government, always wrong just because John Pilger and his crew say that it is so?

Mr. Dalyell: I am genuinely grateful for that intervention because it allows me to clarify a matter. I do not say that John Pilger is necessarily right. All that I say is that John Pilger has a track record of being sufficiently serious to entitle me to ask in the House of Commons what Her Majesty's Ministers know about the matter.

This is no trivial matter when one sees that sheer horror and destruction in Cambodia on film. It is a land——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The proposal that the House is required to consider is the establishment of a new legal structure. We are not debating whether a particular company or organisation is in breach of exisiting statutes or whether fraud has been committed under existing statutes. That is not a matter for this debate.

Mr. Dalyell: Clearly you want me to leave Cambodia and go on to safer ground. Therefore, I draw the attention of the Government to a report yesterday which said:

"Machinery for Iraqi defence factories was exported by British companies using loans guaranteed by the Government,"

I bring myself into order by quoting the people who have made those allegations. They are the state owned Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, an Italian firm which I shall call BNL for short. The report continues:

"They say that the beneficiaries included Technology and Development group (TDG), a London company controlled by Iraq's Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialisation and the Coventry machine tool company, Matrix Churchill, bought by TDG in 1987.

BNL's Atlanta, Georgia, branch is at the centre of a scandal, over its provision, without authorisation from Milan, of $3 billion of export credits to Iraq. After its takeover by TDG, Matrix Churchill boosted its sales to Baghdad. Customs officers last week detained its managing director, Paul Henderson, for questioning on possible violations of UK controls on exports to Iraq in the Gulf war."——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would explain to me how relevant those matters are to the Commission's proposal to create a new legal structure for supranational companies within the Community.

Mr. Dalyell: It is simply an example of why we need a supranational structure with teeth. By referring to the Italian involvement and the involvement of the United States, I have shown that we are dealing with a supranational structure. As I said, it was the Minister who raised the question of malpractice. The debate is surely about malpractice.

The report continues:

"Although Britain officially banned the sale of lethal items to both sides in the Gulf war, there were no restrictions on the supply of machinery which would allow the Iraqis to manufacture conventional weaponry. And the Government helped Iraq secure the funds to place orders for such sales.

The first British line of credit to Iraq, worth £275 million, was agreed in 1983, and a further £1·1 billion has followed. The credits were arranged by UK banks and guaranteed by the ECGD, the government Export Credits Guarantee Department.

The credit lines were negotiated by the UK-Iraq Joint Commission, headed by the two states' Trade Ministers."

I want to know from the Department of Trade and Industry whether it participated in that, because if it did it has some explanation to give to the House of Commons. The report continues:

"The size of the credit lines, and the goods covered, were decided by officials from the Department of Trade, the ECGD, the Foreign Office and the Treasury.

Both the Foreign Office and the Department of Trade referred all questions to the ECGD, which said that its dealings were confidential. TDG and Matrix Churchill have also declined to comment."

You bet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they have declined to comment.

We are on extremely delicate ground. It is fair to ask on the Floor of the House of Commons whether all that is true. It is reported in reputable newspapers. Members largely depend on such information, but we do not necessarily swallow it hook, line and sinker. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), who has left the Chamber, should note that. We should at least ask whether such information is true. I freely confess that until recently many people did not want to see Iraq defeated, at least not by the ayatollahs and the mullahs, and did not want the Khomeini regime to win outright in the middle east. However, we must be clear about exactly what has happened over the past two years in terms of British law.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That does not fall under the heading of the debate.

Mr. Dalyell: I shall not exasperate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have made the points and other hon. Members wish to speak. I hope that either in the debate or in writing we will get answers to the two questions that I have posed. One is about Anthony de Normann and Christopher MacKenzie Geidt and Astra in relation to Cambodia, and the other is about our exact relations in the export of arms and arms-related goods to the state of Iraq. Both questions are extremely significant and deserve an answer.

6 pm

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) took us away from the rather narrow matters dealt with in the documents, but I am sure that what he has said is relevant. Even if it is not, I am always willing to forgive and show latitude to the hon. Gentleman because I shall never forget that as a result of his heroic actions some years ago we still have a United Kingdom. The hon. Gentleman is a great Member of Parliament.

This is an important debate and I am sure that the House will be grateful to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs for the clear way in which he explained the contents of the statute proposal and the directive on employee participation. Such issues are complex and technical, but constitute laws that have a direct impact on every employee, investor and creditor. In one way or another we shall all be affected by the form of company law which evolves in Europe and in Britain.

I am sure that all hon. Members are concerned about proposals for regulations rather than for directives. As I understand it, regulations apply immediately to all member states which must comply with their terms. However, directives simply mean that each member state has to pass legislation that is in line with them. Therefore, we should always scrutinise with great care any proposal for a regulation. The regulation before us has been debated for some years and there is no timetable for its remaining course. It is a radical proposal and we should be loth to give it the green light.

Many hon. Members will know that I am in the vanguard of those who would like to see greater unity and progress in the European Community. I applaud efforts that have been made on the monetary front and on many political fronts to bring about a single market and greater commonality of law in the Community. That does not mean that every proposal is automatically right. Those who find the idea of European unity abominable should occasionally give credit to some of the Community's achievements for Britain.

The proposal to establish a statute for a new societas Europaea that will be a parallel company structure within the Community seems to be fraught with problems. It seems rather curious that the Treasury is proposing a document for a parallel hard ecu to work alongside national currencies while the Department of Trade and Industry is reluctant to have a parallel hard European company structure alongside national structures. I do not mean to be jocular or difficult when I say that. It is dangerous to have a separate European company structure in any single country. Why do we have company law and set out in statute the subscriptions, the requirements placed on directors, and the nature of limited liability? It is not principally to help shareholders or to protect employees. Perhaps above all it is to protect creditors because the conferment of limited liability is a valuable privilege. It means that shareholders in a limited liability company, whether it is a plc or a societas Europaea, have their risks limited. Before that privilege is granted, it is right that many legislative requirements about disclosure and the discharge of responsibilities to shareholders and others should be made.

Britain has evolved just such a system of protection. Occasionally, it needs to be amended or improved in the face of change and pressures. Our limited liability companies and plcs form a valuable structure giving protection to those who offer credit, give cheques or lend money to such companies. Those people know where they are and can easily assess the risk on which they supply the money. If alongside that limited liability structure we introduce a wholly new structure, the societas Europaea proposal, yet another type of company will be operating in the United Kingdom and in all the other European countries. Will creditors of those companies be able to assume that they have the same protection? Will employees be able to assume that they will have the same rights to information? Will shareholders be sure that their criminal and civil liability is limited in the same way as it is under the existing plc and limited company structure? Those points are not clear. If they are exactly the same in each respect, why does one need to duplicate matters?

Surely one should arrive at one system of protection for all those who are involved in limited liability companies, and should seek to persuade through commonality—which is what I think my hon. Friend the Minister was

[Mr. Anthony Nelson]

driving at—other European countries to adopt the same stringent and responsible standards as us. As soon as we are all on a standard basis and when the law on the protection of creditors is exactly the same in each country, we can call a plc an SE or something else. However, that change must take place through organic commonality rather than through imposed regulation. I see grave risks and great uncertainty and misunderstanding about the imposition of a regulation in this area.

Secondly, I noted with interest what my hon. Friend the Minister said in reply to my intervention about the directive on employee participation. In general, we need not be too afraid to import even into our national company law some greater employee participation rights. The directive contains three options, the first of which assumes a supervisory board structure. I can live quite happily with the second one which could easily be accommodated in a unitary board structure company system. As I understand it, the second option proposes the setting up of a body to represent employee interests and says that they shall have certain rights of information. It does not say that they will have control over decisions made by the board or that they will have to account to other bodies in a particular financial way. It merely says that a body representing the employees in a company shall have certain rights of information.

There may be an argument about the information that should be provided and the basis upon which it should be done, but I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister would be the first to agree that any company worth its salt ought to be doing that sort of thing anyway. Most of the companies that do not are probably exactly the sort of companies for which a directive or law is necessary to make sure that they divulge information to employees. I am a loyal supporter of a party that, more than any other in our post-war history, has encouraged employee participation, promoted worker shareholdings and relished the success of companies such as the National Freight Consortium that have been enormously profitable, built up and expanded on the basis of privatisation and employee shareholdings. This need not be a matter of partisan difference. I am amazed to see the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) shake her head when I suggest that there should be agreement across the Floor of the House about the success of employee participation and of companies such as the NFC, built up on ownership by the people who work in the company.

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): If the Government are so keen on employee participation, why have they blocked all European initiatives on this subject?

Mr. Nelson: I am not aware that they have. As the record shows, the growth of employee participation has been faster in this country than in any other European state over the past 10 years, and that growth has been accompanied by a higher standard of take-home pay, and by an increase in proportion of worker participation in the companies from which they draw the fruits of their labour. That is wholly desirable. That is what the Conservative party believes in. We believe in private ownership and the responsibility attached to that. We view suspiciously the corporatist ethics of either large institutions or of Governments who vest unto themselves more and more power. We believe in plurality. That is what we stand for.

Ms. Quin: Oh!

Mr. Nelson: That is right. That is why we should support this motion. I am sure that the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) would agree that we should not oppose the directive on employee participation.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Perhaps my hon. Friend has spotted that there is a basic difference in the definition of participation in industry as given by the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) and the definition given by my hon. Friend the Minister. According to the Conservative party, participation means that each worker has a share in the company, and therefore a definable vote, and a right to receive financial information. According to the Labour party, participation in industry means that workers, rather than having shares in a company, should have imposed on them a trade union leader—a fat cat—who sits on the board. That gives workers no genuine participation.

Mr. Nelson: I could not have put it more eloquently. My hon. Friend is right. The Opposition believe in social demarcation. They have a vested interest in the continuation of a working class deprived of the fruits of its labour, kept in economic servitude, depressed and not made part of a capitalist sharing system under which, when they give something, they can take back something. They believe in the feudal patronage of company law, and we should have no part in that.

6.12 pm

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): My hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) and I are good Europeans and do not wish to oppose the motion out of a feeling that Europe has no part to play in the future of the United Kingdom. Quite the reverse—I should like to see set up either a European company or, as my hon. Friend said, a societas Europaea. I regret that now is not the time for that, for many good reasons.

I greatly enjoyed the speech made by the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley). It was interesting and we can all learn a great deal from some of the things that he said. His experience in Europe is second to none. I am reminded of the first day I came into the Chamber, some seven years ago, when I sat next to him. I was surprised to see him there and said, somewhat innocently, "I didn't realise that you were on our side." He said, "Never confuse sitting on your side with being on your side." The hon. Gentleman has shown us today that he is more on our side than is sometimes felt to be the case.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is, as has been said, a remarkable parliamentarian. His interesting speech was not so much supranational as supernatural, in that he mentioned items that are not part of this debate. He raised important matters, but the instrument that we are discussing is rather more mundane. Our debate is about whether we feel that it would help progress in Europe if we had companies that could be called European companies—societas Europaea—or continue down our route of separate organisations such as plcs, ltds, ags, sas, and all the other letters and whether we

should have a company which trades as a European company in the new harmonised, free, single market Europe. We have all agreed that that would be desirable.

Mr. Dalyell: The hon. Gentleman has said that the matters about which I asked are important, and I am sure that he means it. Would he like a letter from the Minister answering these questions? I have asked that we have an explanation. As the hon. Gentleman thinks the matter important, he might like such a letter.

Mr. Hanley: The hon. Gentleman said that he has been fortunate enough to have been given the opportunity to ask, at the appointed time, the question that he asked the Minister today. I shall be waiting for the Minister's answer on that occasion, and I shall be looking forward to the answer to the question for which two weeks' notice has been granted. These issues are so important that a Minister who has come briefed for a debate on a European company should not have to think on his feet. Furthermore, the answers to these questions will reverberate for some time to come. I agree that this is an important issue, but I am sure that the hon. Member will not expect the Minister to deal with it now.

When Europe is a single trade entity and we have harmonised our direct and indirect taxes and our laws by the gradual process that has begun, we could have a European company. However, we should not impose a European company at this stage, for a number of cogent reasons. The hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) said that the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, for which I am Parliamentary adviser, is opposed to the draft regulation because it is opposed to worker participation in industry. She mentioned the institute in the same breath as the CBI. I rebut the allegation that the Institute of Chartered Accountants is opposed to the instrument purely for that reason. It is not opposed to discussion of the matter, but it is opposed to worker participation being imposed on us. It would be wrong to create a European company and then to impose on it a range of social and fiscal matters. Such issues must be sorted out first, and the European company created afterwards.

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Ms. Mowlam: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hanley: I am being bombarded in this exciting debate.

Mrs. Mowlam: I do not wish to mislead the House on the position of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. It is true that I mentioned the institute and the CBI in the same breath, but then I referred to the CBI's specific point about worker participation. I did not go further in taking up the response of the institute because its press release is so general. The only phrase that crystallises its position is that

"the Institute suggests that those dealing with the technical aspects of the law governing the European Company are likely to find daunting the possibility of a multiplicity of models from country to country."

The rest of the press release is not especially descriptive. That is why I left the matter as I did.

Mr. Hanley: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her intervention. I accept her good will, which she has made clear in explaining her position.

The institute's submission of February 1990 to the Department of Trade and Industry was its response to the DTI's consultative document of December 1989. The hon. Lady feels that the contents of the submission are not especially snappy, but I can assure the House that the document covers a great deal of ground.

The hon. Lady said that the only reason why the Government are opposed to the proposed legislation is that it includes provisions which bear on participation in industry. I suspect that the hon. Lady supports it because it includes those provisions. The institute has dealt with many other practical matters with which accountants have to deal in their professional work. Accountants are rather like the men who follow elephants around the circus ring: they have to use buckets and spades to clear up the messes caused by corporations, some of which are extremely large. The proposed legislation would introduce more complications and would lead to confusion in the minds of shareholders and creditors.

Since the previous consultation process, many submissions have been made to the Department of Trade and Industry and to the Department of Employment. The House will understand that both Departments share responsibilities for the proposed legislation. It is accepted in most of the submissions that there is some attractiveness in having a European company—a company which gives the impression to those who trade with it that it is a pan-European organisation. A company that chooses to set itself up as a European company must surely have in mind the objectives and ideals of Europe. That would be assumed by those who decided to deal with it. It would be thought that it must have a greater European experience if it chooses to be identified with the Community rather than with a single piece of national corporate law. There is no doubt that it would be an attractive vehicle. It might be thought that people would deal with it because its name and structure would suggest that it had greater experience and knowledge of trading in Europe than other organisations.

The proposed legislation tells us that it would be necessary only to form a group with two companies as part of it, with one in one country and one in another. That hardly means that the group would be pan-European. It means only that two separate companies which are under one holding company happen to choose to use the proposed structure. The group might appear to be European, but it might not necessarily be more European than any existing trading structure.

In its restrictions on the formation of the European company, societas Europaea, the proposed legislation contains a major problem. We are told that the structure which requires that a holding company has to be created will stop individual companies forming as a European company. I am not against companies wanting to be seen to be more European than perhaps they might be now, but I find artificial the strange structure of the holding company and the two subsidiaries. I should rather have a European company which does not necessarily need the particular formation of a holding company and two subsidiaries. I should like to see a European company as a genuine option when company law is far more closely aligned in the member states.

[Mr. Hanley]

The cross-border merger issue is important. One of the stated objectives of the proposal before us is to give companies from different member states the option of combining their potential by means of inter-state mergers. It may be that the European company would be seen as a way to facilitate cross-border mergers. I am doubtful about that, however, and so is the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. The institute has been much involved in the massive programme of mergers between companies and partnerships in the build-up to the single European market, and I doubt whether it has found the absence of a societas Europaea to be a major impediment. In other words, if the proposed legislation is introduced to try to help mergers throughout the European Community, why has there been such successful merger mania over the past 10 years?

Almost every large British company now trades in all of the European countries. These companies do not feel the need to have a societas Europaea. They trade as they have traded in the past but they take advantage of the single European market programme. To be opposed to this proposed legislation does not mean that we are bad Europeans. I remind the House that the United Kingdom is at the top of the list of member states when it comes to adopting the directives for the single European market. We have only nine still to achieve, so we have done far better than any other European country. Italy still has 50 to achieve. That demonstrates that Britain is a good European in terms of trade.

Worker participation has been mentioned by the majority of those who have contributed to the debate. The draft directive that accompanies the proposed legislation provides that there has to be the involvement of employees in the

"supervision and strategic development"

of a European company. We are told that there is a choice of four models for worker participation. The first is the

"election of at least one third and not more than one half of the members of the administrative or supervisory board by employees."

Secondly, there is

"co-option to the boards, with the right of general meetings of shareholders and of employee representatives to object to any particular appointment subject to a procedure for declaring an objection inadmissible."

That is rather complicated.

Thirdly, there is the

"establishment of an employee representative body with rights to information and reports from the board."

As the hon. Member for Antrim, North said, what opposition has anyone to that proposal? I thoroughly agree with him. There is no good company in the United Kingdom that does not take into account fully the rights and futures of its employees. It is a truism that any company that rides roughshod over its employees will not survive in the climate of the United Kingdom in the 1990s. Major companies now give far more information to their employees, including specially created employee accounts. These accounts are not necessarily less sophisticated than others, but they are easily understood. They are designed so that employees will understand important information that is specific to them. I feel that companies care about their employees. Employees have rights as pension earners and as shareholders, and the atmosphere has never been better.

The fourth model in the directive is an

"agreement between the boards of the founder companies and their employees or representatives to a model which would provide the latter with rights to specific information and to be informed and consulted on the matters laid down in the Regulation."

In other words, the two parts of the holding company, the two subsidiaries, would have a special structure that would give rights of access to employees by law.

In a memorandum way back in March 1984, the institute expressed the view that there was no reasonable justification for the imposition on member states of

"complicated and proscriptive provisions to attain an object whose desirability is not generally accepted either by employees or management."

In other words, the principle has not been demanded by employees; it has been demanded by employee representatives and by trade unions, which view it as an additional power. No one had convinced me that the worker participation suggested in the Vredeling proposals, and which is dreamed of by the Opposition, would give more democracy and more information to individual employees —rather, it would give that to employee representatives, and we know what democracy is about at that level.

I do not believe that the movement towards worker participation in industry is greatly enhanced by being enforced by statute. I should prefer that the argument about worker participation be discussed separately and fully and, when it has been resolved, that the European company be imposed on top of that. It would be a disservice to such an important matter if the European corporate structure imposed worker participation in a roughshod manner.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chichester, referred to another matter. He and I served on the Standing Committee of the Companies Bill. We spent many happy moments discussing the subject of non-executive directors. We remembered the excellent work of Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams, a late Member of the House, who every year for 16 years introduced a Bill whose aim was to impose non-executive directors on the boards of major companies. He was a remarkable man and I was honoured to support him on five of those Bills. He was a legend in company law. It was said that many people looked forward to his company law Bill each Session—and in general few would admit to looking forward to company law legislation. Someone once said that company law was to an accountant what haemorrhoids were to a general practitioner; it is a rather unattractive end of the market, but it pays. Brandon was the expert in what, for most people, is an end of the market that they would rather ignore.

I can remember seeing in north Kensington one item of graffiti against Brandon—a large slogan, "Abandon Sir Brandon." I am sure that that most beautifully written graffiti had nothing to do with the Government's opposition to his Bills each year. It is worth remembering that, for the first time, the House passed his Bill—the 16th —and sent it to another place, yet the very day their Lordships rejected it was the day that he died. Happily, he did not know that his Bill was to be rejected. It was a sad end for a gallant man.

Even Brandon would not have accepted that the creation of a European company should be the medium through which non-executive directors could be imposed upon United Kingdom companies. He believed that they should be there as a form of audit committee. Again, the

argument should not be whether this statute should impose important requirements by way of a sideline; it is too important a matter to be imposed through this legislation.

Article 66 provides that the executive members of a one-tier board, if that is the choice of the company, should be fewer in number than the other members of the board. To put it in the terms of the CB, single-tier boards—which must have more non-executive than executive directors, with at least one third of the directors being appointed by employees—would be an alternative model. Those arguments will rage, but for many companies they are a matter of practice. Many large companies have non-executive directors, but no single company is identical to any other single company. The needs of one company are not necessarily the needs of another company. How does the regulation that exactly one third of the board should be non-executive members advance the cause of democracy within a company? Companies should have expertise, and if that must be non-executive, so be it. The board of directors must answer to its shareholders. The non-executive directors that many companies have used successfully for many years must properly earn their keep. To impose non-executive directors through legislation would be a back-door measure.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): I am sure that the House recognises my hon. Friend's great expertise in this subject. Being able to share his views tonight is an educative experience. He is making a powerful case about back-door bureaucracy, which the EEC is trying to impose on nation states. Is he aware of companies such as Airbus Industrie—a supranational organisation that I was fortunate to visit during the recess as a member of the Industry and Parliament Trust? It is based at Toulouse and comprises a French-based company—sadly nationalised—a German company, British Aerospace and a Spanish company. They have come together to make the airbus. That happened before the United Kingdom even joined the European Community, so the concept of a supranational organisation not only works and, for this organisation, is extremely effective, but it does not necessarily have to involve all this European bureaucracy. That is the point that my hon. Friend is impressing on the House.

Mr. Hanley: I recently spoke to some of the directors of the airbus project, and they said that the highlight of recent months was my hon. Friend's visit. He has made a powerful case for the continuation of a structure that has so successfully traded among European countries. However, my hon. Friend might not agree with my view that there is nothing wrong with having a European company, although I hope to show why now is not the time for that.

Let us consider some of the more detailed points, which have nothing to do with worker participation or non-executive directors, but are to do with accounting requirements. The Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales knows them better than most. The accounting requirements by which companies are regulated are among the most important regulations in company law. Successive Companies Acts have tightened those requirements. A judge once said that publicity was the most potent safeguard against fraud. What companies must produce in their accounts reduces the propensity for fraud; it is the accountability aspect of the company.

It is essential that the directors of the company produce and present accounts to the shareholders and that they are registered at Companies house so that everyone can see them. The regulations before us would apply to a European company the requirements of the fourth and seventh directives, which deal with both individual and consolidated accounts. However, they would retain the options within those directives. That is important because the options mean that if one registers a societas Europaea in Great Britain, the company would be required to disclose less information than that upon which we insist in our domestic legislation. In other words, there are so many areas in the accounting requirements of a societas Europaea, as set out in the regulation, that I fear that entrepreneurs will make a list of those items of information that they are required to publish under the societas system and those items that they are required to publish under domestic company law. It would be very wrong if the requirements of the House, as imposed on public limited companies, were circumvented by easier legislation.

Recent legislative requirements, such as the widening of the definition of a subsidiary—aimed at preventing off-balance-sheet financing—could effectively be avoided by means of the vehicle of the societas Europaea. A number of other requirements of United Kingdom company law are not even mentioned in the societas—for instance, analysis of directors' remuneration, and detailed information about transactions involving directors.

The House considers it right for the income of directors to be set out properly in published accounts. The House believes that, if directors have loans or use credit cards on the company, the information should be shown, again in published accounts. The House has agreed to that, and has incorporated it in successive items of legislation. This regulation, however, does not insist on the publication of directors' remuneration or interests, or on the publication of information relating to political and charitable donations. I am sure that the hon. Member for Redcar, who fought so hard for political and charitable contributions to be split in the Companies Act 1989, would hate to think that, under this legislation, political donations would not even be mentioned in the published accounts of the European company.

Ms. Mowlam: I do not wish to hold up the debate, but I must tell the hon. Gentleman that I was not the woman member of that Committee; I know that after a while we all look alike, but it was my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin). Let me add—although I was not there—that, if the hon. Gentleman had looked at the amendments on employee share ownership plans that we tabled to the Companies Bill, he would know that we supported wider share ownership and the disclosure of information.

Mr. Hanley: The hon. Lady protests too much. The clause to which I was referring returned to the Floor of the House on Report, having been defeated in Committee. If she was following her party Whip, I am certain that the hon. Lady would have traipsed through the appropriate Lobby like any other faithful soul. It was, in fact, a Lords

[Mr. Hanley]

amendment that was discussed here. I am sorry if the hon. Lady was not present; I had forgotten that her knowledge of company law was so recent—on her own admission.

We fear that the cumulative effect of the relaxations relating to disclosure might lead a person who was not acting in full good faith to choose a particular vehicle merely because it was easier on him. That goes for taxation as well. Article 133 of the regulation provides that, where a societas Europaea has one or more permanent establishments in a member state or a non-member state and the aggregation of the profits and losses for tax purposes of all such establishments results in a net loss, that loss may be set against the profits of the societas in the state where it is resident for tax purposes. That is fine; the only trouble is that in every member state there are different calculations relating to profit, and to the taxation of that profit.

That means that yet another industry will be created, or rather built on: the industry that produces taxation information for corporate clients. In this instance, the companies will ask their advisers, "Do we want to set up this new body? If we do, we shall receive better tax treatment than we receive if we trade in individual countries." I am convinced that progress towards the harmonisation of income tax, corporation tax and value added tax should come first. Only then should the European company be imposed on a Europe in which fiscal harmonisation is a reality and not merely a pipe dream. If we cannot even achieve fiscal harmonisation in relation to VAT, fiscal harmonisation in relation to corporate and individual taxation is bound to be even harder.

Although the regulation is drafted in very general terms —much more general than the terms to which we are used in this country—numerous aspects would give rise to litigation, because of the current differences between member states. The fact that some national law is applicable and the reliance placed on reference to other directives are, I think, likely to make it difficult for businesses to ascertain the overall nature of the provisions under which the societas Europaea operates. It would not, in fact, be imposing a separate set of company law rules; each company would be obeying its own domestic company rules, and that is likely to lead to confusion. United Kingdom company shareholders are already confused enough by our own company law. What will they say when they are shareholders of a company which may have to answer to the regulations of at least 12 sets of legislation in other countries? According to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales,

"significant differences amongst Member States in those areas of national law that would apply to an SE, and in approaches to enforcement, would frustrate the objectives of the Regulation."

There is little doubt in my mind that the concept of the European company ought to benefit both Europe as a whole and the companies that choose to adopt it. I like to think that a company would decide to form an SE because it was a good European company, because it traded over all the national boundaries, because its staff were well versed in European matters—because it was indeed a genuine European company. I fear that, as the regulation is currently phrased, companies may choose to become European companies merely because of the odd little advantage that they might obtain through the relaxation of one piece of legislation—perhaps on the presentation of accounts—or the gaining of more allowances for taxation purposes, rather than because of the merits of the concept.

It would be most unfortunate if the popularity of this idea stemmed wholly from the desire to operate under a less demanding regime. I must therefore oppose the regulation, albeit with reluctance. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will accept that we are not merely discussing worker participation; that is only a sideline. The most important issues are the fact that accounting regulations differ between member states; the publicity that directors must provide in the publication of accounts; and the need to achieve final harmony before we start talking about a societas Europaea.

6.47 pm

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): I shall be brief. My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) has already made most professionally and eloquently many of the points that I intended to make.

What we really want is deregulation, not more regulation. The annex to the document contains regulation after regulation. Many are worthy and necessary—the disclosure requirements and those relating to annual accounts, for instance—but surely the time has come for Europe to consider deregulation when introducing new directives.

It may seem at first that my two main points bear little relation to each other. I am a member of the British delegation to the Council of Europe, which many of the emerging states of eastern Europe are keen to join. Hungary joined at the last session. Those countries will, of course, want to become members of the EC quite soon. The word "pan-European" has been used. I use it to mean the whole of Europe, from the Urals to Madrid. It would be dangerous if such a regulation became a model for those emerging countries. It must be rejected as being unnecessary.

Firms in my constituency do not want the Commission telling them how they must set up a company before they can trade. They fear that it would not be long before societas Europaea status was a prerequisite of tendering for a contract, which would be ridiculous. Compulsory worker participation is not what this country needs, even if the Commission thinks that it is right in principle. The regulation must be rejected or altered drastically for the sake of those countries that are waiting to join the Community, and for those firms in my constituency that want to trade freely in a deregulated capitalist Europe.

6.50 pm

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): The House has heard a fascinating and wide-ranging speech by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), and I look forward to hearing the Government's answers. I enjoyed also the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson), who has exceptional knowledge of corporate law and of the taxation and financial sectors. I disagree with some of my hon. Friend's concepts, such as European monetary union. He may be right in the direction that he takes, but not in the timing.

My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) made an outstanding contribution, and I will

not waste the time of the House by reiterating my views on taxation and corporate law because they are very similar to those of my hon. Friend.

I must declare at the outset that I have financial interests that could be affected if the regulation were to become law.

I support the proposal in general terms as being part of the synergy of the European Community of 1992. It is designed to help companies governed by the laws of different member states to choose a structure for co-operation and restructuring that is suited to the dimensions of the larger market to be achieved in 1992. It aims at freeing companies from legal and practical constraints arising from the existence of 12 separate legal systems by offering them an optional structure based on Community law, and independent of national laws in so far as they have not been harmonised.

That is great news from an EEC point of view, but the implications of such a proposal are worrying. Imposing by the back door and almost unnoticed practices that are at the heart of fundamental political issues that we in this House have fought over long and hard for decades cannot be right. Worker participation in particular, mentioned in several speeches, is among the most important of those fundamental issues and merits debate and legislation in its own right. It should not be slid through Parliament on the back of something else.

Ms. Mowlam: Does the hon. Gentleman seek specific legislation on worker participation? If the Government consider that so important, why have they blocked the fifth directive—the Vredeling document on consultation? That aspect has been divided into a directive and a regulation to meet the Government's opposition to worker participation over many years. The hon. Gentleman cannot have his cake and eat it.

Mr. Browne: I can only answer for my own view, which is that the regulation does not seem to cover that aspect adequately. My hon. Friend the Minister will explain the Government's viewpoint.

I have no objection to the principle of non-executive directors, but to impose them, and the percentage of a board for which they should account, is wrong. Again, that aspect merits its own debate rather than be included as part of a broader regulation.

Some of the tax reforms envisaged might be advantageous to some EEC countries and could encourage improvements that my right hon. and hon. Friends and even Opposition Members may consider beneficial. Nevertheless, the question remains whether the regulation is the right vehicle for tackling the vastly complex subject of tax reform, which has huge political implications. I think not. It is far too complex a matter to be dealt with in a few paragraphs of a regulation.

The accounting procedures observed in this country are of a very high standard, and they put the markets of the United Kingdom well on a par with the finest in the world. The regulation would weaken that standard.

I welcome the acknowledgement given to smaller businesses by lowering the capital requirement from 250,000 to 100,000 ecu, which shows a move in the right direction within the EEC.

I support the general aim of the proposal, but when one examines it in more detail and discovers the plans for imposing worker participation and non-executive directors rather than offering them as an option, one is bound to conclude that the regulation should not have the support of the House tonight.

I have reservations also about the timing of the introduction of the regulation, which strikes at the heart of several serious issues that are to come before the House in the near future such as the exchange rate mechanism and European monetary union. One may agree with them all in principle, but how and when are they to be introduced? I accept that, after EMU, gold will become a truly international form of currency. It is a well-known numeraire, it is readily tradeable and has a store of value.

Paper money represents an economy. That is important because paper money is politically controlled. I fail to see that we can have a credible single European paper currency without a single European economy. At the moment we do not even have a single European market, let alone a single economy. I fail to see how we can look forward to creating a single European paper currency in such a short time before we have achieved a single market.

It being Seven o'clock, and there being private business set down by THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS, *under Standing Order No. 16 (Time for taking private business), further proceeding stood postponed.*

Midland Metro Bill

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the Promoters of the Midland Metro Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

That all Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill, together with any minutes of evidence taken before the Committee on the Bill, shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

7 pm

Mr. David Gilroy Bevan (Birmingham, Yardley): Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for presenting us with this chance to continue with the debate on a carry-over motion of this Bill to the next Session of Parliament.

I remind the House that the scheme was originally proposed by the West Midlands county council, after being proposed beforehand by the passenger transport authority of the West Midlands, of which I was the second chairman.

A previous Bill failed in 1984 as too much demolition was required, it had bad public relations and insufficient district council support. This Bill provides for lines 2 and 3. The Midland Metro Act 1989 will progress substantially public transportation in the west midlands. At the moment we are awaiting a Government announcement regarding funding of that Act.

Lines 2 and 3, which will run through Birmingham and in the Black Country, will have all-party support, apart from a small minority of hon. Members. The Bill was launched by the passenger executive in the west midlands in 1987—now known as Centro. The object of the Bill is to relieve congestion, to bring about economic regeneration, to ensure the increased use of public transport and to ensure an improvement to the environment.

Light rail transit is usually quiet, ecologically attractive and blends in well with the environment. In places where light rail transit systems are operating, for example in Grenoble, it has been heralded as a successful system by all who have seen it. The Grenoble system is the type that this scheme will emulate. I am told that my hon. Friend the Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills) was very impressed by the Grenoble system when he made a recent visit there and thought that it would make a great contribution to the cause of public transport. We are much obliged to him for those remarks because I know that he had some reservations about the project.

The trains will be between 28m and 30m long and as light as 26 tonnes. The overhead supports will not be higher than 18ft 6 in, and trains will carry about 75 people seated and 175 people standing. The train will increase people's mobility and will have a low floor level—almost parallel with the loading area—making it easy for people to alight. In modern parlance, it is environmentally friendly, fume-free and reliable, and compares favourably with other forms of transport, especially road transport, as it is safer, costs less and has less environmental impact.

Hon. Members who vote in favour of the carry-over motion today will remember that in many studies recently roads have not been proposed as the solution to the transport needs of urban areas. In the London area a vast road building programme was not chosen by the Secretary of State in favour of "a redline system" of alleviating traffic parking.

The system will cost less than heavy rail and will have less environmental impact. It will be more flexible and will share the roads with other traffic. There can be a greater penetration into the centre of cities. The trains will be more reliable than buses. They will be cleaner and fume-free. They will have a greater passenger capacity and will be faster. The light rail system has a more modern image, as up-market transport. Rightly or wrongly, buses do not enjoy the same image. The system has much to recommend it and the carry-over motion has much to commend it.

Line 2 will go from Birmingham Five Ways through the city centre to a vast new Heartlands development area of more than 2,000 acres in Bromford and then on to Castle Bromwich, Chelmsley Wood, Arlington business park, the national exhibition centre—I am sorry if I sound a little like a conductor—Birmingham International railway station and Birmingham International airport, all of which are important destinations. The line will be 26 km long with 34 stops. The new underground section will serve the new international convention centre in the centre of Birmingham, making Birmingham one of Europe's most strategically placed cities, the town hall, New street and Corporation street. It will come to the surface in Birmingham's second university area—Aston university —and will cost £100 million.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): I am following the hon. Gentleman's speech with great interest. I wonder if he has been as persuasive with the Department of Transport as he has with the House. As he has come to the financing of this worthwhile project, can he tell us whether there is any likelihood of that Department coughing up some section 56 grant so that we can get the line built and stop talking about it?

Mr. Bevan: The hon. Gentleman is trying, in the nicest possible way, to put the cart before the horse. It is no use trying to get any pronouncements on financing unless there is a Bill to be financed. That is the motion before us tonight.

As I said earlier, we are awaiting an imminent decision on financing for line 1.

Line 3 will do a very important job, joining Wolverhampton and Dudley town centres, passing through Wednesfield, Walsall, Darlaston and Wednesbury. It will cross line 1 at the Sandwell 2000 development in Tipton and will be 26 km long with 32 stops. There will be 11 vehicles with a 10-minute frequency and the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) will be interested to know that it will cost about £136 million.

Feasibility studies were made to enable a route to be chosen, and high scoring corridors have been chosen. District councils selected the routes on the basis of minimal effect upon residential property, of potential ridership, of cost and of environment effect. Future development proposals were considered together with the practicability of construction.

All construction matters have been taken into account by the local authority. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East ought to be aware, if he is not already aware, though he seems to be celebrating his awareness with laughter and happiness, that all seven district councils, on every side of the political spectrum, are totally behind the project. I am told that the one Liberal councillor from Birmingham who is on the passenger transport authority is also in favour of it.

Intensive market research is being carried out. In July 1990 a ratio of 4:1 west midlands residents were in favour of the project. That is a new figure. The previous ratio was 3:1. It appears that 47 per cent. favour the project. Vast numbers of leaflets have been circulated. Numerous meetings have been held in all the affected areas. A huge public consultation exercise took place with many authorities, including Birmingham, Solihull, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley. Public consultation has not been skimped.

The public are rightly concerned about noise, but these trams will be almost noise free. They are nothing like the old Brummie or Blackpool trams that were operational in the 1940s and 1950s. I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Meriden that the tracks will be bedded in rubberised compound and ballasted, wherever feasible. Furthermore, noise insulation grants should be payable under schemes similar to that operated for highways, in appropriate circumstances.

We are determined to increase the quality of life by improving public transport. The lines will be among the finest ever introduced anywhere in the world. They will be far safer than cars and there will be far fewer pedestrian accidents. As the vehicles will be on rails, they can be controlled far more easily than cars or buses. The driver, who will have to be trained to a high level, will not have to steer the vehicle. The system has been approved by the railways inspectorate, according to extraordinarily strict criteria. It will bring a completely new look to public transport.

In 1989 a scheme was introduced to purchase properties that are directly affected by the proposals, if the owners wish to sell. However, no residential property is affected by demolition on line 2. Only slum clearance property is affected on line 3. There is conclusive evidence, nevertheless, that in areas where light electric rail has been introduced property values have increased much faster than normal when new public transport infrastructure is provided. Under the scheme, 12 properties were purchased on line 2. There are no current applications on line 2.

There have been many references to the environmental effects. The lines allow for the introduction of much more pedestrianisation, especially as they will be accompanied by traffic management measures. They take up much less space than highways. Noise levels are much less intrusive than those connected with buses or trucks. Moreover, they are pollution free and are accompanied by extensive landscaping. They will therefore contribute to the greening of the areas that they will serve. They will result in economic and landscape regeneration.

The colours of the tie that I am wearing happen to be the colours of Centro, the body that is promoting the Bill. I hope that it reflects the fact that a substantial amount of green is included among the attractive blue. I hope that it will harmonise with the blue and result in an excellent turquoise-type environment.

The consultation exercise began in March. There was widespread publicity in the local press—the *Birmingham Evening Mail* and the *Birmingham Express and Star*. Leaflets were distributed in civic centres. Fares generally will react to market forces and may be slightly higher than bus fares, although we hope that they will be as low as possible. I introduced the travel card scheme when I was chairman of the authority. I hope that it will include the metro. I hope, too, that concessionary passes will be valid on the lines.

The area has a good record on concessionary passes. When I was a member of an all-party transport committee in the 1950s, we introduced free bus travel for pensioners. I was also able to introduce free travel for pensioners on the railways except at peak times. I hope that that good record will be continued.

The scheme is intended not to replace but to complement bus services. The operator will probably run feeder services and there will be park-and-ride facilities.

We trust that the private sector will be involved in the funding. We understand that the EEC is to provide about 30 per cent. of the cost. The United Kingdom will provide a similar figure. The local authority will also be involved in the funding, through its passenger transport authority. The passenger transport authority is likely to receive substantial funds if it goes ahead with other proposals that are currently before it. It will amount to many millions of pounds.

At 1990 prices, the cost amounts to £81 million for line 1. At 1989 prices, the cost is £273 million for line 2, for 26 km, and £136 million for line 3, again for 26 km. The cost of vehicles amounts to £30 million. It is interesting to compare these costs with equivalent road costs. Line 3, costing £136 million, can be compared with the Heartlands spine road, costing £85 million. As I have said, the length of line 3 is 26 km, whereas the Heartlands spine road is only 4·1 km in length. The cost of line 3 per kilometre is therefore £5·36 million, compared with a road cost of £20·66 million. It is about a quarter of the road cost. The maximum number of passengers who can be carried both ways per hour by the light railway is 30,000, whereas the maximum capacity of the Heartlands spine road is 14,500, so the light electric railway is equivalent to two dual carriageways.

The council has offered its unanimous support. Local groups have given substantial support, including Aston Villa football club, the Automobile Association, urban wild life groups and the west midlands CBI.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): As the hon. Gentleman knows, I support the Bill and voted accordingly on 5 March. However, I have some constituency reservations, which I have set out and will not repeat tonight because there will be other opportunities to do so, such as on Report. Is the hon. Gentleman aware that in my constituency the Bill is supported not only by the local authority and the majority of the people in the borough but in Willenhall? I do not think that there is any doubt about that, and my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) will probably agree with me. In addition to the reservations that I mentioned on 5 March, some anxiety has been expressed about the memorial park. It is argued that only a small part of it will be used, but as we so desperately need green space one is obviously reluctant to see any of it sacrificed. If I did not support the Bill I would make my position clear, as I always do on the Floor of the House, but it is important that the promoters reconsider that aspect. If the Bill is to receive the support of my constituents, as the hon. Gentleman would wish, those reservations should be reconsidered. I am not satisfied that there are not alternatives.

Mr. Bevan: I am obliged to the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) for the point that he makes, for the support that he gave on Second Reading and for his implied support today. The promoters are determined to preserve as much as possible of the landscape and beauty of the areas through which the line will pass. I cannot speak to this specific matter, but it is a detail that is causing concern. Although a small part of that park might be used, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will bear in mind the green benefits of the line.

It is interesting to note public reaction in Grenoble, where originally only about 53 per cent. of its people were in favour of a tram system—slightly higher than the percentage of people who have expressed themselves in favour of the system in the west midlands. Two years after the system had been in operation, almost 94 per cent. of its population were in favour of it. I am certain that there will be a similar reaction from our citizens.

The Opposed Private Bill Committee spent 12 working days considering 35 objections in detail. Five objections were from a residents' group, four of which were rejected under the locus standi provisions, which do not encourage applications by corporate bodies other than individuals who might have a land holding interest. There were 27 commercial interests and British Rail, the Black Country development corporation and the university of Aston.

Only two petitioners attended the Committee. Centro objected to the residents' petitions and was aided by recommendations from the Joint Select Committee on Private Bill Procedure. That did not prevent residents' views from being put, as they have been forcefully put in debates in the House and through newspapers and other media.

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): Do those objections include the 2,000-signature petition centred around Belinda close?

Mr. Bevan: I am not sure whether that petition was included in the objections, but most of the petitions must have been considered. However, I shall try to clarify that point and answer the hon. Gentleman later.

Two petitions were heard. The Committee asked Centro to devise a new route avoiding the site of Foseco, which was an industrial complex in Nechells. That route will be the subject of an additional submission, which has been laid before the Committee today. There was a petition from Chelmsley Wood residents, who were represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Meriden. The Committee was not convinced by the arguments for changing the route, but it sought undertakings regarding landscaping and the resilience of the track, to which I have already referred.

There has been liaison with residents on operating details such as car parking provision and the design of stops. The promoters are happy to comply with those details. Although I am taking a long time to deal with this, it is important that the House knows that it has been considered meticulously.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Although detail is important, the motion before us is very narrow; it is only a procedural carry-over motion. The hon. Gentleman has gone into much detail. I remind him and other hon. Members that we are debating a narrow procedural motion.

Mr. Bevan: I take careful note of what you say, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I should not wish to detain the House with matters that might not be relevant to the motion.

It is important that the motion is carried, because refusing to do so could cost the community charge payers of the area concerned at least £1 million and add at least two years of procedural administration. It is my heart-felt wish, having held a long-term interest in the Bill, that it be carried.

I was born in a taxi. That was not an elitist decision by my mother but an accident of transport. Had I been born in a bus or even a light electric tram, I should have been much more highly delighted. In transport terms, I have been trying to catch up ever since. I hope that the House will pass the motion to carry over consideration of the Bill to the next Session.

7.28 pm

Mr. Iain Mills (Meriden): I shall not detain the House long. As you have rightly reminded us, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a carry-over motion. Although I have not decided whether to oppose the motion, I seek a guarantee on behalf of my constituents that certain matters will be considered.

I should declare that I visited Grenoble to inspect its system, by which I was impressed. The trams are quiet and the design of the stops and shelters good and unobtrusive. Since then, I have received a guarantee that shared carriageways will not be a hazard—for example, in Moorend avenue, which is used by 5,000 vehicles a day or in Helmswood drive, which is used by about 1,800.

The first guarantee that I seek—before I decide my position on the carry-on motion——

Mr. Snape: Carry on!

Mr. Mills: I thank the hon. Gentleman for doing me such credit, although he will be aware that I meant "carry-over motion".

I seek a further guarantee that shared carriageways will not constitute a hazard in areas where there is a large

number of vehicles. The system apparently works in at least two cities in France, and elsewhere, but I seek guarantees, too, that existing light standards will be used as the supports for the power supplies to the metro.

It is important that the decisions of the Opposed Private Bill Committee should be enshrined in the Bill. They should be a matter of law, and not merely a matter of choice by Centro. The statements to which I refer are to be found on page 2 of the Opposed Private Bill Committee's decisions. The first is that the promoters should deploy resilient track, and I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) for his assurances—I hope that they are guarantees—on that matter. The Committee also sought the undertaking that there would be liaison with local parties. To overcome my criticism of the consultation process I would further ask that a meeting be arranged shortly between CARE, Centro, the Solihull council working party and the other bodies, to discuss, detail by detail, the position of stops, the posts to carry the power supply, car parking and all the other matters outlined.

The Opposed Private Bill Committee further asked that there should be no less car parking space and that the metro stops should be

"of a similarly attractive design to the artist's impressions."

If the stops are as good as those in Grenoble, I shall be impressed; they will beat the bus shelters in Chelmsley Wood hands down. I would add to that list the requirement that our vehicles should be built to the same high standard of engineering as those in Grenoble.

I have brought these matters to the attention of the House to ensure that they are properly registered before I make up my mind whether to support the carry-over motion.

7.32 pm

Mr. Bruce George (Walsall, South): Madam Deputy Speaker, you politely admonished the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) for talking generally. I shall seek to avoid such admonition: I shall speak partly in general terms, if I may, but I shall also be specific, to meet any potential criticism from the Chair.

Why should we support the motion? Everyone—whether a student, at whatever level, of the British constitution, a journalist or whatever—is aware that if legislation is not passed in one Parliament, it lapses. The work done on it passes into history and, in most cases, is regarded as wasted. Given the effort that has been put into this Bill so far, a decision not to allow Parliament to make further decisions and not to allow the promoters to proceed further would mean that there had been an appalling waste of time of the House and its Committees. It would also have been an appalling waste of time for those in Centro and the West Midlands passenger transport authority who have put in so much effort. It would mean that there had been a total waste of effort by those who have conducted surveys into public opinion and by the local authorities, which have consulted and redrawn routes and have expended a huge amount of intellectual and physical effort in providing the necessary information.

If we decide that the House should not proceed with the Bill next Session, an enormous amount of money will have been wasted: I understand that it has already cost Centro £1 million to promote the Bill.

If the carry-over motion is defeated, the metro project will suffer a severe setback. There have been setbacks before. We are all aware that the idea of the midland metro was first generated in the early 1980s. The proposals were stillborn and there was a delay of four or five years before they were reactivated. The present Bill has received an enormous amount of support. Should it suffer such a setback, a great deal of effort will have gone down the drain. I acknowledge the right of any Member of Parliament to oppose something to which he or his constituents object, but I hope that the majority of those who are here to listen to our proceedings will support the motion, and thus allow the promoters to continue, as well as giving some hope to those outside the House who look forward to the enactment of the Bill.

Of course, there have been objections. Even hon. Members who, like me, are very much in favour of the Bill and hope that work will soon commence, have had representations made to them by constituents. Some—very few—have expressed their absolute opposition. Most of those who object are in favour of the concept, but, for a variety of perfectly understandable reasons, would prefer the route not to run so close to their homes. But the great virtue of the metro is its accessibility. People should not have to walk one and a half miles to a railway station—or get a bus or taxi if it is raining—to pick up a light transit system. The route must be constructed to achieve a number of conflicting goals. It must not go so near to people's houses that it is detrimental to their environment, but it must be sufficiently close to allow them a degree of mobility that they do not enjoy at present. We have all received objections, but, although those objections are not marginal or insignificant, they have not been sufficient—in my constituency and in adjacent constituencies—to convince me that the midland metro is anything other than highly desirable.

We do not want the metro in 10 years' time; we want it tomorrow. The British are not renowned for their impetuosity. The decision-making process can be, and usually is, protracted, and more often than not the end product is wrong. In planning matters we have an almost obsessive attitude to consultation. The French do not suffer from the same hangups and I want to draw a parallel between the construction of Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris and the construction of London's third airport at Stansted. Many years ago I wrote my MA thesis on environmental pressure groups and one chapter was about the case for a third London airport which began in the late 1950s. I have now seen on television an advert announcing that after some slight delay—since the late 1950s—that airport is now operational. That is wonderful, but Charles de Gaulle airport is almost an historic construction in comparison.

We are obsessed with consultation and we do not want to proceed. We criticise the Japanese for their desire to reach a degree of homogeneity and support, but in some ways we share their attitude. The parliamentary process has imposed time constraints on those who want to use the Bill to create a light rail network in the midlands. That is perfectly correct. The process affords ample opportunity for individuals and groups to object and express their views. Any system, even a dictatorship, might in theory permit people to express views. However, under a democratic process if those views are expressed by enough people, they are acted upon. In fairness to the Bill's promoter, there has been an obsessive interest in consultation. I know that the Opposed Private Bill Committee rapped the promoter over the knuckles with

[Mr. Bruce George]

regard to inadequate consultation for one commercial enterprise, but it would be unfair to castigate the Bill's promoter for lack of consultation.

When people had reservations in my area, Councillor Warrell jumped on his bike within minutes and went to listen to the objections. He pored over maps with potential critics and he made constructive proposals which met many of the criticisms. Each local authority in the region embarked on a leafleting programme and a series of public consultations. No one can criticise the consultative process.

However, at the end of the day, we must accept the old utilitarian theory of political action expounded by John Stuart Mill and work on the principle of the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Some fundamental criticisms may remain unresolved and some people may not be placated because the promoter cannot provide adequate rerouting or environmental activities which would minimise the effects of the proposal. However, I understand that Centro has purchased 12 houses in advance of any legal requirement. The Committee has not yet published a report because it has yet to receive all objections. However, of 55 km of track there is dispute over only 150 m.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): Is not that precisely because the Committee was not allowed to hear objections from the residents?

Mr. George: If Centro had decided not to listen to certain objections, my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) would have ample excuse for his criticism. However, it was a parliamentary body that decided that the groups in my hon. Friend's constituency did not fall within the rules which made it a responsibility of the Committee to hear those complaints.

If my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill had taken the time to reread the speech that I made on 5 March in the same way that I have reread his, he would recall that I concluded by hoping that if the sponsors were successful, they would be magnanimous in victory. Even though my hon. Friend's constituents' objections were not heard by the appropriate Committee, I understand that they have had a continuing opportunity to express their views. If all the procedures are completed in this House this Session and next Session, I hope that every opportunity will be taken to meet those objections.

I have been informed that, had TRAM's objections in part of my constituency and in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) been met, half the people would have received access to the route and the costs would have doubled. I hope that the Opposed Private Bill Committee will make recommendations that will meet the objections. Even though the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill were not able to make a formal presentation of their views, I hope that the sponsors will make a legitimate response and that some, if not all, of the objections can be met.

Mr. Terry Davis: I hope that my hon. Friend will accept that the *Official Report* will show that he has not answered the point that I put to him. My constituents and other residents—although I am concerned only with my constituents—could not explain their case to the Committee. For my hon. Friend's information, that decision was taken by the Court of Referees, not by the Opposed Private Bill Committee. The Court of Referees heard a technical and legal objection from Centro. I have read the previous speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) as he has read mine. When he reads the speech that he had made tonight and he looks again at my intervention, he will see that he has avoided my point and not very successfully. Obviously he has been told that there was some kind of consultation with my constituents subsequent to Second Reading. Perhaps he can outline that now.

Mr. George: I do not speak from direct experience about this, but I understand that there were exhibitions and a public meeting. My hon. Friend actually had meetings with Centro and many people wrote letters or telephoned. Centro has been willing to listen to the objections.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill will reread my speech again. I felt a certain lack of affinity with those who argued that, on technical grounds, objectors should not be permitted to present their case. However, it was up to the relevant parliamentary authority to decide on that. I do not, and my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill does not, decide on the rules. The rules were enforced and that might have caused my hon. Friend some anxiety. The decision was taken by the Court of Referees and we must accept that. However, I believe that objections should be heard. If the motion is successful, there will still be opportunities for the objectors to try to influence the eventual outcome.

The local authority in Walsall wants to negotiate with Centro about a number of criteria over the next few months. There is still an opportunity for those who object through the local authority to press Centro to make the requisite alterations and try to minimise what may be perceived as negative impacts on what is overall a small number of objectors.

Mr. Terry Davis: My hon. Friend must not try to evade the point—I am sure that he is doing it unwittingly. He referred to his speech on Second Reading. He is quite correct; he appealed for magnanimity—that was the word that he used—by Centro. What consultations took place after that speech, after his suggestion that there should be magnanimity, and after his plea that there be consultations with my constitutents? I ask him again, because everything that he mentioned took place before that speech: what was Centro's response to my hon. Friend's plea for magnanimity?

Mr. George: I do not speak with any authority on behalf of the sponsors, so I trust that my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) will be able to respond to that question. I certainly reiterate what I said on 5 March. When legitimate objections can be met without sacrificing the overall objectives of the Bill, I very much hope that, even at this late but no means completed stage of the process, those objections will be met as far as humanly possible. I hope that, without jeopardising the process, my hon. Friend's constituents will be satisfied.

Mr. Winnick: I entirely endorsed the remarks that my hon. Friend made on 5 March. He may be aware that I also argued that there needs to be a certain amount of flexibility by Centro in this matter. It would be unfortunate if it came to the view that, because there is a

large parliamentary majority—like my hon. Friend, I am pleased that there is—in favour of what is proposed, there is no need for flexibility. It may be argued that some of the points that have been made by residents are unrealistic. I am not convinced, however, that some of the criticisms should be dismissed out of hand—they need to be looked at again from a narrow, constituency point of view. Some residents have a point. My hon. Friend may have heard my intervention about the memorial park in Willenhall with which he is familiar.

Mr. George: I am almost taking on the role of officially responding, and I am not authorised to do that. In Walsall there were 36,000 leaflets in three different versions. Eleven consultation meetings were organised, and were attended by Centro and council officers. There appeared to be a great opportunity for people to express their opposition. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North and I have made statements in the local press and written letters. I understand indirectly that TRAM was revealed at one stage to have 11 paid-up members. That was one reason why the appropriate parliamentary Committee did not allow it an opportunity to express its views directly to the Committee.

I also understand via second-hand sources that there has been no communication between TRAM and Centro over the past few months. It is perfectly acceptable that, at some stage, TRAM may wish further to express its views. Again, I repeat what I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill. Objections must be met as far as possible, without prejudicing the overall concept. If, to placate a certain number of people, a new route is chosen at high cost, which would then make access to a larger group more difficult, one may regard the process of capitulating to pressure to be unfair and a folly.

I shall refer later to potential criticisms of proposals that Walsall council is making. I hope that hon. Members will appreciate that there are still opportunities for objections to be made and to be met in Walsall.

Mr. Mills: Do I gather that the hon. Gentleman approves of the locus standi rule? Four out of five organisations in my constituency could not give any evidence at all and could put their case to Centro only at public meetings. The distribution of leaflets is fine provided that they reach the people concerned. Is not the hon. Gentleman in favour of something a bit more democratic than the locus standi rule?

Mr. George: Having been an hon. Member for 15 years, I am certainly aware that what is procedurally correct and what is democratic in the House are not always one and the same. I would certainly have wished for as wide a group of objectors as possible to be heard—indeed, not simply for them to be heard but, where possible, for views to be reconciled. The decision was neither mine nor Centro's, and it was taken according to parliamentary procedure and rule. Regrettably, opportunities were not afforded. The hon. Gentleman and my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill have been strenuous in representing the views of those in their constituencies who are affected. Therefore, even though the objectors were not able directly to express their views before the Committee, Centro has been made more than aware of collective objections. In some cases, objections have been met.

Having listened to what I have been told about remarks in Committee, I gained the impression that not all the hon. Gentleman's constituents' objections were considered to be valid. I was not at the Committee hearing, so I do not wish to elaborate on that matter. At the risk of incurring your rightful wrath, Madam Deputy Speaker, I add my voice to those who say that, in the interests of efficiency and of justice, objections must still be met. Having listened to my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill and the hon. Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills), one would have the impression that there is at least vociferous minority criticism about the route that has been taken. In fairness, I have not heard any criticism of the overall concept.

I understand that Centro uses a market research firm to conduct public opinion research into the attitudes in the west midlands as a whole. In listening to the views of a certain area, one must not forget the requirements of the region as a whole. One thousand people were consulted. We must bear in mind that public opinion pollsters reach a national opinion on political parties on the basis of smaller samples than that. Out of that sample of 1,000 people, support for the concept of the metro was 4:1, and in Walsall support was 8:1. That point must be borne in mind and set against those who may have objections for a specific area. Therefore, one should conclude that the metro is desired and required.

I shall now briefly recapitulate what was said about why the motion should be passed. It is to keep alive the supporters' idea that a system of transport will be provided for our region and will be commensurate to the needs of that region in the decades ahead. I spoke earlier of a national trait of the British. We are not usually forthcoming or impetuous in our decision making. Another national failing is our almost total inability to see beyond the end of our noses or to make decisions a year, month or week in advance. It is difficult for us to comprehend or to act upon decisions.

I am reluctant to use the word "visionary" when describing Centro because what it is doing in the west midlands has been done elsewhere by others who are quicker off the mark or who are working in conditions that are more conducive to swift decision making. Other authorities in other parts of the country are further ahead in the game or have reached a point that is parallel to that reached by Centro in the west midlands. I can hardly use the word "visionary" when describing something that is now almost commonplace. However, it is visionary in a regional context.

Centro is perfectly competent to do what it has to do because it is the authority which is responsible for bus transport. It has recognised that our region is progressively clogging up and, like us all, has recognised that the country has an inadequate transport policy. I am not fixing blame because I am seeking to be as non-partisan as possible. However, the failure to make decisions has resulted in what can be described either as a crisis now in our transport or as a state of affairs that will increasingly reach crisis proportions, and which will have enormous economic, political and social consequences.

Using the estimated figures for car ownership at the turn of the century, Centro has concluded that unless something substantial is done swiftly, our region will grind to a halt because the number of motor vehicles on our roads greatly exceeds the space available to them. That state of affairs will not inconvenience the casual motorist alone.

I attended a branch presentation by the Confederation of British Industry last week in Wolverhampton. A

[Mr. George]

well-documented report has highlighted the infrastructure weaknesses in the black country. Unless we have a proper road and rail network, we shall fail to capitalise on the opportunities that are potentially available to us. A rapid transit system such as is envisaged will not be only a marginal improvement for the transport and industrial development of the west midlands and the black country, it will be an imperative.

Last week's survey by the CBI concluded that a major problem was the lack of trained and qualified personnel in the area. That is not only the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Employment; it is partly a function of the transport infrastructure. An adequate transport system would mean that people who possess a motor vehicle would not only have the ability to move from the periphery into Birmingham but, thankfully as a result of line 3, for the first time such people would be able to move laterally from Wolverhampton to Walsall, Darlaston and to the western part of the black country and the west midlands.

The economic need for the route is of enormous consequence. It is imperative that we give the endorsement that the majority of people want and allow this Bill to carry over into the next Session.

We have become a nation much concerned with environmental problems. I have read the Government's response to the impending environmental crisis, but I shall not comment on it now. As someone once said, the desire to create a Jerusalem of economic growth in England's green and pleasant land has so far resulted in a conspicuous lack of both greenness and pleasantness. That is nowhere more apparent than in the general area that I represent.

I find it amusing that the word "black" is pejorative in the phrase "the black country" because, as the CBI pointed out, "black" is far from pejorative in the phrase "black forest gateaux". I hope that people who live in the black country will have a more positive perception of themselves in the future than they have now. Their self-perception is less than positive now. Although the CBI survey proved more positive, ironically that perception was less positive than external perceptions of the black country.

One way of trying to resolve that is to improve the environment. A major source of environmental pollution in the black country and the west midlands is the pollution that is caused by the motor vehicle, which is ironic because that is what we manufacture and process.

I do not wish to suggest that the metro will cause many people to scrap or abandon their cars entirely, or that it will provide the panacea for resolving the environmental crisis in the west midlands and the black country. However, if the aspirations of the promoters are realised and it is possible to entice people into using a form of public transport that is relatively swift, relatively cheap, convenient and environmentally sound, the line will go at least some way towards minimising the growing degradation of the environment as a result of the pollution that is generated by the motor vehicle.

That is why it is so important to support the carry-over motion. The metro is not only desirable, it is essential, because it will play a major role in regenerating a region that is represented by many of the hon. Members now present in the Chamber. We have seen the west midlands slip from its position of industrial pre-eminence in the 1960s. I am not seeking to minimise or to be critical of the efforts made by the local authorities and the industrialists who are not seeking to reverse that decline. However, I believe that that process of economic regeneration will be greatly enhanced by improving the infrastructure. It is essential that the Government should cough up some money, but providing money for Centro will not relieve the Government from the obligation of improving other aspects of public transport in the region by improving our roads and providing a better rail network. However, I am not saying that, by itself, the metro will resolve all the critical problems or weaknesses of the region's transport system.

We must support the motion because the metro will help to relieve traffic congestion. It will be of enormous environmental advantage. It will considerably improve our infrastructure which, as we are all aware, is inadequate. I served on the Standing Committee considering the London Regional Transport Bill in 1984 when there was considerable agitation among Opposition Members who felt that by allegedly freeing public transport we would be permitting private operators to provide a service without the controls which, until then, had been effected by the traffic commissioners under the terms of the previous legislation. One area of anxiety was that private contractors would buy old buses which would be inaccessible to the disabled. We can all remember those old buses, some of which still run. It was virtually impossible to put a wheelchair on them. One of the great advantages of the metro is that the proposed vehicles have low access suitable for wheelchairs. Mobility should be provided for work purposes and recreation. The disabled should be given a mobility which hitherto they have lacked.

Mr. Mills: In view of the shortness of the hon. Gentleman's speech, has he considered going to Grenoble to see just how good the system is for the disabled? It is an excellent system for the disabled and perhaps he should go there.

Mr. George: The Whips are critical enough of my occasional visits abroad. I have no immediate intention of going to the Chief Whip and suggesting a trip to Grenoble. I was in Alsace-Lorraine a few weeks ago and that is the limit of my desire to travel to France. I have seen the video of the system in Grenoble and I have read virtually everything that has been written about it. Although people eulogise that system, it is hoped that the vehicles designed by whoever wins the contract to provide them will be almost a generation in advance of the vehicles currently operating in Grenoble.

There is a great demand for vehicles for the metro but it is less than one would have imagined. Other authorities will place orders in the future. According to contracting and purchasing policy, companies outside the United Kingdom will surely be given the opportunity to bid. So any British bids will have to be competitive. The vehicles will have to meet Centro's requirements that the vehicles be light, cheap and roomy. I hope that sufficient British companies, or at least one substantial British company,

can meet the high requirements of Centro and other authorities who seek bids in the years ahead. I very much hope that a British company will win the contract.

I mentioned earlier that my local authority in Walsall intends to make several proposals to Centro. The authority has been very supportive from the outset. It has been put to me that its proposals could be designated a shopping list of safeguards. They have been put forward and will be discussed in the months ahead. I shall not abuse Madam Deputy Speaker's already great tolerance by reading out the proposals. I simply wish to say—this will take only one minute—that the authority's proposals relate to open spaces, highways, safety, and the community impact. They also draw Centro's attention to several operational aspects including maintenance, drainage, pollution and alignment. If I sought to speak longer, my colleagues would believe that I was engaged in some form of obstructionism. I wish to make one point forcibly. The local authority supports the concept of the metro. Several matters relating to the route, the structure and the environmental impact remain to be resolved, but I am absolutely confident that such is the good will between Centro and the local authority that the authority's proposals will be met.

Although Walsall council perceives itself as being under an obligation to support the metro, it also has an obligation to meet other criteria where possible. Environmental impact is important, and I shall watch developments closely. If the motion is passed, as I hope that it will be, and if the legislation is reactivated next Session, hon. Members must continue to follow the negotiations and the progress to ensure that conflicting interests are properly reconciled.

I hope that you are under no illusions, Madam Deputy Speaker. I strongly support what is at hand. I hope that the House will say to the sponsors of the Bill, "Please carry on. We shall not scupper your proposals by refusing to endorse the measures this evening. However, in endorsing the measures we do not give you carte blanche to do exactly as you wish." In my experience of Centro, those remarks would be superfluous. It recognises the need not only to consult but to meet objections, not simply because it is a great democrat but because it recognises that it is more efficient to meet objections than to have to—I was about to say "railroad"——

Mr. Snape: My hon. Friend said that he would take only a minute.

Mr. George: My hon. Friend's timescale is more accurate than mine.

In conclusion, I hope that we shall endorse the proposals and that we can return on a future occasion to ensure that our wishes have been complied with.

8.16 pm

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick MeLoughlin): I intervene briefly in the debate because, as you rightly reminded us earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, the motion is strictly procedural. I rise simply to advise the House of the Government's view. It is the tradition that the Government take a neutral stance on private Bills. This Bill is no exception to that rule. That was made clear by the speech that my hon. Friend the Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo), the then Minister for Public Transport, gave on Second Reading in March. By convention, he recommended that the House give the Bill a Second Reading so that the Bill could be considered in detail by the Opposed Private Bill Committee. It is consistent with that approach that the Government support the carry-over motion.

In principle the Bill is acceptable to the Department. Light rail schemes of the type promoted by the Bill remain a novelty in this country. The docklands light railway is a fully segregated system. It has shown the success which light rail can achieve in the right places. But the Manchester metro link is now being built with some £50 million of Government grant and revenue support. It will be the first modern street-running system of the type envisaged by the Bill.

I know that many towns and cities would like to emulate the Manchester example. We recognise that in the appropriate circumstances light rail can have an important role to play in reducing traffic congestion and helping to promote urban regeneration. We shall consider financial support for worthwhile proposals which are put to us. However, naturally we must always see whether there are cheaper ways of obtaining the same result with the resources available. It is too early to say whether the scheme proposed in the Bill would be eligible for grant. The Bill is presently being considered by the Opposed Private Bill Committee. It is right to allow the proceedings to continue and reach a conclusion on both the Bill and the detailed provisions therein.

If the motion is carried, the House and another place will have further opportunities to consider the arguments for and against. We have heard some of the arguments for it already this evening and I know that we shall hear more speeches later. It would be unfortunate not to agree to the motion in the name of the Chairman of Ways and Means and therefore I urge the House to allow the Bill to be carried over by accepting the motion.

8.19 pm

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): As the Minister has said, such matters are not normally dealt with by Front-Bench speakers but are left for the House to decide. We are discussing a procedural motion and not the principle of the Bill, although I had some difficulty in realising that that was the case. I listened with interest to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) who took us on a rattling ride through the suburbs of the west midlands. I felt queasy at one stage and thought that I had gone past my stop on at least two occasions. I was on the point of altering the hon. Gentleman's destination blind so that it read "depot only" so that he could be returned to the tram depot at a reasonable hour. He realised that, for those hon. Members for whom this new method of transport is welcome, a break was necessary.

The hon. Member for Yardley and my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) spoke about finance. We listened carefully as the Minister read from his brief, but, regrettably, he had little to say on that matter. He reminded us that the midland metro is being considered for section 56 grant. His speech, which was presumably drafted by his civil servants, contained the caveat that we must evaluate carefully the different modes of transport. I am not sure how much evaluation the Government need, but I strongly suspect that they desperately need to keep evaluating until the general election because I fear that it

[Mr. Peter Snape]

is hardly likely that section 56 money will be found to fund this or the other two worthy metro projects in the west midlands.

For most Opposition Members representing west midlands constituencies, the sooner the project gets under way and is completed, the better. That applies to all our constituencies in Birmingham and throughout the black country and indeed in Wolverhampton. In a recent television programme there were claims that Wolverhampton was now in the black country while those in that great city said it was not.

Everyone in the west midlands suffers from the same problem of chronic traffic congestion and this modern variation on an old mode of transport is long overdue. The hon. Member for Yardley promoted previous Bills and is is charge of this one. I hope that he will be successful in persuading not just the Minister, but his two immediate bosses that all hon. Members, regardless of party, and all the district councils in the west midlands are as much in favour of the present motion as they were of the two previous motions. A little less talk from the Department and a little more cash would be greatly appreciated.

8.22 pm

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): I oppose the motion in view of the Bill's effects on my constituents who live in the Bromford and Firs estates and because of the way in which they have been treated by the West Midlands passenger transport authority which now calls itself Centro. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) argued that if the House refused to carry over the Bill to the next Session, it would be an appalling waste of time and effort for Centro and the Bill's supporters. However, I will argue that if the Bill is carried over, it will be regarded by my constituents as an appalling act of contempt towards them.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South is right about the expense that has been incurred to date, but justice is expensive. It is the job of the House to ensure that justice is done, and an injustice has been done to my constituents.

My hon. Friend was certainly mistaken when he spoke at length about the concept of rapid transit, light rail, the metro, or whatever it is called. He spent much of his speech explaining the advantages of that form of transport compared with other forms. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) also followed that line.

The Bill is not about the concept of metro or rapid transit. It is about two specific routes, one of which I oppose. I make no comment on the route affecting Walsall and the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South. However, I am entitled to talk about its effect on my constituency and on my constituents and to oppose the Bill in the interests of my constituents who have a justifiable grievance about the way in which they have been treated by Centro.

I emphasise that the Bill is not about the concept of the metro. I did not oppose the previous Bill which became an Act. It was to build the metro from Birmingham to Wolverhampton. My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-East (Mr. Turner) asked me to waive any objections that I had to that Bill. I told him that I had no objection to it. He asked me to refrain from opposing the Bill, and I did. I told him that I did not object to the concept. My only concern was about the way in which it might affect my constituents.

The hon. Member for Yardley spoke about all-party suppport for the Bill. There is all-party opposition in my constituency to the route. It is opposed by all political parties there. The hon. Member for Yardley shakes his head. Why does he disagree that there is all-party opposition in my constituency? I challenge him to tell the House why he disagrees with that statement.

Mr. Bevan: I do not agree that there is all-party dissent about the route. That is not what I understand from the Conservative who will oppose the hon. Gentleman at the next general election. I would have liked to accept the invitation issued by the residents to see the route, which I have already seen. The letter was dated 15 September, the postmark was 19 October, and the letter did not reach me until yesterday. I do not know why the residents should deliberately ensure that a letter dated 15 September should be posted at such a late date. It is hardly the kind of invitation that is desirous of gaining all-party support.

Mr. Davis: I do not represent the residents association and I am not responsible for when it posts its letters. I accept what the hon. Gentleman says but remind him that it is not the first time that he has been invited by my constituents to visit the estate and meet the residents. He is sponsoring the Bill. Many months ago, the residents on the estate invited him to go there. The letter that he mentions is the latest that he has received, but there have been others inviting him to meet residents. The residents have written to many hon. Members, and I am glad to say that some have met them, have understood their concern and have expressed sympathy for their case.

I am interested to know that the prospective Conservative candidate in my constituency at the next general election supports this route. The last Liberal candidate in my constituency opposed the route. That is significant because that Liberal, like many others, has now become a Conservative. He was a Conservative candidate at the local elections in my constituency in May and had the temerity to attack local Labour councillors and me for not opposing the route vigorously enough. Apparently the Conservative party talks in different voices in different places. The Conservative candidate for a council seat in an area in which the route will run attacked the metro route and at an open air meeting tried to pretend that I had not opposed it. Hon. Members on both sides of the House will recognise that that was a grotesque distortion of the truth, and I am glad to say that so did my constituents. The residents on that estate put out their own leaflet, which was nothing to do with me or the local Labour councillor, who had opposed the route from the beginning. That leaflet distributed by the residents poured scorn on the Conservatives for introducing party politics into the campaign against the metro route and condemned the attempts of the Conservative candidates to extract political advantage, something that neither I nor Labour councillors had tried to do.

There are nine councillors in my constituency. Eight of them are Labour, two of whom represent the ward affected by the route. The sole Conservative also represents that ward and at a public meeting he said that he agreed with what I was saying. Clearly there is all-party opposition, but it is also clear that the support for this route comes

from Conservative Members of Parliament and the aspiring Conservative Member of Parliament in my constituency.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South made a much more thoughtful and considered speech. As I have explained, there is all-party opposition to the route in my constituency. My hon. Friend said that he thought that the opposition might come from a vociferous minority. He was talking generally, not specifically. The only statistics I have seen are those produced by the Birmingham city council and Centro from the survey that they did. The route was opposed by 90 per cent. of the people who responded in that part of my constituency. Therefore, it is not fair to say that opposition comes simply from a vociferous minority. An overwhelming majority of the people who live in the Bromford estate are vigorously opposed to the route.

On Second Reading I explained the reasons for the opposition. I explained in some detail the fears and concerns of my constituents, so it is not necessary for me to go into so much detail this evening. However, nothing has changed. Centro has done nothing since the Second Reading debate in March to deal with my constituents' objections on the ground of the loss of amenity, bearing in mind that the route would run through the only open space in the estate, across a grassed area—the only one that my constituents have—a green ribbon between the houses and the motorway. The metro route would desecrate it. Other amenities affected are football pitches and playgrounds.

Secondly, people are concerned about the visual impact that the metro will have. It will run within 40 yards of some of the houses. Between these houses, which have big picture windows, and the metro will be a narrow estate road and their short front gardens. The people in them will look at the wires and see the vehicles going past every two and a half minutes. We are told that they have no grounds for objections. They have no locus standi to complain. They cannot present their case to Members of Parliament because they have been ruled out by the Court of Referees, on the initiative of Centro. We are told that it does not matter.

Mr. Bevan: It must have been made clear that these people would have had the right to object as individuals living in the area where the project is to be carried out. They could have individually appealed and attended the Committee. The locus standi ruling would not have pertained.

Mr. Davis: We have different views about that. People who live even closer to the route than those in the houses that I have just described, in a block of flats called Douglas house—those living closest to the route—signed individual letters explaining that they wanted to be represented by the local residents' association. That is not unreasonable. However, the association was not allowed to be heard. Therefore, the residents lost their right to have their views heard.

Residents are also concerned about the effect of noise. As is well known in Birmingham, noise is a major problem. These residents suffer from motorway, railway and air traffic noise. Even the chairman of the passenger transport authority has said that this is a horrendous situation. Naturally, the residents are concerned about anything that will add to that volume of noise. The environmental services department of the city council, at my request and that of the local councillors, did a survey and said that, in its opinion, even on the inadequate criteria that we have now, 118 homes will be entitled to noise insulation if this route is used. Naturally, my constituents are extremely anxious.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South said that we need to balance the need to preserve accessibility against the need not to cause detriment to people's homes. He is right about that, but the case put unanimously by me, my constituents, local councillors of all parties and the local Member of the European Parliament is that that is not what has happened. We have all supported an alternative route which would run to the north of the M6 and would not affect my constituents or the constituents of any other Member of Parliament. It is not the case, as Mr. Michael Parker, the spokesman for Centro, has said, that my constituents are saying, "Not in my back yard" and want to move the route so that it affects somebody else's home. That is a slur on their moderate and reasonable attitude and a distortion of their point of view. They have consistently said that they do not want to save themselves at the expense of someone else. They have argued only that there is an alternative route that would not affect anybody else's home, and that route should be used.

The hon. Member for Yardley said that the metro would be environmentally beneficial and ecologically friendly and that the promoters want to preserve the landscape. Those words will be read with incredulity by my constituents because that is what will not happen for them if this route is used. It will not be beneficial to their environment, nor ecologically friendly, and it will certainly not preserve the landscape if it runs across the only open bit of land, the only grassed area that they have for recreation and their only facilities for play and recreation.

The hon. Member for Yardley keeps talking about Grenoble, but that is not relevant to the scheme promoted by the West Midlands passenger transport authority. Grenoble is a different city—it is not Birmingham.

Mr. Bevan: Has the hon. Member visited Grenoble and inspected the scheme there? He told me that he would do so but that he would prefer to do it on his own, although there was an opportunity for him to go with a group.

Mr. Davis: Yes, I went privately. I paid my expenses. Who paid the hon. Gentleman's fare?

Mr. Bevan: The hon. Gentleman may have gone, but he did not wish to say that he had. My fare was paid for by Centro, but that has no bearing on the case. The hon. Gentleman claims that the Grenoble system has no similarities with the Birmingham or black country schemes, but that is nonsense. The hon. Gentleman must agree that the Grenoble scheme is an example of our schemes. The midlands scheme is based upon the Grenoble example, and it will be like it. If the hon. Gentleman is honest, I am certain that he will say that he was mightily impressed with the Grenoble system as a means of light electric transport.

Mr. Davis: The hon. Gentleman's final remark was out of order and out of place in this debate. I must also remind him that I am not responsible to the hon. Gentleman, the Government or the Conservative party. I make up my own mind. I went to Grenoble without fuss and I paid my own fare, unlike the hon. Gentleman. I went to Grenoble and

[Mr. Davis]

looked at the system for myself. I was not shown what others wanted to show me. I travelled the entire length of the tramway—that is what they call the system in Grenoble. I travelled along it twice and I walked a good part of it as well. I got off the tram at the stops, and I listened to the noise. I carried out a thorough examination. I do not need the hon. Gentleman to tell me how to do my job.

As I have said, I was not shown the system by others. I did not see only what others wanted to show me. I went to Grenoble with my wife, we talked to local people on and off the tramway. I think that I saw rather more than that which was shown to the hon. Gentleman. As I have explained, I went under my own auspices. I do not need Centro to pay my fare to enable me to do my job. I paid for myself.

I shall tell the House about Grenoble. Before I do that——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. We are discussing a procedural motion and not the merits of a transport system in a foreign city. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will confine himself to the motion before the House.

Mr. Davis: I seek your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did not introduce the merits of the Grenoble system. The hon. Member for Yardley said that it is a model for the route which would affect my constituency. I am seeking to explain why that is a misleading statement. I think that I should be allowed to explain why what the hon. Gentleman said in an intervention is grossly misleading.

As I have said, the system that is operating in Grenoble is called a tramway. We have been told that it is very quiet, but, in my opinion, the trams are as noisy as buses. In addition, there is the use of a bell in some places. It clangs like the noise that accompanied the song with the line "Clang, clang, clang went the trolley". There is a clang every time a tram sets off from a stop. If people have a tram stop near their home, they have the noise of a bus and the clang of a bell.

The Grenoble system is much shorter than the operation that is proposed for the west midlands. It is much shorter than the proposed route that is set out in this Bill.

It is also a route that would be different in character from that which is operating in Grenoble.

The hon. Member for Yardley may not like to hear these comments, but he introduced the Grenoble system into the debate.

I shall describe why the two routes are different in character. At Fontaine La Poya, the Grenoble system terminates in a sort of square near the town hall. It is not a residential area. I am not surprised because the left-wing council would not allow that to happen. The route does not enter an area in which people live. The public travel to the tramway by bus.

The west midlands system will pass through estates. In effect, there will be a big loop. The route will pass through the Bromford estate, the Firs estate and Chelmsley Wood and back along the Coventry road. It will pass through areas where people live, unlike the Grenoble system.

As I have said, the people of Grenoble travel to the Fontaine La Poya terminus by bus.

It is true that people do live in the centre of Grenoble, but they occupy flats which are above shops. The design of the system must be an environmental improvement for those living in the centre of Grenoble. It has replaced ordinary street traffic.

The tramway does pass through a residential area on its way to Alpexpo. Near the Arlequin stop, all the other traffic has been re-routed. Instead of having all the noise that is generated by cars, vans and lorries, there is only the noise that is produced by the tramway. The trams pass every few minutes, but the noise is much less than it was. Also, there is no residential property at ground floor level. That level is dedicated to garages and other services. No one has to look at the tramway from a ground floor flat. Above all, the street noise is much less than it was.

That is very different from the proposal that the west midlands scheme should pass through the Bromford estate. This system will not replace buses and other traffic. Instead, it will run through a grassed area in front of windows in living rooms. Residents on the Bromford estate look out at open land across which the metro system will run. No existing traffic will be replaced. That is very different from the situation in Grenoble. The hon. Member for Yardley may not have understood it, but that is the fact.

There is another difference. The mayor of Grenoble decided that one route should be introduced and not an entire network or system. I admire the way in which he approached the introduction of the tramway. There is only one route, which runs from Fontaine La Poya to Alpexpo. One route having been built, the mayor is extending the system so that it runs through the centre to the university. That is a sensible way to proceed. It is very different from the way in which the West Midlands passenger transport authority wants to proceed. The authority seeks to impose routes on people. I advised the authority years ago that the most effective way to gain public support for its ideas would be to construct one route so that residents could see it and hear it for themselves. Of course, the authority rejected that advice.

On Second Reading, I described the failure of Centro to consult my constituents. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South has said that we in Britain are obsessed with consultation. That statement will be greeted with ridicule by my constituents. Indeed, the Select Committee criticised the lack of consultation. It was not allowed to criticise the lack of consultation with my constituents, however, because it was not allowed to hear them, but there was no prior consultation.

A letter has recently come to light which was written by Robert J. Tarr, who was at the time the secretary of the West Midlands passenger transport authority. Four years ago he sent the letter to a councillor in my constituency. That was at the time of the abandonment of the previous scheme. He told the councillor that a decision had been made to abandon the scheme, and then he wrote:

"The Authority has further resolved that any future scheme for Rapid Transit will be subject to full consultation."

As I said during our previous debate, that did not happen. I should add, however, that Centro has sought frequently to avoid the blame for lack of consultation. It shelters behind the skirts of Birmingham city council. When I asked the city council why it did not consult my constituents, it said that that was Centro's job and not its,

the council's, responsibility. Centro and the city council keep on passing the buck from one to the other. The fact is that neither of them sought to consult my constituents before the proposals were published.

A senior local government officer in the city council has told some of my hon. Friends who represent Birmingham constituencies—this was in my hearing—that in future the council will ensure that they are consulted on metro routes. After making that statement he turned to me and said, "You see, Mr. Davis, the council learns from experience." I am glad of that. The council will ensure that there is consultation in future, and it has decided that it cannot rely on Centro. It seems, however, that the lesson has been learnt at the expense of my constituents, who were not consulted.

In March, shortly before Second Reading, the hon. Member for Yardley arranged a meeting between himself, myself and Mr. Tarr, who is now the director general of the passenger transport authority. As a result of that, a meeting took place with representatives of local residents in the Bromford and Firs estates. I described the results of that meeting on Second Reading. The meeting discussed the wishes of my constituents, their objections to the present route, and their suggestion for an alternative route north of the M6 which would not affect anyone. That route is supported by me, by councillors of all parties, by the local Member of the European Parliament and by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), through whose constituency the route would run.

The response to the alternative route was totally inadequate. Centro gave three reasons for rejecting it. First, it said that it was not physically possible because a spine road was planned for the northern side of the motorway, and it was impossible to find room for both a spine road and the metro. We knocked that argument on the head because both the chairman of Birmingham Heartlands and the city engineer's department said that it was possible. Secondly, Centro said that it would be too expensive as it would cost an additional £16·5 million, of which £12 million would be for a tunnel. Thirdly, Centro said that it would affect ridership figures because fewer people would use it if it was north of the motorway. That contradicts what the hon. Member for Yardley said earlier when he described how the route would link the airport, Birmingham international railway station and the national exhibition centre at one end to, at the other end, the international convention centre, Five Ways and the city centre. My constituents do not object to that link, but it should be routed along the other side of the motorway where it would not affect their homes.

Centro now says that the route is not about linking the national exhibition centre, the international convention centre, the airport and the railway station; it is about serving the people on the Bromford estate. It wants the metro to run in front of the windows of residents so that it can serve the residents. Centro claims that if the route were changed fewer people would use the metro. It says that if the line runs to the south of the motorway, it would carry between 1,900 and 2,200 passengers a day, but that if it ran to the north of the motorway, it would carry only 500 to 800 passengers a day.

We have held two more meetings with Centro since Second Reading, which is why I earlier asked hon. Members what they knew about the consultation that was supposed to take place.

Our actual discussions with Centro told a very different story from that told by the hon. Member for Yardley. He said that the metro is not intended to replace buses. He is wrong because Centro estimates that 75 per cent. of the ridership on the metro will be transferred from buses. It calculated the ridership by using a computer to work out how many passenger journeys on existing passenger transport would change to the metro if it were built where it wants it to be built. It estimated the number of people living within the radius of the route who would transfer from buses to the metro, and then added a third for new passengers and people transferring from cars. Contrary to what my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Walsall, South has been told—it may have been only in the context of his route, but I doubt that—Centro told my constituents that the metro is intended to take passengers from buses, not from cars. The proportion is 75 per cent. from buses and only 10 per cent. from cars. It is well known that congestion is caused by cars, not buses. It is not true to say that the metro is not intended to replace buses. I asked Centro what the effect would be on bus routes, but it said that, because it used a general rule of thumb, it could not estimate the effect on individual bus routes, but it estimated that 75 per cent. of the estimated 1,900 to 2,200 passengers a day would have transferred from buses.

Again contrary to what has been said in the debate, those calculations were based on the fares on the metro being the same as the fares on buses. In fact, we have now been told that the fares on the metro will be slightly higher than those on buses, so all the calculations are brought into question. The estimates of ridership, with which Centro sought to impress and confuse us, are bogus.

Mr. Michael Parker, the head of communications for Centro, eventually told us in May that, at our request, Centro had again studied the costs and, instead of costing £16·5 million to put the metro on the other side of the motorway, it would cost only £12·5 million—a reduction of one quarter—mainly because the cost of a tunnel had been reduced from £12 million to £6 million. Its previous estimates were way out. That £12·5 million is not an additional cost, as was suggested by the hon. Member for Yardley in our previous debate. The estimated cost for the route that would affect my constituents is £2·7 million, so the additional cost is only £10 million.

Mr. Bevan: As questions about the cost of moving the route from one side of the M6 to the other are continually being posed, I can tell the House that should that happen, besides the fact that only one third of the number of passengers would use the metro than would use it if it were built on the proposed route, the cost would be £12·5 million as against £6 million for the existing route.

The arguments are quite extraordinary. The hon. Gentleman continually protests, so I must ask him whether he supports the principle of the metro, or whether he is rubbishing the whole idea. Does he agree with the view of the majority of his party and that of the House, which supports the metro? If so, why does he attack it on every point?

Mr. Davis: I shall run through the figures again, slowly, so that the hon. Gentleman understands them, but first I must tell him that it is a sign of weakness that the promoters of the Bill need to attack the motives of their opponents. I have said several times that both I and my constituents do not oppose the concept of a metro. The

[Mr. Davis]

residents' association has made it clear to me, to Centro and to everyone who will listen that it is not attacking the concept; it is simply arguing that Centro has the wrong route and that it should adopt a different route, which would serve all of its purposes without affecting my constituents' homes. I am sure that at least my hon. Friends recognise that view and will not join the hon. Member for Yardley in his incredible attack on our integrity. The hon. Gentleman makes such an attack only because he knows that he is losing the argument.

In a letter dated 14 May 1990, Mr. Michael Parker said that the cost of the alternative route would be £12·5 million—a significant reduction on the previous estimate. I have always been told that the cost of the southern route, which would affect my constituency, would be £2·7 million. The hon. Member for Yardley is shaking his head. In fact, he makes my case for me. It appears that Centro has given him more up-to-date figures, because he just said that the cost of the southern route would be £6 million. My case is even stronger than I thought. It is a pity that we had to elicit those figures in the course of the debate, rather than Centro making them readily available; but, as a result of the intervention of the hon. Member for Yardley, we now know that the cost of the northern route is £12·5 million and that of the southern route £6 million. The difference is £6·5 million: even the hon. Member for Yardley cannot argue with that arithmetic.

The original estimate of the cost was £224 million; the hon. Member for Yardley has told us this evening that that figure has now been increased to £273 million. My constituents want to protect their environment—they want an ecologically friendly route. They want Centro to increase the £273 million figure by £6·5 million. That sounds like a lot of money until we place it in context: we should consider not only the £273 million, but the amount that Centro is to pay for tunnels elsewhere on the route.

In Birmingham's city centre, it is to spend £100 million on tunnels to avoid the problems that might result from running the metro through the city centre.

It is also to spend £7·5 million on a tunnel to take the metro from my constituency to that of the hon. Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills)—but it cannot afford £6·5 million for my constituents.

Centro also proposes to spend £12·5 million on tunnels to protect the environment in Solihull. It is not prepared to spend £6·5 million to protect the environment of my constituents. Naturally, my constituents want to know why their homes are less important than those of people living in Solihull, Meriden or the centre of Birmingham. They are entitled to an answer, but it has never been forthcoming. The constant refrain from Centro is that it cannot afford such an amount—but it can afford many times as much to carry out work elsewhere on the same route, and feels able to spend nearly twice as much to benefit the inhabitants of Solihull.

In fact, I suspect that the total cost of the alternative route is less than £12·5 million. In the last month, Centro has announced an amendment to its own route, part of which is being moved from the south to the north—as suggested by my constituents. Unfortunately, only part of the route is affected, and that part lies to the west of my constituency. In any event, the action is not being taken as a result of representations by my constituents, or out of consideration for their interests; the aim is to take account of the difficulties caused by the new Heartlands spine road, and we do not know how much that amendment will cost. All that we know is that it is possible, suddenly and with ease, to move the route slightly northwards to benefit a new road, but impossible to move it slightly northwards further along to benefit the existing residents of the Bromford estate. Where there is a will there is a way; Centro will not change the route to benefit people.

I am sorry to refer so often to my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South, but he made a long and interesting speech. He spoke of the need for flexibility, and said that everything possible should be done to meet the objections of residents on all the metro routes. He and I see eye to eye in that regard; indeed, it is the central issue. The so-called consultation that has taken place since Second Reading is regarded by residents' representatives as a farce: to put it bluntly, the officers of Centro gave the impression that they were simply going through the motions. Following the two meetingts that have been held since Second Reading, my constituents are bitterly disappointed by the officers' attitude.

I wish to be fair: Mr. Tarr was not present, although he had set up the consultation, along with the hon. Member for Yardley. We never saw him again; he left the business to others to whom he delegated, and it is those others whom my constituents have criticised. But we cannot simply blame officers.

My constituents were also invited to "have a chat"—in his words—with the chairman of the Centro passenger transport authority, and they asked me to accompany them so that I could hear what was said. They told the chairman that they had not had much joy from his officers. It is with great regret that I must tell the House—this is very important in the light of what my hon. Friends have said—that the chairman told my constituents, in my hearing—I wrote down his words at the time—"We have drawn our battle plans and are absolutely entrenched." That is not a sign of flexibility or magnanimity. He went on to say, "There is no chance of rerouting—not since the Bill was put in Parliament." So much for magnanimity, flexibility, consultation, and a willingness to talk about the effects of the development.

Mr. George: If my hon. Friend were a student of military history, he might reach the conclusion that the most resolute statements are sometimes followed by a quite different course of action. Therefore, he should not take such a rebuff as necessarily a demonstration of intolerance. In a survey, the system that my hon. Friend himself paid to inspect had the support of 93 per cent. of the residents of Grenoble. So, although it may not have met his requirements, surely that indicates reasonable acceptance by the people of Grenoble of the system that they had the wisdom to establish.

Mr. Davis: Having visited that system, I would expect such a result. I am not sure that my hon. Friend has visited Grenoble, and it may not be necessary for him to do so. Nevertheless, I am not at all surprised that 93 per cent. of the residents there think that the system is a good thing—as I would do if I were a resident of Grenoble. I would be amazed if less than 93 per cent. of the people living along the route thought it a good thing. That would be a much tougher test, and I am only surprised that 7 per cent. of those polled did not think that it was a good thing.

The reason for that belief is that Grenoble has a very different kind of route. Where it runs along streets where people live, it has replaced city centre traffic—cars, buses, vans, lorries, and heavy goods vehicles. The local residents have witnessed a tremendous improvement in their environment. However, one cannot translate the Grenoble experience to the proposal for the route through my constituency. If my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South can find the time to visit the location, I believe that he will reach the same conclusion.

Where the route in Grenoble would have affected residents, it has been ended, and buses take passengers to the terminals. It is very impressive. That is done in the socialist part—the suburb across the river, which comes under a different local authority. Passengers on the trams told me that the system was an improvement on what they had before. Of course they would think that, because it has taken a great deal of traffic off the streets. That will not happen in the case of the metro route in my constituency because it will bring incremental nuisance to people's very doorsteps.

To refer again to my hon. Friend's mention of military history, I recall that the words, "They shall not pass" went unheeded, but it is clear to me that Centro will not concede any amendments unless they are forced to do so. Centro will not be flexible. Centro's own chairman said:

"The route will only change if the Bill comes out of the sausage machine."

By the sausage machine, he meant this House. It is our job to change the route, because Centro will not do that. Centro's chairman also said that there was no chance of negotiations because the Bill was already before Parliament.

If my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South thinks that there is any flexibility or willingness to consult, negotiate and subsequently to amend or change the route on Centro's part, he has been misled and will be bitterly disappointed. It may be a different story in respect of route 3, but I can comment only on route 2—and then only in so far as it affects my constituents.

I turn to the shabbiest aspect of the whole affair—Centro's decision to challenge the locus standi of my constituents to petition against the Bill and thus their right to be heard by a Committee of this House. In the Second Reading debate, the hon. Member for Yardley said:

"Granting a Second Reading will merely allow the Bill to proceed to Committee where it will be fully examined".

Centro made sure that it was not fully examined.

The Minister for Public Transport told the House:

"there will be the opportunity to present objections to the Select Committee."—[*Official Report*, 5 March 1990; Vol. 168, c. 642 and 650.]

There was no opportunity for my constituents to present their objections to the Select Committee.

Centro appealed to the Court of Referees. There were 35 petitions against the Bill from banks, property developers, businesses, education institutions, statutory undertakings of British Rail and many other organisations, including Foseco. Centro only objected to the five residents groups and it persisted in objecting to my constituents from the Bromford estate and the Firs estate. That decision by Centro was widely criticised during the Second Reading debate by supporters and opponents of the Bill. Centro's friends urged it to think again. My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) said:

"I am convinced of the relevance of some of their objections. However, to deny objectors the right to put a case before a Committee of the House is scarcely good public relations.

I am aware of the recommendations of the Select Committee, behind which Centro seeks to shield itself from criticism. It has nothing to fear from criticism and I wish that it had not taken the action that it took."—[*Official Report*, 5 March 1990; Vol. 168, c. 652.]

He said later that the objectors should have been allowed to put their fears to the appropriate Committee of the House without being challenged.

Hon. Members who voted for the Bill urged Centro to drop its technical and legal objections, which would prevent ordinary people from being heard by the Committee and by Members of Parliament. I am sorry to have to tell the House that all those pleas fell on deaf ears. Centro refused to listen to their friends any more than to their opponents.

The hon. Member for Yardley said that 35 objections were considered by the Committee. He is wrong. I am sure that he did not intend to mislead the House, but 35 objections were not considered by the Committee. The objections from four residents groups—the most important as far as I am concerned being the petition from people in my constituency—were not considered by the Committee and could not be considered because of Centro's deliberate action.

The hon. Member for Yardley said that anyone with a land-holding interest can have his objections considered. A land-holding interest means that one owns the house, garden or land on which the route will run. That is not the case, as Centro will run a line not across gardens but just in front of houses and gardens belonging to my constituents and so they do not have a land-holding interest. Apparently, we have laws which protect land holders and owners, but we do not have laws to protect residents.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South mentioned the Court of Referees, but it was called on to rule only because Centro appealed to it. If one discusses the issue with Centro, it blames Sherwood—the parliamentary agent—and says that it is in the hands of its parliamentary agent. Alternatively, Centro blames the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure, and it refers to that Committee's recommendation that:

"Promoters should be encouraged to police the rules of *locus standi*, and private bill committees should not treat a reasonable but unsuccessful challenge as a point of prejudice."

That is quite true. The Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure recommended that promoters should be encouraged to police the rules of locus standi, but I doubt whether that Committee ever envisaged that someone would behave in the way that Centro has behaved by objecting to the right of people who are going to lose the benefits of their homes to be heard by a Select Committee of the House.

Since Centro is so fond of quoting the reports of the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure, I remind the House that one of the early recommendations of the Joint Committee was:

"Private bill committees should treat a wilful failure by any party to consult or negotiate as a point of prejudice."

Centro neglected to consult or negotiate. I am not surprised that it had to stop my constituents from saying so to the Select Committee which considered the Bill.

[Mr. Davis]

The representatives of my constituents say, and I believe them, that if they had been allowed to put their case to an independent body, a Committee of Members of Parliament, and to be subjected to questioning by the Committee and Centro, and that if the Committee had then found against them, they would have accepted the decision, even though they would have been very disappointed. They would have felt that they had had their opportunity to explain why they objected to the route and preferred a different one. However, they were denied that opportunity. They were denied that hearing by Centro, which used their poll tax and their rates to employ barristers and parliamentary agents to argue before the Court of Referees that they should be denied a hearing.

Centro blocked the right of my constituents to be heard. Their voices have been stifled. One is bound to ask, what was Centro afraid of? Why did it want to stop residents in my constituency and in other constituencies explaining their point of view? Is Centro scared that its case will not stand up to cross-examination by ordinary residents with their ordinary logic, feelings and skills? Centro knows that its case is weak, otherwise it would not have behaved so undemocratically.

If the carry-over motion does not succeed, we shall be telling Centro to go back and do its job properly by consulting people properly. We shall also be telling it that if people are dissatisfied they should be allowed to put their case to a Committee of Members of Parliament. In a democracy, people are surely entitled to nothing less.

9.16 pm

Mr. Dennis Turner (Wolverhampton, South-East): I shall seek to follow your edict, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the procedural nature of the motion.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) gave a historical account of the metro. As he said, it is supported by the seven authorities that make up the west midlands conurbation. The first Bill, in 1989, was unopposed. This Bill would empower the creation of two lines—the first from Birmingham to the international airport, the second from Wolverhampton to Walsall and then through the black country to Dudley.

I welcome the Minister's statement that the Government support the carry-over motion. My hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) said that the Government ought soon to make known their intentions regarding finance so that the metro lines can be developed. I hope that the autumn statement will contain a positive contribution to the scheme. The hon. Member for Yardley made it clear that the carry-over motion is needed so that advantage can be taken of Government finance. A clear Government commitment to the scheme is needed.

The hon. Member for Meriden (Mr. Mills) said that he had considered various aspects of the project. On Second Reading he rightly made an impassioned plea on behalf of his constituents. We appreciate the fact that he has now taken a fresh look at the carry-over motion.

I shall try to ensure that the hon. Gentleman gives us his support by responding to the questions that he asked. He wanted a guarantee that the shared carriageway would not be a hazard. I understand that Solihull's highways department, the custodian of highway safety, has already given that guarantee. The hon. Gentleman said that the representations made by CARE and the recommendations of the Opposed Private Bill Committee should be honoured and enshrined in law. I understand that Centro is prepared to give that legal undertaking. Likewise, it is happy to give undertakings on traffic lights and stop locations.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) made an excellent and comprehensive speech. His positive remarks highlighted his belief in the light rail system and the contribution that it can make to our lives in the next century.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the most inspiring features of today's debate has been that all of the seven authorities agree? We are here to represent those who represent the local people. If seven authorities agree, is it not better, instead of continuing to praise their worth, to show our worth by voting on the issue so that we can forward what those seven authorities—which are not all Labour, however unusual that may sometimes seem—think is right? May we vote on this matter to show that, as the hon. Gentleman said, we all agree with them? Is this not the time for action, not just for words?

Mr. Turner: I very much appreciate the hon. Gentleman's comments; in so many of his comments, he shows wisdom. I endorse entirely what he says. The democratic process has been at work and it is of great importance that local authorities in the west midlands speak with one voice and say that they want this metro to proceed into the 21st century.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South succinctly mentioned how much investment has already been made in the project. If the motion were not passed, that money would be wasted and the opportunity that we have now for speedy development—we hope with Government finance—would be lost. My hon. Friend made several germane points and I appreciated his contribution to the debate.

I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) would agree that most of his speech tonight was from Second Reading. We expected that he would rehearse the arguments that he made on behalf of his constituency with integrity and tenacity. He has battled courageously on his constituents' behalf. The House should respect him for what he has done and his constituents should be proud of his contribution. I mean that sincerely although I am sad to say that, on this occasion, I disagree with him.

I understand the reasons why my hon. Friend has advanced such arguments. He has quoted what different people have said, but I am sure that he understands that what has happened goes back to the first principles of democratic accountability. Whatever my hon. Friend says, the fact remains that Birmingham city council has approved the line of route in accordance with the democratic process and the committee structure. My hon. Friend referred to a city officer saying, "We may have learnt the lesson." But the elected members of Birmingham city council—with the exception, as my hon. Friend rightly said, of his ward councillors—have taken a different view.

Mr. Terry Davis: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks, but he is slightly mistaken. I was talking not only about the councillors in that ward but about all the councillors in my constituency—a far greater number.

Mr. Turner: I am sorry. I accept that a number of councillors in my hon. Friend's constituency oppose the line of route.

Mr. Davis: All of them.

Mr. Turner: I accept that my hon. Friend was talking about all of them, including the MEP.

I repeat, however, that, even before going out to consultation, the local authority had taken a democratic look at the proposals. My hon. Friend will accept that the starting point for the planning that went into that part of the route—like every other part—was set by the local authority and involved members and officers of that authority.

Mr. Davis: My hon. Friend makes a fair point. He is absolutely right that officers of the city council and some city councillors considered routes in secrecy, behind closed doors. But they never discussed their proposals with the local councillors representing my ward or, indeed, nearby wards. The chief executive of the city council has told me that he regarded it as Centro's responsibility, rather than that of the city council, to consult the local people and local councillors. Centro says that it was regarded as the city council's responsibility. That is little comfort; I am not bothered about that. They are both to blame and they have learnt their lesson. The trouble is that they are not willing to repair the damage that they have done to my constituents.

Mr. Turner: I hear what my hon. Friend says, but I rest my case. Wolverhampton, which dealt with the first phase and the original Bill, was certainly involved right from the outset. Elected representatives were fully involved in the process.

We know the arguments advanced by Centro and we know that my hon. Friend opposes them. The first concerns cost. We can reasonably accept the argument that there is a difference in cost between the route proposed by the residents and the route proposed in the Bill. The second concerns the movement of people, and the promoters' route would touch far more people than would the alternative FORCE proposal for a route further north of the M6. Strong arguments have been advanced, but not one of them has been accepted by my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill or, as he rightly says, by the residents of his area who feel that there is a preferable route available.

I understand my hon. Friend's argument about his constituency and those who are directly affected on that relatively small piece of track which is the bone of contention. However, when we consider that we are talking about 150 miles of track, it must be common sense that within the whole of that area some people will be unhappy and dissatisfied by the proposed route. Although I accept my hon. Friend's argument and that he is concerned about the route, we must decide in favour of this carry-over motion. I know that hon. Members are anxious to get into the Lobby and vote for this majestic concept.

The people in the black country and in Birmingham have had 200 years of industrial revolution. So far, before today, we have failed to develop the proper links which should be developed between the black country, Birmingham and the west midlands. I want to share with hon. Members a homily and a simple truth about the black country. If a courting couple travel from Tividale to Bradley, people still come out of their homes to look at them. That is how our people have been divided for 200 years between the black country, Birmingham and the west midlands as a whole.

The canal network in the black country was designed for goods, not people. The local train service was demolished by Mr. Beeching. Now the buses churn out pollution. This new metro can take us into the 21st century. For social, environmental and transport developments, let us go metro tonight. Let us pass the motion and consider the Bill in the next Session. We can then give the people in our conurbation the kind of transport that they will need as we move into the 21st century.

9.32 pm

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I understand some of the things which have been said, particularly by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis). If there are changes, we experience the NIMBY principle—not in my bloody back yard, you don't——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That is coarse language which is uncharacteristic of the hon. Gentleman. I hope that he will not use it again.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I will not use it again. However, perhaps I should refer to the FLIMBY principle which I take to mean, "Not in my flipping back yard, you don't."

We all agree that there should be change. On occasions we all agree that a road is needed here, an airport or a railway there. I will not repeat what I said earlier because of your sensitivities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but when those needs arise people say, "Not in our flipping back yard, you don't." That is what change involves. Someone's flipping back yard is going to be affected.

It is a little like sacrifice. People often say that we must all make sacrifices. I agree with sacrifice, so long as it starts from the chap next door but one. The hon. Member for Hodge Hill rightly said that the proposal may well be good for greater Birmingham or the greater west midlands, but like the rest of us he is elected to represent his constituency. The hon. Gentleman must accept, however, that in our own individual patches unpleasant things sometimes have to happen for the greater good of our constituencies or our areas.

Mr. Terry Davis: Will the hon. Gentleman explain who would be adversely affected by the alternative route put forward by my constituents?

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Somebody is always adversely affected by any change in anything.

Mr. Davis: The hon. Gentleman has come into the debate late and has therefore not had the benefit of a full exposition of the matter. Will he now anwer the question that I put to him directly? He has accused my constituents of taking the NIMBY attitude. That has been said by Mr. Parker, the spokesman for Centro, but it has been denied

[Mr. Davis]

by my constituents many times. I am not seeking to move this into someone else's backyard—I am seeking to move it where there are no backyards.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Of course that point will be dealt with, as all such things are, by every so-called expert. I state a general principle. All hon. Members have seen such things happen. I saw it happen in Selly Oak with the Bristol rail. Somebody sometimes wants to widen one side instead of the other. One side says, "Great," and the other side says, "No."

As a general agreement has been obtained, can the House decide on the broad principle that nothing in this life will satisfy everyone? As my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) and others have said, we must make progress. If we do not make progress now, all progress will come to an end. I hope that the hon. Member for Hodge Hill will agree with that view.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 183, Noes 8.

Division No. 326] **[9.38 pm**

AYES

Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Crowther, Stan
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dykes, Hugh
Fallon, Michael
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Galbraith, Sam
Gale, Roger
George, Bruce
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gordon, Mildred
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Leadbitter, Ted
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Ian
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Michael, Alun
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pike, Peter L.
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ruddock, Joan
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Short, Clare
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stott, Roger
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaz, Keith
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winnick, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Maureen Hicks, and
Mr. Roger King.

NOES

Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Cryer, Bob
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Hardy, Peter
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Skinner, Dennis
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the Midland Metro Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

Ordered,

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

Ordered,

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

Ordered,

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

Ordered,

That all Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill, together with any minutes of evidence taken before the Committee on the Bill, shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

Ordered,

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

Ordered,

That in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

Ordered,

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill

Order for Third Reading read.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I call Mr. Richard Holt.

9.50 pm

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh) *rose——*

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You will recall that last week the Redbridge London Borough Council Bill was withdrawn because of technical imperfections. Have the Clerks obtained from the Committee the minutes for the Bill that we are about to debate? Have they also obtained the record held by the Clerks in the Private Bill Office? I understand that there could be a discrepancy between the two and I should be grateful for your guidance. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Hon. Members not taking part in the debate should leave the Chamber quickly and quietly.

Mr. Cryer: I am sorry about the interruption from the parliamentary agents to whom more discipline might be applied. I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for curbing their activities. I want to know whether the minutes of the Committee and the record held by the Clerk to the Private Bill Office for this Bill are before you or the Clerk of the House so that we can seek guidance if necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand that the report of the Committee is available.

Mr. Cryer: I am asking whether the Clerks have it, because it is an important source of guidance to the House in debating the Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure that whatever documentation is relevant and necessary for our debate is available to hon. Members.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): We heard that story last week on the Redbridge Bill and for about half an hour we were told that we were debating clause 6. After some hurried consultations we were told that clause 6 was not in the Bill. You were in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the hon. Member who was moving the Bill had to abandon it. We just want to make absolutely sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) does not start to debate a part of the Bill that is not there for hon. Members to examine. The Redbridge Bill was introduced in the Lords, nobody spoke on it and it went through like a dose of Epsom salts. Let us be sure this time. Are we in order? It is a fair question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My recollection of the events of last week is a little different from that of the hon. Gentleman. When the matter to which he refers was raised I suggested that, pending clarification, we should proceed with the debate. When I eventually received the information that was relevant to the point of order I took the appropriate course. We should sensibly proceed that way again. I am assured by the Clerk that all the relevant information is available.

Mr. Holt: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As all the relevant information is before the House, I should like your guidance on the distinction that seems to exist between the record of the proceedings of the Committee, which is held by the Clerk in the Private Bill Office, and its formal decisions, including those taken in private session, and the minutes of the meeting in public session. A decision was made about the placement of the headquarters of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That is a matter that can be dealt with in the debate.

Mr. Barnes *rose——*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Now that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) has moved the Third Reading, it may be useful if I tell the House that Mr. Speaker has not selected the amendment for recommittal in the name of the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) and others. The matters that gave rise to that amendment can be discussed during the debate if hon. Members so wish. Is that the point that the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) is raising?

Mr. Barnes: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not making a point about the placement of the authority, which is a matter for debate. I am making a point about the distinction between the record of the proceedings which is held in the Private Bill Office and the minutes. There is a clear discrepancy between the two on one point. The minutes say that the issue of the headquarters of the authority will be dealt with in the House of Lords, and that the promoters have agreed to that. However, the records of the proceedings of the Committee do not include that undertaking. What is the significance of that discrepancy? Should we adjourn until it is resolved?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: For the purpose of our Standing Orders and our procedures, the relevant record is that contained in the official record of the proceedings of the Committee. I understand that that is available.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am grateful to you for letting the House know that the amendment in my name and that of my hon. Friends has not been selected by Mr. Speaker. The point of order on which I seek your guidance relates to a point made in the Committee examining the King's Cross Railways Bill, which said that any amendments agreed in Committee ought to be taken on the Floor of the House. I respect and accept the decision made by Mr. Speaker about our amendment, but that Committee said:

> "We are quite clear that if a House of Commons committee considers that a Bill referred to it stands in need of amendment, then it is the duty of that committee to make that amendment."

The Committee examining the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill has acted in a way condemned by the King's Cross Railways Bill Committee. If the amendment that the Committee wanted but did not make is not inserted into the Bill, the other place may take a contrary view. If it does so, this House will have no further opportunity to amend the Bill. Thus, the will of the Commons will be frustrated and that is hardly in the interests of parliamentary democracy. Although the promoters have undertaken to propose an amendment to the Bill in the other place, they have done so only in order to avoid further scrutiny on Report. That is undemocratic and weakens the House of Commons.

The House of Commons has a duty to maintain a vigilant watch over the Executive and hold it to account. Democracy is weakened by a thousand small cuts. While the failure of the Committee to refer the Bill back for Report in the House is a small cut, it is an important one.

On 21 June 1990, the Government issued a consultation document called "Private Bills and New Procedures". May I have your assurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the points of order that we have made tonight, as the Bill returns to the Floor of the House from Committee, will be passed on to those who prepared the document, so that the House can exercise its right to protest and say that this is wrong? The House of Commons must look at amendments coming from Committee. The Committee cannot decide simply to have these referred to the other place, thereby depriving Members of Parliament of a proper and valid scrutiny over the Executive.

It being Ten o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *interrupted the proceedings.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Motion made, and Question put,

That, at this day's sitting, the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

The House divided: Ayes 158, Noes 50.

Division No. 327] **[10 pm**

AYES

Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*

Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tom Sackville and
Mr. Tim Boswell.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Buckley, George J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Flynn, Paul
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hardy, Peter
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Michael, Alun
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Ruddock, Joan
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ronnie Campbell and
Mr. John Cummings.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Let me now deal with the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell). I understand his concern, but I am sure that he would not expect me to comment on either the proceedings or the conclusions of the Committee that considered the Bill. He will have an opportunity to air the matters to which he alluded, and it will be for the House to make a decision in the light of what is said in the debate. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) may choose to comment on what is said before the end of our proceedings.

10.13 pm

Mr. Holt: Let me continue what I was saying some 20 minutes ago, when I moved the Third Reading.

There is no need for me to repeat in detail the arguments for the Bill, which the Committee has already scrutinised exhaustively. The Committee found, after lengthy consideration, that the promoters had made their case for the preamble. As the Bill's sponsor, I wish to put on record my thanks to the Chairman and members of the Committee for their diligence and hard work.

The promoters agreed to a number of undertakings during the Committee stage. First, and to answer the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell), the head office of the successor company will be located in Cleveland. That will be so only for as long as there is a county named Cleveland, but it is my wish and that of most of my constituents that the county name reverts to North Yorkshire as soon as possible. When that happens, the company's headquarters will remain where they are, but the county boundaries will be removed or changed. Nevertheless, the headquarters will remain on Teesside, which is the best way that we can phrase the undertaking given by the authority.

Secondly, the authority recognises the significance of this development and fully agrees that an employee share scheme be established in respect of the holding company. That aspect was the subject of considerable debate in Committee, and the promoters are happy to give an undertaking that employers will have that right. Employee involvement in the ownership of the business has always been viewed by the authority as an important factor alongside other local interests, and we want to maintain that policy.

Since privatisation began, Teesside has enjoyed a considerable upsurge in business. Only 10 days ago, albeit without a great deal of national publicity, we launched a roll-on/roll-off ferry service that will operate between Teesside and Hamburg twice a week. That will open up a great deal more of eastern Europe's market potential to Teesside and to the people living there.

Our third undertaking is that the shareholders in any employee share scheme will carry full voting rights to the successor company. We give that undertaking freely and openly, so that everyone knows that the points raised in Committee have been fully understood by the Tees and Hartlepool authority. I repeat the clear undertakings that it has given.

It is a pity that Labour Members have opposed this opportunity for Teesside, but it is not untypical. Only my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) and I have been fighting for the steel industry on Teesside. Scottish Labour Members and my hon. Friends who represent Scottish constituencies have all been fighting for the Scottish steel industry. Whenever there have been debates or questions about the steel industry over the past few months, not one Labour Member has spoken in

[Mr. Holt]

support of steel workers on Teesside. We deprecate that in the way that we deprecate the fact that Labour Members failed to support the workers in the Tees port, the developments there, and the jobs and economic well-being that will flow from that first privatisation of a port.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): As the hon. Gentleman has described what the promoters have done since the earlier stages of the Bill, perhaps he will give us their view of the levy that has been imposed on the proceeds of the privatisation since the Bill was first introduced, and which will take perhaps two thirds of the amount for the central Exchequer. Are the promoters happy about that? Does it in any way change their view of the Bill?

Mr. Holt: Naturally, when one takes money from someone—and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is no different—they are not particularly happy about it. Nevertheless, the promoters are happy that they are losing only half the money. They might have lost the whole lot. The money that they retain will be reinvested in the port authority and will provide job security for the future. I again commend the Bill to the House.

10.18 pm

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): One of the most significant aspects of the Bill is that the Government have not remained neutral. In the debate on the Midland Metro Bill, the Minister for Aviation and Shipping made a short intervention in which he gave no encouragement to the promoters of that Bill that they could look forward to any grant under section 56. He said that, as always with a private Bill, the Government were neutral. How the Minister dares to say that, despite the evidence of the *Official Report* especially in relation to this Bill, is beyond the belief of any reasonable person in the House.

Before I deal with some of the aspects proper to Third Reading, I congratulate the members of the Committee who worked exceedingly hard during hearings on the Bill dealing with the submissions by the proposer and petitioners. The petitioners and the proposer also worked exceedingly hard. Having said that, one would have thought that hon. Members should be reasonably happy but, time and again, especially in this Session, hon. Members have been increasingly worried about the private Bill procedure.

The promoters of the Midland Metro Bill, which we have just finished considering, said that they had spent about £1 million and the petitioners said that they had spent many thousands of pounds. A large amount of money has been spent on the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill. However, where the functions of the House of Commons are concerned, hon. Members with local knowledge are virtually neutralised. Four hon. Members and the Chairman sit upstairs and objectors have little impact Even though the petitioners perform their services very well, it is at great expense to the authorities and not to the satisfaction of the objectors.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend accept that one of the difficulties with the private Bill procedure, and with this Bill in particular, is that if the Chair refuses to use his casting vote to allow any hon. Member to talk—as on this occasion—it cuts out any sound and reasonable objections which ordinary citizens are prepared to advance?

Mr. Leadbitter: That is the case.

Let us forget for one moment the presumption that because the proposers proposed the Bill they are right. The Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority has a chairman, a chief executive, a kind of secretary and 10 non-executive members. Between them, they have been dilly-dallying with the Government for the past few months. Yet hon. Members who, with great respect to those officers, have greater experience of the area have a right to be heard, too. It should not be implied that hon. Members are not competent to have an input into the argument when we have had many more years experience and service in the area than any of those people, including the hon. Members for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) and for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin). Let us make that clear.

What is an important objection? We will come to the contradictions in a minute. Mr. Bartlett, the counsel for the proposers, was so anxious to make a good case that from the moment he made his submission in Committee he referred to section 12(3) of the Tees and Hartlepools Port Authority Act 1966 and pointed out that responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the port area were a constraint. He did not want them. That was his first argument.

Mr. Hackney, the chief executive of the authority, was not running on quite the same track as his secretary. In Committee he referred to those responsibilities and said that a special clause protected Hartlepool. I fail to see how a senior officer can say that a section will look after the interests of the infrastructure, of the breakwater and the piers, when counsel in Committee says that Hartlepool wants none of those constraints. He used the word "constraint" as a reason for promoting the private Bill. If the Bill is passed, we know what will happen to the protection of the port. The history of the last 10 years shows that questions have been raised about invoking the responsibilities enshrined in section 12(3) of the Act.

Hartlepool borough council's petition refers, as a matter of primary importance, to section 12. It is worth reading what the petition says:

> "Section 12(3) of the Act of 1966 states that the authority shall 'take such steps from time to time as may be necessary for the maintenance of so much of the harbour as comprises the existing port of Hartlepool in a condition not less efficient, safe and commodious than it is at the passing of this Act.'"

I know how important that section is because I was the Member who had it written into the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill of 1966. The clause was devised by me, the then town clerk of Hartlepool borough council, and the parliamentary commissioners. The clause had legal backing and it was accepted by the House. Since then, however, the Tees and Hartlepool port authority has been reticent about invoking it and in the case of this Bill has said that it is a constraint. On page 12 of its proof of evidence to the Committee, referring to the section, Hartlepool borough council says:

> "The importance of the port and harbour to the well being of the community has long been recognised by the council. Whilst the port authority indicate that the proposed legislation would preserve the burden of that duty upon the operating company, none the less the council suspect that should other interests or priorities demand, the discharge of that duty will be diminished under the proposed arrangements."

That is the truth of the matter.

Another truth is that 10 years ago Hartlepool borough council did not support that section of the 1966 Act. There was a long-drawn-out argument about the protection of the breakwater. Contrary to what is said in its proof of evidence, Hartlepool borough council did not recognise its importance for a long time, but it has come round to recognising it now.

Mr. Skinner: Why did it not recognise it then?

Mr. Leadbitter: It was suffering from incompetent advice. Other legal advisers are helping us now. In Committee, the port's chief executive said that the section is a protection for Hartlepool but to make out a case for the private Bill counsel said that it was a constraint. Men who are supposed to be honourable and intellectually attuned are contradicting each other. We do not have what I call truth in the House of Commons. That is not unusual. I have been here for a quarter of a century. During that time I have found that it is easier to pursue a lie than to find the truth. The only problem is that when one does find the truth certain people get very angry about it.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend plays a leading role in this place. He is on the Chairmen's Panel. Has he noticed that during the past few days the well-paid parliamentary agents who play such a significant role in private Bills, including the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill,

[Mr. Skinner]

have got it wrong? Those tin-pot agents, if I may so describe them, introduced a Bill last week. Much to the embarrassment of Mr. Deputy Speaker, who, as always, was trying manfully to get it through, my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) discovered that the parliamentary agents, with their fat wallets, paid for by the taxpayer, had left out clause 6 which had gone through the House of Lords on the nod, not being spoken on by anyone. The result in the House of Commons was like a Monty Python show, talking about clause 6 when it was not there.

I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) has scanned the Bill because I heard him speaking on it once before. I hope he has looked at it carefully, because there is a chance that something is missing. These agents, who are similar to the ones who advised Hartlepool council 10 years ago, may well have cocked it up again. My hon. Friend should be ultra-careful about this as there is some chance that we can stop the whole show.

Mr. Leadbitter: It is possible that we could still do that. My hon. Friend mentions legal fallibilities.

Mr. Skinner: That is one way of putting it. No wonder my hon. Friend is on the Chairmen's Panel.

Mr. Cryer: No wonder my hon. Friend smoked out Blunt.

Mr. Leadbitter: It was harder to smoke out Blunt than it was to smoke out the promoters of this Bill.

I turn to the saga of the 50 per cent. sale of the proceeds, which is going into the pockets——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will avoid turning his back on the Chair. I seem to be missing his jests.

Mr. Leadbitter: This part of the story is at least fascinating. We shall take with it the saga of the enabling legislation.

I do not know whether the chief executive was a delegate at the Tory party conference, but we were receiving communications from Bournemouth from time to time. I thought that the Secretary of State for Transport had enough trouble without him being there. The chief executive's statements were outdone by the more robust language of the secretary of Tees and Hartlepool port authority, a man who suffers from a lack of vocabulary and, at times, politeness.

Mr. Cryer: One of the questions that we continually raise during proceedings on private Bills is the involvement of the Government. My hon. Friend said that an executive was at the Conservative party conference. I wonder if he could give us further information about that as it implies seedy collaboration between members of the Conservative party and others to get the Bill through. That would be quite outside Standing Orders and the honour of this ancient and honourable House.

Mr. Leadbitter: It is more than a coincidence that we have this private Bill and the chief executive in Bournemouth. The chief executive is not an old-age pensioner. He is not thinking of retiring there, but he may say that it was a pure accident that the conference took place while he was visiting that very interesting town.

I have looked through some of the epistles, the communiqués and their dates. On 14 May 1990, during a debate on the Clyde Port Authority Bill, it was indicated that 50 per cent. of the sale of the shares would be paid to the Exchequer whenever a trust port was converted into a company. The percentage was agreed as a broad figure for all trust ports. The House should remember that. The chief executive—through his secretary, of course—claimed that the 50 per cent. left was a gain. He gave the impression that he had negotiated the figure, but the *Official Report* gives the lie to that. Some of these officials are so imbecilic that they think that Members of Parliament cannot read.

Mr. Beith: The situation is worse than that which the hon. Gentleman has described. On 3 July, in the Standing Committee on the Finance Bill, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury admitted in answer to me that the levy would amount to a tax charge of 67·5 per cent. He put it another way. He said that that

"means a cash injection of 32·5 per cent."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 3 July 1990; c. 568.]

In other words, what the taxman leaves us is a cash injection. By July, the Government had made it clear that, with the combined effect of the levy and capital gains tax, they expected to get more than two thirds of the proceeds.

Mr. Leadbitter: I accept that observation. The hon. Gentleman expressed his concern in my constituency, and I took note of that. The hon. Gentleman jumped to July. I want to go back to June. On 27 June 1990, the Clyde port authority sent a letter to worthy hon. Members, such as myself, and said:

"We share the Government's view"—

that means that the Government have expressed a view for the authority to share——

"on privatisation".

At the end of the letter, the authority adds:

"This Bill is with the full backing and support of the Government."

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping must not sit there naughtily, feeling protected and pretending neutrality. We know what is being done by his mate in a higher office. It is a sham, even if he calls it democracy.

On 15 October 1990, we come back to our worthy secretary of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. That man has had more mention in the House of Commons than in the whole of the rest of his public life——

Mr. Skinner: You don't like him, do you Ted?

Mr. Leadbitter: I feel disposed to limit my feelings of friendship.

The secretary of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority wrote:

"We have also won the return of the 50 per cent. proceeds."

He had nothing to do with it—he was told what to do. Later on, the chief executive said that it came as no surprise to him. They cannot even work together. As I said, when we reach privatisation in four months' time, we shall watch their salaries go up. But they have not even worked for it. They are not even in harmony with each other.

On 5 October, the chief executive of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, in an enclosure to the management and staff, wrote:

"Delay on this Bill could lose us our lead and the benefit of the return to the business of 50 per cent. of the proceeds."
What wishful thinking. He is saying, "Do not oppose the Bill. Do not go through the democratic process because if there is a delay we shall lose our lead and run the risk of not getting our 50 per cent." Suppose that someone pinches half my money. If I then say that what I have left is a gain, I ought to be seeking psychiatric treatment.

On 9 October 1990, the secretary of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, on the announcement of the enabling legislation, said this:

"The situation that we foresaw has now materialised."
I think that he was a bit tired; he had been overworked and had not read the *Official Report*. Way back in March 1988, long before the Tees and Hartlepool port authority thought about a private Bill, the Secretary of State, in a talk to the ports federation, had made it clear that he saw advantages in privatisation. He then said that he was very disappointed by the lack of response. There is no real upsurge of support for privatisation and he has been bludgeoning on since then.

The proof of the pudding is always in the eating. The chief executive answered the counsel for the petitioners about when he became disenchanted with the present constitution. The House will be pleased to know that this Bill reached this House having received no consultation. It was not challenged in Committee and the counsel for the petitioners pointed out bluntly in the last sitting that there had been no consultation. The board agreed the Bill's contents in June 1989 and the Bill reached the Private Bill Office just before the closing date of 27 November. The summer recess split the board's agreeing the Bill and its appearance in the Private Bill Office, so consultation as we understand it did not take place. Only one or two little representations which had already been agreed upon were discussed.

The secretary of the board claims that the board foresaw, but it foresaw nothing. That is how the Bill's promoters have been twisting the words around. Whether they like it or not, they must accept that the petitioners have addressed the facts. They have not tried to distort or to misrepresent. The latter is characteristic of the promoters. The House should be warned that, when we have an opportunity to discuss the new private Bill procedures, never again will we find ourselves in a position of incurring great expense as with public or enabling Bills.

The House is more than likely to grant the Bill its Third Reading and to pass it to the other place, but the procedure leaves a bad taste in the mouth because a handful of people have determined the course of events. They have tried to suggest to hon. Members and to the petitioners that they have behaved properly, but they have not.

Mr. Bartlett was counsel for the petitioners in the Committee upstairs. On 15 May 1990 he said:

"So it is by this means that the proceeds of the sale are returned to the holding company and become available for investment in the expansion of the business. Those will be reduced on the basis of the current indications of the Government by some 50 per cent. Taxation might reduce it further, but it is those proceeds which become available as a result of selling the shares."
The whole of the property, all the assets and the shares would be sold and instead of all the proceeds going back to the port as they should, the Government are going to take half. Under the present system, the port's revenues go into port expansion programmes or to reduce charges. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) referred to one of the port authority's new ventures. That has been implemented under the present legislation, not under the new proposals.

The promoters knew about the 50 per cent. beforehand. They did not foresee it—it was common knowledge. Rather than include it in the Bill where we could see it, they slipped it in during progress on the Finance Bill so we might not see it. That shows how devious the whole process was.

Mr. Skinner: It is a pity they did not slip something into the Finance Act 1981, which produced the massive tax loophole allowing people like Lady Porter and one or two others to invest in offshore companies and make a big fat killing. Has my hon. Friend seen page 17 of the minutes of evidence? I think that it refers to the bloke to whom my hon. Friend has been referring. The minutes of evidence state:

"Mr. Hackney himself admits that the shareholders of the holding company may or may not be concerned with the welfare of Teesside. If they are to behave as logical, reasonable investors would behave, they will be concerned for their profits."
There it is in a nutshell. They are saying, "We are not worried about the people of Teesside and Hartlepool." All they are concerned about is making money. Hon. Members have argued about the private Bill many times. In this case—I should like my hon. Friend to comment on it—the Government have been promoting the idea. They are not content with just walking through the Lobby and supporting the Bill. They have actually promoted it. There has been a sinister collaboration with people like Hackney and the others, together with the Government, who have now got the Bill through on the private Bill procedure. In reality, it should have been part of their programme if they had really believed in it.

Mr. Leadbitter: Now moving to the 50 per cent. robbery——

Mr. Skinner: Yes, robbery.

Mr. Leadbitter: —the enabling proposals that were announced in Bournemouth, the conference town, the Secretary of State and the chief executive of the port authority have now agreed on one thing. Mr. Hackney said:

"Our belief is that the Government announcement of an enabling Bill of trust ports"
that is, to privatise—
"would not have happened without our Bill, and the money that was spent on it has been very well spent to that end."
That is not the truth. There is a word for that in the House of Commons.

Mr. Skinner: Yes, lying.

Mr. Leadbitter: An hon. Member would not get away with it because it is not the truth. I consider it to be utter impertinence to write to a Member of Parliament or to anybody and say that this enabling proposal would not have existed without the Bill. I now give another quotation to which I referred on Second Reading on 15 Marcxh.

Mr. Cryer: I remember it well.

Mr. Leadbitter: I remember it well, too. I refer to the report of the minutes of evidence of the first sitting of the Committee on 15 May 1990. Mr. Hackney himself exposed the real position. He said:

[Mr. Leadbitter]

"We were also advised"—

that is, by the Department of Transport—

"that the Government would not be providing enabling legislation at that time because of problems with legislation in the House."

There was not sufficient time.

Good observers in the House know full well that it has already been announced in the House what things will not come under privatisation in this Parliament. One is British Rail, but there is another. Nothing was mentioned about enabling proposals for the ports. That was on the cards—it has been on the cards for a long time and it has had to stand in the queue, but whatever else is said, once that queue was moved aside everybody knew that the enabling proposals would come to the House. It was not because of the private Bill that the Secretary of State is bringing forward the measures. More than that, I wonder what kind of Secretary of State would have the notion, even if it were possible, to promise enabling legislation for all ports on the basis of one port. It is a non sequitur in that sense and it is an untruth in another.

I now refer quickly to matters in contrast—for example, the port authority of Clyde—in this argument. At least the authority gave a raw, frank admission that its Bill is what the Secretary of State for Transport wanted and what the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to take. That is the difference in the conduct of the Clyde port authority and the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. We must look at the management. As I said, the board is made up of non-executive members. In other words, they are not in the driving seat. At present there are 10, selected by the Secretary of State. The day-to-day management and the authority of the board is left to the management team.

I should like to give a little caveat here. On 15 March I talked about the success of the port. On page 17 of the minutes of the Committee, Mr. Hackney states:

"In 1967 the authority broke even before taxation and employed 2,177 people. It handled just short of £12 million. In 1989 the profit before exceptional items and tax was £11 million. The labour force was dropped to 828 and the tonnage increased to 38 million tonnes."

That shows the streamlining—the economic health—of the port under existing legislation.

Of course, the first step towards privatisation was to get rid of the dock labour scheme. It was a case of "Get rid of these expensive lads—every one of them", and it was done. I feel strongly about the success of the port and that makes it harder to see it run into the more risky waters of private enterprise.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend has said that the abolition of the dock labour scheme was the first step towards these proposals. My hon. Friend is a member of the Chairmen's Panel and has been a Member of the House for 26 years. He is saying that, on the one hand, the Government introduced a Bill of their own in the Queen's Speech to get rid of the dock labour scheme, while at the same time they have encouraged and connived with others to use the private Bill procedure to get the second phase of the scheme through.

The Government have a majority of 150 over us and they are tipping off the private Bill people and saying, "Look here, we don't want to stuff our programme with too much, but since we have a majority of 150 and we do not need everybody here to pass a private Bill, you smuggle it in that way; we'll give you a hand and get the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State for the Environment to go through the Lobby at 10, 11 or 12 o'clock at night to support it." That is a corrupt practice of a Government with a big majority who are using the private Bill procedure to tell the nation that this is a private matter when, in fact, it is an addendum to the Government's manifesto and programme. The whole thing stinks. What my hon. Friend says has been said by us many times previously—in relation to Bills relating to British Coal and to Associated British Ports. My hon. Friend has added something new by being able to show that the abandonment of the dock labour scheme is part and parcel of the private Bill procedure——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. Does the hon. Gentleman wish to make a speech? If so, I am sure that he will be able to catch my eye eventually.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Mr. Leadbitter has the Floor.

Mr. Leadbitter: The shadow Secretary of State for Bolsover did it in one. He got it right.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It took him a long time to do it.

Mr. Leadbitter: Having covered the success of the port in that thumbnail sketch, I now remind the House that, apart from the constraints that Mr. Bartlett wanted to remove because they were a costly item in the port's financial affairs, he mentioned two other reasons for the Bill. One was getting ready for 1992, but I will not waste time on that——

Mr. Skinner: I would.

Mr. Leadbitter: No, there is plenty of time for other things. The other idea was to be free to go into other investment ventures.

In pages 25 and 26 of the proceedings of the Committee Mr. Hackney said:

"The authority over the years has built up considerable sums of money initially invested in the money markets but the stock market suggested better returns so surplus funds were divided into two and given to professional investment managers. There has been a significant growth in the return achieved on investment income and it is a very successful part of the business."

That is under the present Act. He then says:

"A sum was set aside to invest in companies in the north-east."

There is nothing wrong with that. He goes on:

"A sum was set aside for port-related companies"—

there is nothing wrong with that either—

"and money was set aside for companies that were not port related."

That brings me back to the Second Reading on 15 March. What can be done under the Bill that it can be claimed could not be done under the Act? The companies were listed on page 26 of the report. The chief executive of the port authority said that the Tees and Hartlepool port authority set up a company called Port Authority Distribution Services and another called Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Developments

"to utilise in future in distribution and property business."

I find that of interest. He was asked by counsel upstairs:

"What corporate plan have you got for this investment in non-port activities?"

The answer was:

"Integrated transport business"—

which he said was dear to his heart—

"and property."

Yet I find in the evidence that it could deal in property. I do not think that I misread the minutes. It is interesting that there is no corporate plan. There is no plan of any kind for what might be called the financial strategy requirements of those non-port activities. Yet under the present Act the port authority can invest in non-port related activities. The list of them appears in the *Official Report*. I did not put them there. Mr. Hackney put them there.

One matter is outstanding in the new Bill. On Third Reading we should examine it by what I call the question and answer process, which was used in Committee. We dealt with what are called the holding company and the successor company. I shall not go into the details but the report lays out specifically and with clarity that the holding company would deal with the financial side, the funding and so on and the successor company would deal with the responsibilities to the port such as those under section 12(3) of the Act which requires the authority to maintain the ports and the piers which are constraints. The report said that the port would become an integral part of a group business and that failure in the performance of the group was likely to affect the core port business and the economy of Teesside. The funds of the core business are for group purposes.

In other words—in short, thumbnail language—if the port is one of a group and the group does badly in its investments, does the port suffer? Or if there is an investment proposal, should the money go into the port or where there are better returns to be found in the market? Does this organisation of infrastructure deal positively and certainly with the need for adequate resources for the port? The evidence appears to show some considerable doubt.

On page 39 of the Committee's proceedings Mr. Hackney concluded the part that I described by saying:

"£20 million in cash surpluses was not invested in Teesside but in stocks and shares, some in London, some abroad."

Counsel put to him:

"This Bill is venturing the resources of the port capital invested at risk."

Mr. Hackney agreed. He was asked:

"Two aspects, public and statutory responsibilities which have to be preserved and supporting plans to make the responsibility work."

Mr. Hackney agreed. He was asked:

"They go together but with this Bill the control of the funds goes to the holding company."

He agreed. It was put to him:

"The responsibility goes to a successor company and the funds are in other hands."

He agreed. He was asked:

"The kernel of your case is that if we were purely concerned with port business the present constitution would be satisfactory."

Mr. Hackney said yes. He was then asked:

"But because you want to engage in wider trading activities that constitution is unsatisfactory."

Mr. Hackney said: "That is so." He was asked:

"If the aims and object of the authority is the port then the present constitution is adequate."

Mr. Hackney said yes.

"The result of privatisation is that 50 per cent. of assets built up and held for future port development goes into the pocket of the Government."

Mr. Hackney said yes.

Page 34 records Mr. Hackney's answers to counsel for the petitioners who said that there was no groundswell among ports for privatisation. Mr. Hackney said:

"At that time most ports felt that there would probably be some Government enabling legislation and we were waiting for that."

If they were waiting for it and knew that it was coming, why in God's name have they spent so much money? Why are my poll tax payers paying for their profits? Privatisation is like a little mouse running about and the little trap waiting for it is set by the takeover boys. Those who created this nonsense will find themselves out of a job.

Without prevarication, Mr. Hackney said that he was waiting for the enabling legislation. It will come during the next Session. I shall try hard to get the Lords to keep this Bill ticking over until the enabling legislation arrives.

Mr. Skinner: I have agreed with my hon. Friend for three quarters of an hour but he is now on dodgy ground. He wants the House of Lords to keep up the work. I wish him well, but the people who wanted to save the GLC said, "Wait until it gets to the House of Lords. Those independent men and women will stand up for us." What happened? The Prime Minister waved her wand and the Lords all turned up and got rid of the GLC. People said, "Wait until the poll tax gets to the House of Lords. By God, the Lords will make a difference. The SDP and the party that dare not speak its name will band together and stop the poll tax." What happened? Lords turned up from Canada, Scotland and Ireland. Two cousins met in the Lobby and were introduced by the Chief Whip of the Tory party and said "Hello, Charles." They had never met but had turned up to vote to get the poll tax through.

My hon. Friend will fight to the bitter end, but I do not want him to waste his energy. They were going to give us a chuck on with the Associated British Ports (No. 2) Bill, which was similar to this, and what did we get?—a gnat's whisker. My hon. Friends tried, but we could not get any amendments. My hon. Friend should battle on, but he should not put too much faith in the odd bods in the other place.

Mr. Leadbitter: My hon. Friend is quite right. I never dreamed that my threat had so much weight. However, I want to conclude.

Mr. Cryer: I am listening carefully to my hon. Friend, who is a man of authority, with many years experience. Before he rushes to his conclusion, could he dwell a little on asset stripping? That is what he is talking about—the seizure of these ports by private interests, and then the selling off of all the lands and assets on which the new owners can get their greedy hands. As a man of the area, he will naturally deeply resent the way that public assets are frittered away by private greed.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. We cannot have one intervention on top of another. I am sure that the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) will want to respond.

Mr. Leadbitter: My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) is right. I have much experience of asset stripping. I used to call them professional enclosures. I used to mix with what was called the high-risk entrepreneurs, who would put their hands in the public purse for grants and loans, and when the time came to repay, would close the shop and go to other countries to open some factories, taking the equipment with them.

There used to be a company in my constituency called Foster Wheelers, which employed a lot of people. Rolls-Royce took it over, and it is now shut. The £15 million worth of defence nuclear orders that we had for many years disappeared, with some of the equipment going to a company in Newcastle called NEI, and some going to Derby. I hear that Parsons is talking of getting rid of 650 men because of the Gulf crisis. That is nonsense. There are not 650 men working out there. It just so happens that Rolls-Royce is working behind the scenes. They call it restructuring and reorganisation.

I have here another question from the minutes. Counsel asked:

"If we had minutes now, we would find nothing until recent times which would suggest that you were disenchanted with your position."

He was referring to the minutes of the authority. Mr. Hackney said, "Yes." The significance of the reference to the minutes is that counsel, who was paid a lot of money for his services, applied to the port authority for a look at the minutes of the undertaking over the previous three years, and was refused. So counsel had to formlate his question in that way to find out when Mr. Hackney and his secretary, and possibly a couple of others, became disenchanted.

I notice that the chairman of the authority has not said a ruddy word. He has been a silent partner—the do-as-you-are-told boy, whose name I do not even know. He was not in the Committee. He thinks that he rules the roost, but he does not. There is a kind of freemasonery working over there. Counsel wanted to get to the meaning of the minutes. He wanted to pinpoint the stage at which there was thought of privatisation. As he could not find that information in the minutes, he had to rely on the word of the chief executive. He asked:

"At what point were you disenchanted with your position? —only recently?"

The chief executive replied:

"That is so."

Question:

"You can carry on Port-related business of every kind under your present powers."

What we have to say to one another in this place must not and does not interfere with our regard for one another, but I say to the House, and especially to the hon. Member for Langbaurgh, that when the chief executive answered the question, he simply said yes. That appears on page 11 of the second volume of minutes.

Counsel then asked:

"Can development sites anywhere in the country be done, financed and invested in if they contribute to the welfare of the port?"

Mr. Hackney's reply was "Yes". There is no doubt about that answer. He was then asked:

"Could you establish an outpost, if you wished, on the Continent instead of the service between it and the port provided that it benefited the port?"

The answer was yes.

The important words are "benefit of the port". As there is a holding company, a successor company and resources generally, surely any operation should be carried out to benefit the port. What is there in the Bill that differs from that?

A member of the committee—my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East—asked a significant question which appears on page 20 of the second volume of minutes. My hon. Friend asked:

"What advice have you received from the Department of Transport?"

This was the answer:

"The Department of Transport advised that the harbour revision route was not a route that the port authority could go down. We were advised by the Government that they would like to pass legislation, but because of the backlog of the legislation business"—

that is the enabling Bill—

"within the House it was unlikely that enabling legislation to enable trust ports to privatise could be passed. We know there was a degree of sympathy."

I have a list of the foreign and domestic traffic in the major ports that is split into five groups.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend has been in articles for 26 years as a Member of this place. That being so, what is the view of the people of Hartlepool? If anyone knows the answer to the question, it will be my hon. Friend. Should there be a ballot? Should that sort of consultation with the people be organised? The Government talk about ballots for trade unionists and for everybody but themselves, and I should like to know whether steps can be taken and whethere they are in place to draw the people into the argument.

Mr. Leadbitter: Since the town was formed, since it started shipbuilding, since the related trades were established, since the beginning of steelmaking and since the importation of timber—the gamut of activities arising from the coal trade—the people of Hartlepool have had what might be described as a complete link with the port. It was one of the few ports where the public were able freely to walk from the new town of Hartlepool to the then ancient borough of Hartlepool. One was called West Hartlepool and the other Hartlepool. Educationists—I taught more than a quarter of a century ago—were able to take their children through the port and give them lessons about the origin of the ships and their cargoes. There were 4,500 people working on shipbuilding and a further 6,000 working for Richardson and Westgarth. That was more than 10,000 people, and with the related trades there were often as many as 15,000 people working in the port and its surrounding area. There was complete access.

When the Tees and Hartlepool port authority put forward its fancy ideas, footpaths were closed and the shipbuilding work disappeared, as did Richardson and Westgarth. There is hardly any work left, certainly not for that number of people. The authority said that it was dangerous for people to walk through the port. Once a year it carried out its daft notion of closing the remaining parts of the port for a couple of hours. I was there on one such occasion. I was not given access, but after a couple of hours I was told that I could walk through. What a farce. It is an attempt to justify the authority's behaviour. It says, "We have listened to our legal advisers", but some of them could not defend a man against a parking ticket.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) asked the hon. Gentleman an

interesting question about a ballot. Will the hon. Gentleman answer? What communications has he received from his constituents either for or against the privatisation measure? Indeed, has he received any correspondence, because I have not?

Mr. Leadbitter: I have been involved with the port for many years—indeed, I was the chief policy witness for the Bill in the House of Commons in 1966. The hon. Gentleman was probably going to school then. I went to school in Hartlepool, and sometimes I played truant. There is a strong affiliation between the public and the port. In fact, the port and the public are synonymous. They belong to each other.

Mr. Holt: The hon. Gentleman has twice had the opportunity to answer a simple question. How many letters has he received from people in Teesside opposing the privatisation of the port? I am the promoter of the Bill, but I have yet to receive one letter from any trade union official, any trade unionist or anyone other than the two local authorities that are opposed to the Bill. I have not heard from one member of the public.

Mr. Leadbitter: The hon. Gentleman lives in Langbaurgh, which is about nine or 10 miles from Hartlepool, with a river in between. The hon. Gentleman is living in foreign parts. We are not used to writing to Conservative Members.

Mr. Hardy: A number of hon. Members have referred to the long experience of my hon. Friend and to his deep knowledge of his constituency. Many private Bills have been presented while the Conservative party has been in office, many of which have been harmful to the environment. That is one reason why I am attending this debate. I should be obliged if my hon. Friend could give me some information or offer an opinion on whether there will be any threat to the environment in his constituency if the proposed changes are made and the constraints removed.

Mr. Leadbitter: On 15 March, I referred to the Secretary of State's appointment to the board of an environmental officer. We set a good deal of store by environmental matters in the Teesside area—we are currently involved in a number of issues connected with the environment. It must be borne in mind that we are living in possibly the largest industrial-growth area in Europe—an area that houses petrochemicals, nuclear power, chemical and metallurgical industries and shipping.

According to the Committee, the port authority has made it clear that some 30 per cent. of people employed in the Cleveland area depend on the port for work. Obviously the parameters can move a little, but the port is nevertheless a very important element, which is why we are concerned about its success.

I have here some figures relating to the share of foreign and domestic traffic handled by major ports in the United Kingdom. Associated British Ports is listed, and so are other major company ports, major trust ports and major municipal ports. Not one of the 17 Associated British Ports has obtained a higher percentage of the foreign and domestic trade than Tees and Hartlepool; not one of the nine major company ports obtained the same percentage.

We have already dealt with more than half the ports in the United Kingdom. Of the 10 major trust ports, only one obtained a marginally higher percentage than Tees and Hartlepool, and only one of the major municipal ports obtained a slightly higher share. The Tees and Hartlepool port authority is a success—as it is now constituted, that is.

Mr. Harry Barnes: My hon. Friend has demonstrated very effectively that the port is viable, that it is performing fantastically well and that there is therefore no case for change. If that change comes, however, what will be the impact on Hartlepool? It seems that about three quarters of the port's activity—including employment and output—takes place on the Tees. Surely Hartlepool will find itself very much at a disadvantage in the event of privatisation: if investment is made in other areas, it will be the most vulnerable section covered by the authority.

Mr. Leadbitter: That is, indeed, a problem and one that I referred to on 15 March.

An expert witness who appeared before the Committee, an authority on port activity and port-related trade at home and abroad and a qualified consultant—I cannot hold that against him, of course—tried to summarise the implications of the Bill. His assessment made it abundantly clear that there was a poor case for privatisation. He pointed out that, although the port is very successful—the chief executive concedes this—it depends on a narrow base consisting of three or four large companies.

This is a captive trade. It is not a question of competition; the companies have no means of receiving or disposing of their materials and finished goods other than the port. The port is essential to them, and they are essential to it. The whole complex of industrial activity—80 per cent. of which is related to the port—is an important element of the economic welfare of the region; that is why I was so disturbed to hear what that expert witness had to say.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell (Blyth Valley): As a member of the Committee, I received about half a dozen letters from members of the public in Cleveland concerning the environmental aspects of Shields sands and the birdlife and other wildlife that exist there. Among them was one from a 10-year-old girl begging me to stop the Bill being passed because she knew that the development would mean Shields sands being lost to nature.

Mr. Bell: Before my hon. Friend concludes what has been a sterling speech, I recall that when he served on the 1966 Committee he was given the promise, which was incorporated into the Bill, that the port of Hartlepool would continue in perpetuity. That undertaking was also given in the Committee on the Bill now before us, and may be reflected in the final legislation. However, my hon. Friends the Members for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) and for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) know what happened in the past, when the Government promised a golden share to keep companies in the public domain for ever.

We can see a whole scenario developing whereby the new company will end up in private hands in the City. When that stage is reached, how will the port for which my hon. Friend fought so hard in 1988 be kept in public hands in perpetuity?

Mr. Leadbitter: The 1966 Bill was the subject of 18 months of consultation, because its promoters at least displayed courtesy and an understanding that input from various local interests would benefit them. There were, as

[Mr. Leadbitter]

always, one or two exceptions—pompous, arrogant individuals who thought they knew it all, but who outside their ivory towers were as incompetent as one could find. Some of them came from the list of the good and the great, and felt that they were not accountable to anyone. In Committee, they even had the cheek to say that the port did not belong to anyone. If that was so, what business was it of theirs to be involved in those proceedings?

Some of the debates on the 1966 Bill lasted two or three hours. We were even given special rooms at the Grand hotel so that the public could have their say. That was something quite different. I remember one or two of them sniggering at us. One man said, "You'll never win." That was the way it was. I do not like mentioning names, except when the individuals concerned enter the House and are recorded in the *Official Report*. Then they are on a hiding to nothing.

I ended my speech on 15 March by indicating that even a guarantee from the company's executives in golden letters would be worthless because they are not in a position to give any guarantee. The sad thing is that when the Bill is passed, those executives have no guarantees about their own jobs.

In Committee, counsel made it clear from the start that the Bill was a piddling little thing in terms of high finance, and that it is all because the promoters want to invest in integrated transport. I have more years' experience of transport than all of them put together. One can never get an integrated transport system in a competitive market. The market can never decide on integrated transport. That is the first lesson that one learns. As to saying it is dear to one's heart—that is trying to take wooing a little too far.

Then the authority talks about putting in two offices, and surely it can do that, but it does not have a plan. Hon. Members might ask the Tees and Hartlepool authority if it has a corporate plan—a strategy for investment in property. If so, what kind of property and where is it? What is the risk element of the venture?

If we want to talk in terms of track record on investment, we should not go to the present Tees and Hartlepool port authority because it does not have a good record. If it has a failure, it says that it will try a rescue operation.

Let us consider all the expense and time the authority has spent trying to side-track parliamentary procedure of enabling legislation—it has been devious and has not told the truth—but in a few weeks from now there will be enabling legislation and the House will be able to scrutinise and examine the Bill in Standing Committee rather than in the way in which we examine private Bills in Committee, with four members. They can work hard and be as diligent as they like, but they are working against the law of diminishing returns—the harder they work, the less result we seem to get. The authority goes on and on misrepresenting, but the question and answer powers that the Minister gave to the House are factual and give it the lie.

Whatever happens to the Bill, if the port is privatised, undeserving people will get full support from people such as myself because we want to make the port work. We are used to doing that because our conduct is always better than the example that we have had to put up with in the past few months.

11.32 pm

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick McLoughlin): I shall speak briefly to put the Government's case.

As I explained on 15 March, the Government support the underlying principle of the Bill, and I welcome the initiative shown by the Tees and Hartlepool port authority in the proposals in the Bill.

I was somewhat surprised by some of the comments of the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter). Most of his speech was an outright attack on the management and leadership of the port authority. However, he told us, rightly, how successful the port is and has been in the past few years. One of the reasons for that success is the Nissan car company and the way it operates its business; it exports many cars through the port. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will join me to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) who got the company to go to that area. It has subsequently given a lot of support to the Bill and a lot of custom to the port.

Mr. Leadbitter: It cannot be true that the hon. Gentleman is giving the full credit to the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit). With great respect, and without wishing to diminish the right hon. Gentleman's reputation—which is beside the point—for the very first time we worked in unity in the northern region with a positive plan to attract Nissan's investment. The northern region succeeded, not the right hon. Member for Chingford.

Mr. McLoughlin: I have obviously touched a raw nerve. I did not mean to do so. I meant merely to suggest how successful the port had been. I did not want to excite the hon. Gentleman.

The Government welcome the port authority's initiative. It will stand the port in good stead. It is no surprise that the Finance Bill contained a clause relating to this matter. As the hon. Gentleman well knows, and as the whole House knows, I made that clear in my speech on 15 March. I said at column 749 that one of the options that we were considering was the inclusion of a provision in the Finance Bill. I am pleased that we were able to do so. It was my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) who first urged trust ports that wished to pursue a private venture to introduce private Bills.

The Bill is particularly important. I wish it well.

11.35 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): The Minister was so quick to sit down that one has to conclude that he had had enough of the mood of the House.

In a desperate search for support among the Tory faithful at a recent conference the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Government intended to introduce a Bill to privatise trust ports. In doing so, he has made this private Bill wholly redundant. The privatisation of the trust ports should be debated on its merits, though I doubt very much whether Ministers will be able to bring such merits to the attention of the House. I assure them that Labour will vigorously oppose any such measure.

Mr. Devlin: The hon. Lady cannot predict—nor can I, or any other hon. Member—what will be in the Gracious Speech. Even if what she has said were true and such a Bill

were to be introduced, would not it be in the interests of the people of Teesside and Hartlepool if our port were to be privatised before the others so that it had a competitive advantage in the marketplace, since it would be in the private sector before the rest? That is probably why her hon. Friends have not received a single letter of protest about the measure.

Ms. Ruddock: I cannot believe that my hon. Friends have not received any letters. Some of them have taken the trouble tonight to say that they have. I have certainly received letters on the topic. People are opposed to the privatisation of this local port. If the hon. Gentleman has such faith in this procedure, he, like everyone else, ought to be willing to wait for a proper debate by the whole House on the privatisation of all trust ports. Then at least a Government Bill would be before us that would afford the House the opportunity properly to examine the case for radically changing the status of around 60 British ports.

Mr. Devlin: Is the hon. Lady saying, therefore, that during the Bill's progress through the House she and her hon. Friends have not had an adequate opportunity to discuss the merits of the Bill? The House has given two formal readings to the Bill and it has been discussed in Committee. We have been kept up late at night upon it so that both sides of the House could put their views at great length. The hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) has just detained us for over an hour. Is she saying that the House has not had an opportunity adequately to discuss the merits of the case? I believe that it has.

Ms. Ruddock: I am saying that the private Bill procedure is inadequate for a proper debate, for proper accountability and for proper decision-taking. I repeat that if the Government and party of the hon. Gentleman had so much faith in their arguments, the Bill would come before the House as a proper Government measure, not in this inadequate and somewhat underhand way.

Mr. Cryer: Will my hon. Friend contrast a Government Bill, which a Minister would have to explain in perhaps a 20 minute or half-hour speech and pilot through perhaps 20, 30 or 40 hours of a Committee's sittings, with the paltry few, fumbling, halting sentences that we heard tonight as a paltry, feeble excuse for ministerial comment, which was less than adequate for any procedures of the House?

Ms. Ruddock: My hon. Friend admirably makes his own case, which I fully endorse.

Mr. Harry Barnes: There is an additional procedural problem with the Bill, even under the private Bill procedure. No amendments were made in Committee, despite numerous attempts to table them, and therefore there was no Report stage. It is said that an amendment will be moved in the Lords for the new port authority to be based at Cleveland. If such an amendment has been made in Committee, hon. Members could have tabled further amendments and had a fuller discussion, including answers from the Minister on each of the amendments, and we could have had a decent debate on Report. We were not allowed a Report stage because of Whipping in the Committee as well as generally inside the House.

Ms. Ruddock: I am delighted to be able to provide so many opportunities for my hon. Friends to make such important interventions.

The trust ports, of which Tees and Hartlepool is one, were set up with Government aid to stimulate the development of industry in their regions. The Tees and Hartlepool port is the third largest port undertaking in the United Kingdom. We acknowledge its success. It has attracted new business and reinvested the money made in that enterprise. It has been an important source of employment in an area which has been hard hit by unemployment. In short, it is the kind of local undertaking, with a degree of accountability, that is anathema to the Government. They require private shareholders to get their hands on any worthwhile asset, regardless of the consequences for the local interests and for the local community.

Mr. Holt: The hon. Lady said that the existing management is responsible to somebody. To whom is it responsible? After it is privatised, every shareholder will have a say or will be able to ask questions, whereas at present they cannot. Management is not responsible to anybody.

Ms. Ruddock: As my hon. Friends have repeatedly explained, we believe that there is a degree of accountability and involvement of the local authority, the local community and its interests. Provision is made under the trust arrangements for constant reinvestment of the money made by the local enterprise of a port. As has been shown repeatedly by my hon. Friends, removal of trust status will mean that money made in the community will not be returned to it. That is where accountability will be lost. There are no guarantees that privatisation will bring local benefits, more investment or more jobs.

Dock workers have every reason to be suspicious of measures such as this. Last year, we were assured that the abolition of the dock labour scheme would not lead to the return of the notorious cattle market for casual labour, yet all the signs are that it has. In Hull, three managers who were previously employed by Associated British Ports have set up a company and two agencies to employ former employees. They are not prepared to recognise the Transport and General Workers Union, which previously represented those men. In September, all the remaining registered dock workers in Hull were made redundant, as were all but 19 in Bristol and Avonmouth.

Mr. Devlin: What about Teesside?

Ms. Ruddock: I am coming to Teesside.

Furthermore, the taxpayer picked up the bill of £130 million, compared with the Government's prediction of £25 million. That is what privatisation means. The Government are prepared to back any measure at any cost —and to use the taxpayers' money—to give private profits to private individuals.

As my hon. Friends have repeatedly said, the Bill is not an independent private measure but an integral part of the Government's proposals to privatise every part of the ports industry. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) said with such clarity, the Bill is a licence for asset strippers. It does not have the job-creating potential the promoters claim for it.

I shall not take any more of the House's time tonight. The Bill does not deserve the support of the House, and I shall be pleased to join my hon. Friends in opposing it.

11.45 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The Bill has already been the subject of a fair amount of discussion in the House and, as we have discussed it, there has been a tendency for new developments to emerge. I shall focus on one of them—the port levy.

From the earliest stage, there has been anxiety, even among friends of mine—the Liberal Democrat councillors on Teesside, who are not opposed in principle to the privatisation of the port—that the resultant company could be subject to takeover and that Teesside might then be controlled by a company that had an interest in suppressing its position in favour of that of a port somewhere else. Those anxieties have not gone away. They cannot be dispelled by guarantees given by the present management or potential management of the port because too much depends on what could happen far into the future. There is to be no golden share—whatever value one attaches to that—and no other procedure whereby a guarantee can be provided. That must be set in the balance against some of the advantages that can flow from the greater commercial freedom that the new ports structure can provide, but it weighs heavily with the Teesside people who are concerned that their port may be taken away from them.

I am not suggesting that the existing trust structure is ideal. I am surprised that the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) should have implied that it was so satisfactory. At certain times, the Labour party has thought it very unsatisfactory and has proposed to nationalise all the ports and put them under direct public corporation control. That is not a route which I favour either. But the present structure leaves the port accountable to nobody in particular. I think that there would be a lot more sympathy for the privatisation route if we could be certain that there would be substantial ownership of the port within the local community—on a scale that would make it difficult for the port to be taken over by interests from a long way away.

One of the things that makes that aim more difficult to achieve is the port levy. During our proceedings on the Bill, the Government have introduced a swingeing form of taxation of the privatisation process for which there is no real logical justification. The Government have discovered that there is money in privatisation and, if there is money around, they want it for themselves. It is proposed to claw a large part of the proceeds of privatisation into the Exchequer. That proportion is sometimes described as 50 per cent., but we all know that it is a lot more than that. In answer to my question during the Committee stage on the Finance Bill, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury pointed out that when one adds in the capital gains tax charge, one reaches a tax charge of 67·5 per cent. on the proceeds of privatisation.

That is not the end of the story. If the company disposes of shares in the initial stages at less than market value, it will still have the tax levied upon it at 50 per cent., as if the disposals had been made at market value.

One of the effects of that is that if the company makes special arrangements to ensure that there is a substantial shareholding by local institutions and local individuals or by its own employees, it will be taxed as if it has made those disposals at market value.

Suppose that the new port management decides that the route to follow is that set out by the Government. Let us consider electricity privatisation as an example. Let us suppose that the port authority decided not to take up the ludicrously expensive advertising campaign, but simply adopted the incentives. Suppose it wanted to offer the customers, the local community and the employees advantageous terms for shares, such as bonus shares and special shares, if they are held for a certain period. In all those respects, the authority would increase its liability to tax. The tax that the Government have devised would discourage the port authority from making provision for the maximum ownership of shares by its employees, by the local community and by institutions based in Teesside.

The Government are not merely robbing Teesside of money that should go back to the local community; they are discouraging that community from owning shares in the port. The Government's attitude to employee share ownership schemes is odd. They have provided for only a 3 per cent. stock of employee share ownership, although they have raised the figure from 2 to 3 per cent. in response to criticisms made during proceedings on the Bill. However, in another context Ministers have pointed out that that is a small amount to make the subject for tax relief for employee share ownership schemes.

When speaking about employee share ownership schemes on a different Bill the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said:

"10 per cent. strikes the right balance, representing as it does a stake large enough to ensure the employees a degree of involvement in the company's affairs, while not being so large as to make the new relief unattractive."—[*Official Report*, 16 May 1990; Vol. 172, c. 960.]

However, in the context of the ports, the Government are allowing for only 3 per cent. They know that 10 per cent. represents a reasonable employee involvement which could have some influence on the company's affairs, but they have made certain that the employees do not get 10 per cent. by limiting the tax relief to 3 per cent. What is the logic of that? If it is a Government objective to encourage employee share ownership at a significant level, why do they not allow the 10 per cent. level to apply to the port? The Government have found another way of discouraging the new port body from distributing its shares to employees.

I believe that the port levy is the most outrageous provision. The hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) has criticised it in the past, but I could find no Conservative Members to support me during proceedings on the Finance Bill to oppose the levy, to try to reduce it to 25 per cent. or to ensure that exemptions were made to it in respect of the various categories of potential shareholders.

Mr. Devlin: This is a very interesting and intricate issue which lies at the centre of the privatisation. There is a legal question: to whom does the port currently belong? That person, body or group of people is entitled to the proceeds. If the port authority as presently constituted is a public body, the Government must be entitled to all the proceeds. That is like saying that if the company's assets are worth £1 million and they are to be offered at £1 million, the company will have a cash injection of £1 million thus doubling its asset value. By taxing at 50 per cent., the Government are trying to sell an asset for the amount that it is actually worth without putting in a massive capital injection which would mean that the shareholder was paying £1 for a £2 asset.

Mr. Beith: I think that the hon. Gentleman has been got at by the Whips. During earlier stages of the Bill he was rather more robust in his criticism of these proceedings.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South said that no one owns the port. Legally that is true, but that does not mean that the Government own it either. If the same principle had been applied to the Trustee Savings Bank, the Government would have seized the entire proceeds of the bank's disposal. However, they knew that panic would have set in if they took over the proceeds. It is ludicrous to pretend that money that is already in the port and which everyone assumes is there for the port and its development somehow belongs to the Government and can be removed by them.

That is not the argument that was advanced in proceedings on the Finance Bill. The argument was that, over the years, the Government had made a significant investment in the port of Tees and Hartlepool and that they should get some return on that investment. They will be getting a pretty grand return on the investment if they get the kind of money that they expect to get from the 50 per cent. levy. I simply cannot accept the argument that the Government are somehow entitled to 100 per cent. There is a legal judgment on which is based the conclusion that it is not the Government who own the port but the state —in this case a rather diffuse concept that again does not give any moral entitlement to the central Exchequer to claim the benefits of the privatisation of the port.

Who, after all, should have the benefit of privatisation? Surely the local community in which the port is situated should have it. The local community has to maintain and build roads around the port. The local community has to cope with the additional traffic in and out of the port areas. Over the years the local community has invested in the port, both financially and through the hard work and effort of all the people of Teesside and Hartlepool who have worked in the port. The industries and activities of the areas have made the port what it is. If there were no industries in the areas using the port, it would not have had the success that it has enjoyed so far.

The Government do not have that moral case. They are actually taking out of the port a much larger share than 50 per cent., and they are doing it in a way that will make it less likely than ever that the ownership of the port will be transferred to the people of Teesside and Hartlepool.

I want also to refer to what was said at the Conservative party conference about port privatisation and the future. There seemed to be some suggestion that we are talking about leaks of the Queen's Speech and things that are uncertain. It may be that what the Secretary of State says has an element of uncertainty about it, for reasons more related to his potential tenure of office than anything else. However, he said:

"Many of our great ports are Trust Ports. Many of them want to expand, diversify and develop. And they want to be privatised."

Quite how those bodies that nobody owns could have wants and feelings of that kind I am not sure, but, according to the Secretary of State, they want to be privatised. He went on:

"And I am delighted to announce today that within the next year they'll be free to be privatised."

I make it quite clear that this is enabling legislation and that no trust port authority will be required to take the route to privatisation. I wonder whether the Minister can offer me any guidance on that point. Several Opposition Members have talked about enabling legislation, but that is not what the Minister said. It can be interpreted in that way. He says that they will be free not to be privatised. If we do not pass the Bill tonight, will the Tees and Hartlepool port be able to say, "We do not think that we will go ahead. We have looked again at the figures and we have decided that the Government are raiding the till to such a massive extent that we will wait until they think again and perhaps reconsider privatisation under future legislation when we can get rid of that absurd levy"? Will the port be free not to be privatised? The Minister's smile does not tell me anything at all, so I encourage him to intervene.

Mr. McLoughlin: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman realises that it would be quite inappropriate for me to speculate on what may be in the Queen's Speech, and therefore I cannot do so.

Mr. Beith: I certainly would not wish the Minister to do that, but I thought that he could offer me some commentary on what the Secretary of State said. I thought that he, as the Minister responsible for ports, would have been told what the Secretary of State meant when he said that next year they will be free to be privatised. I shall certainly want to challenge the Minister if he comes along next year and says, "Folks, you have to be privatised," because that is not what I understand to be freedom. It might be what the Government understand to be freedom, but freedom to do what one is told is not what I understand to be freedom.

There remains a certain lack of clarity about future intentions, but it is perfectly clear that, if the Bill goes ahead and the port of Tees and Hartlepool is privatised, the central Exchequer will rob Teesside and Hartlepool of a great deal of money which should be invested in the local community. That tips the balance quite decisively against giving the Bill a Third Reading.

11.59 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who was kind enough to mention the Committee stage of the Finance Act 1990, on which he obviously served, and referred to some of the Minister's statements to persuade the Committee to accept the new clause which provided that 50 per cent. of the assets of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority should go to the Exchequer. I understood the hon. Gentleman to say that the Committee had been told that the Government had made a substantial investment in the port and that it was therefore quite proper for the Government to take 50 per cent.

In that context, I should like to quote from what the Minister for Aviation and Shipping said on 15 March:

"Admittedly it is a long time since such grants were paid to the THPA, and the amounts were small; but the grants were paid about 20 years ago towards investment projects in the port, and some of those assets are still in use. There is a general rule that, when assets acquired or improved by a non-Exchequer body with the aid of Government grants are disposed of, an appropriate proportion of the proceeds should go to the Exchequer.—[*Official Report*, 15 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 749.]

If the Government make a small investment in a port authority and then, 20 years later, ask for 50 per cent. of the assets, which, with capital gains, amounts to 67·5 per cent., we are talking about nothing short of daylight robbery. When it was first proposed that the THPA should

[Mr. Stuart Bell]

be privatised, and when the THPA executive took on board the suggestion of the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), it was not told—at any stage—that the Government would take 50 per cent. of the assets or that capital gains tax would also be deducted.

It therefore came as a shock when the Minister made that statement on 15 March. It came as a bigger shock in Committee when the Treasury counsel, or a Treasury representative, announced that, in addition to the 50 per cent., there would also be the capital gains tax to take into account. As the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed has said, 67·5 per cent. of the profits will be taken immediately out of the pockets of the port authority and its people.

We have had a great discussion tonight, led by my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter), on the proposed shareholding. We have also had a great debate about whether the shares or the trust port itself belong to the local community. A number of curious statements have been made by Mr. John Hackney and Mr. Charles Wellington about what will happen to the shares, who will be their ultimate owners, and whether there will be a stock market flotation. I asked my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool how we could guarantee the perpetuity of the port at Hartlepool if the shares belong to unknown people, if they were held by unseen hands, and if we cannot even guarantee the future of the site of the headquarters. Although it was agreed in Committee that the site should be in Cleveland, the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) has pointed out that Cleveland may not exist for much longer. It may well disappear and become North Yorkshire, which the hon. Gentleman said was his ardent desire. What sort of promise is being made when people talk about having the headquarters in Cleveland when Cleveland itself may not exist? What kind of promise is it to say that the port of Hartlepool will exist in perpetuity when we do not know who the shareholders are?

I refer now to the story that appeared in the business news section of *The Daily Telegraph* on 19 October, which stated:

"A last ditch attempt to halt the privatisation and subsequent stock market flotation of Britain's third largest port will be made in the Commons tonight."

It was ahead of itself, but it referred to the subsequent stock market flotation. How does that statement square with the statement of Mr. Charles Wellington, the secretary of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, in the *Evening Gazette* on Thursday 18 October, the day before? He wrote:

"May I please correct your recent editorial Steam Ahead regarding shares in the THPA's privatisation. Our shares will be offered to the following:

All our 800 staff without distinction between management and others; all our pensioners and pension fund; the pension fund of the local authorities; the pension funds of our major users."

The next paragraph is significant. It says:

"That spreads the shares as widely as possible. If we went further we would need a general flotation. That would open us to takeover from the start."

What is one to make of that contradiction? Are we to understand that there is to be no stock market quotation because it is afraid of predators, the City boys, the takeover boys to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool referred? Of course, there would be nothing to prevent—certainly we have heard of nothing so far—those workers, pensioners and local pension funds selling their shares to the highest bidder and thus the management of Tees and Hartlepool losing control. That is exactly what Opposition Members have consistently warned against ever since privatisation was mooted.

The article in *The Daily Telegraph* included a photograph of Mr. John Hackney, the chief executive of Tees and Hartlepool port authority, who was reported as saying:

"We want to be in the private sector."

However, according to Mr. Wellington, the authority does not want a stock market quotation because those nasty bogey men called the whiz kids could take its shares from it. Yet everyone knows that the ultimate of a private company is one that is quoted on the stock exchange. The purpose of a company being on a stock exchange is to raise money through share issues for more investment. I presume that in years to come the Tees and Hartlepool port authority would not be interested in further financing itself through so-called junk bonds.

While Mr. Wellington said that there would be no stock market flotation, Mr. John Hackney told Mr. John Petty of *The Daily Telegraph:*

"Stock market flotation would come three to five years after privatisation."

There we have it. That was just the time that Mr. Wellington said that workers would have to hold on to their shares for them to gain in value. Did Mr. Wellington think that that increase in value would come about through a stock market flotation? Perhaps he did not want that to appear in the local evening paper. Who should be brought up under the trades description legislation? Are the shares of the Tees and Hartlepool to be quoted on the stock exchange or not? Will they be traded on the big board or over the counter? The secretary of the Tees and Hartlepool says no but the chief executive says yes. Of course, when one starts to give interviews to the unsuspecting press, it hardly matters what one says, for the journalists will write it down and repeat it anyway.

In the same interview with Mr. Petty, Mr. Hackney said:

"We want to be in the private sector, ready to welcome other ports into it."

Can you imagine that, Madam Deputy Speaker? The local press has been bombarded with stories about the terrible Labour Members of Parliament who are letting down the area because they are preventing Tees and Hartlepool from being the first trust port to be privatised. The hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) said just that in an interview with Tyne Tees Television. But all that Mr. Hackney wants to do is to open the door for privatisation, to put out the welcoming mat, to grab it warmly, I presume, by the throat. What is the nonsense about wanting to be there to welcome the other ports?

In effect, Mr. Hackney is saying that Tees and Hartlepool wants to be first through the door so that it can beat the others to it, gain an advantage and be rewarded for carrying out Government policy before the Government. It wants to be first so that it can divest itself of any intention to invest in Tees and Hartlepool and can invest elsewhere in Britain and on the continent. Mr. Petty, of *The Daily Telegraph*, was right when he predicted that Conservative Members were expected to stay late to ensure that the Bill was approved and sent to the other place for

further consideration. The Opposition will certainly see that Conservative Members are kept up late on Third Reading. It will be given a Third Reading only with the help of the payroll vote. That is hardly surprising because the Minister for Aviation and Shipping said on Second Reading that he would vote for the Bill. He did support it, and so did his colleagues.

Labour has had one success in its efforts to oppose privatisation of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority because Opposition Members have forced the Government to cease corrupting the private Bill procedure. That will ensure that the Gracious Speech will contain a provision for the privatisation of all the trust ports by way of public rather than private Bills. We have had some small success in modifying Government tactics.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed was right to draw the Minister's attention to the question whether there would be enabling legislation to permit all our trust ports to go private if they wished or whether the legislation would be such that the ports would be obliged to go private. The heart of the matter is that the Treasury is the guiding force behind this privatisation. It has seen that there is about £50 million worth of assets in Tees and Hartlepool and knows that it can take 67·5 per cent. of that. It knows that there must be about £200 million worth of assets in the trust ports and that on privatisation those assets can be taken over by the Government. Everyone knows that the Government are trying to get their hands on every possible penny before a general election year, and £200 million would be very handy. Again, we come back to ideology and the Treasury and to the idea of taking money from local communities.

Labour Members are modest, but the Treasury knows a good thing when it sees it. It does not need to watch "Howard's Way" to see how Jan Howard can be ripped off by a local con man because the Government are capable of such rip offs. Having lifted 50 per cent. of the assets of Tees and Hartlepool, they will lift the other 27·5 per cent. As the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed knows, in this Session the Government had to modify the Finance Bill so that they could take that 50 per cent. It was done with a private Bill and an amendment to the Finance Bill, which means that the Government are obliged to take the public Bill route and present enabling legislation.

The Government were able to lift half the assets of the Tees and Hartlepool authority because of the incompetence of a management which sought to privatise the port before all the others and was not aware of the Government's intention to take half the money. As I have said, the other ports may be in a situation similar to that of the Trustee Savings bank. On Second Reading the Minister said that that bank was different from trust ports because there had been no Government investment. There was no Government hand in the till and therefore the Government were not able to take money out. Perhaps the trust ports that they propose to privatise will not have had even modest Government investment because in 1981 the Government ended investment in the trust ports. The Government are trying to get their hands on trust port money, but they may find that the money is not there. *The Daily Telegraph* article implied that the Treasury had changed its position, and was no longer interested in whether taxpayers' money had been invested as an excuse to take 50 per cent. of the money raised through the sale of trust ports assets.

The interview given by Mr. Hackney shows a change of position, which the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed might notice and seize upon as significant. The article shows that, whereas in the past the Treasury has had its hand in the till because money has been invested by the taxpayer, in future the simple fact of privatisation will lead the Government to take 50 per cent. of the assets of a trust port, whether or not there has been an investment. Thus, the Government are clawing back money for the Treasury.

Mr. Leadbitter: My hon. Friend will bear in mind that no Minister for Aviation and Shipping can make a statement about a 50 per cent. stake without saying something else. When analysing any statement, an obvious question is why? The answer by the Minister was that the Government had given grants. Perhaps my hon. Friend will develop this point. A grant is a grant. I did not know that it was a qualification for taking back the proceeds of the sale of a company or trust port.

Mr. Bell: I take my hon. Friend's point. That did not happen to companies such as Courtaulds in County Durham, which took a lot of grant money from the Government to open a plant, but when it closed it, took the machinery and moved it to another plant. We are not aware that the Government asked that company for the grant money to be returned. Again, we see the long fingers of the Treasury in the till.

The Daily Telegraph article on the interview with Mr Hackney said:

> "Still at balance is the Government's plan to claw in up to 85 per cent. of total flotation income by applying capital gains tax as well."

If we take Mr. Hackney's scenario of the trust port going first into the hands of the pension funds, then to flotation on the stock market, the Government will take even more money—up to 85 per cent. of the assets of the port authority. The article also tells us:

> "A consortium will be set up to buy the port from a trust being formed to hold it on privatisation. It would be a mixture of staff, management, local pension funds and city institutions. Tees and Hartlepool are being advised by Rothschilds as the financial adviser."

If we read carefully the statements of Mr. Wellington and Mr. Hackney, we see that they are not mutually exclusive or self-contradictory. Mr. Wellington's statement in the *Evening Gazette* is true as far as it goes, but Mr. Hackney unveils for us the rest of the truth—that a stock market flotation is planned and will take place three to five years after privatisation.

There we have it. The port authority will be privatised if the Government get their way, and this is a Government measure, as we have said time and again. Its shares will then be distributed among pension funds and local employees. The hon. Member for Stockton, South asked how many jobs with the port authority had been lost on Teesside since the dock labour scheme had been abolished. I told the House in December 1989 that some 130 jobs had been lost on Teesside, and 70 in Hartlepool. We were talking then of about 200 job losses. It is curious to offer to give shares to members of the work forces when 200 of them have been made redundant and when others have replaced some of those who invested a lifetime of work in the local docks, in the dock labour scheme, on behalf of local communities.

There are no guarantees that we can ensure that the Tees and Hartlepool port authority will maintain its

[Mr. Bell]

pre-eminence as a port on the Tees and in Hartlepool once it has fallen into the hands of a conglomerate. I shall mention one for the sake of providing an example, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Assuming that a company such as P and O gets its hands on the THPA, where will investment moneys go? Will the headquarters stay in Cleveland? Will the port continue to thrive, or will it go steadily downhill if investment is taken elsewhere?

I would not like to leave Mr. Petty of *The Daily Telegraph* without a parting glance at the advertising copyist's pen. My hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool was robust in his language when he referred to some of the statements made by Tees and Hartlepool representatives. Mr. Petty stated:

"London is the biggest port because it handled 54 million tonnes of cargo last year. It was followed by Sullom Voe oil port in the Shetlands with 41 million tonnes compared with 38 million tonnes for Tees and Hartlepool."

That is the crushing journalese that we might expect from those who listen with care to the statements of the THPA. If oil is excluded, Tees and Hartlepool becomes the second port after London. If oil is excluded from Sullom Voe—it is an oil terminal that imports nothing but oil—I am sure that Tees and Hartlepool will take a higher place in the league. Of course, that is not the sort of argument that would appeal to journalists in the course of interviews.

I am glad to see the Minister for Aviation and Shipping in his place. He is a modest man and——

Mr. Cryer: He has much to be modest about.

Mr. Bell: Since he entered the House as a result of a by-election, he has enjoyed a swift rise to the Government Front Bench to ministerial status. We have followed with care the statements that he has made, with much modesty, on the Bill. I have referred to some of them.

We have always known that the Bill is a public and not a private measure It is to the Minister's credit that he has persuaded the Secretary of State for Transport that there should be enabling legislation for all the ports. Ministers should not try to hide behind the cloak of secrecy that covers the Gracious Speech. Many Ministers have told us that they would not like to reveal the contents of a Gracious Speech, and that is because they would not wish to offend the Prime Minister. There was, however, the promise last year that there would be a children Bill. The Secretary of State for Social Services looked askance at the Prime Minister as the right hon. Lady sat next to him, but said, "I could not give a promise but I believe that we might look for legislation to be outlined in the Gracious Speech."

The Secretary of State for Transport made a significant announcement at the Tory party conference. There was even greater glory—Tees and Hartlepool have come a long way—when the Prime Minister said, before her 14-minute standing ovation, that the Government would privatise the trust ports. She did not say whether all of them would be privatised or only those with assets that the Government could take. The Minister for Aviation and Shipping should not be too modest in his presentation.

I shall deal briefly with some of the comments of the hon. Member for Langbaurgh on Second Reading. What has happened to THPA Distribution and Services Ltd. and THPA Developments Ltd.? We have not heard a squeak from the hon. Gentleman about those companies this evening. However, he said on 15 March:

"The creation of the new companies is one of the first practical steps towards creating new wealth and jobs in the north-east."—[*Official Report*, 15 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 734.]

That was another bit of parliamentary newspeak—an expansive statement about new jobs and new wealth for the north-east.

What has happened since Second Reading? Have we heard any more about those companies? What are they doing? I understand that when those questions were put in Committee the answers showed that there was not even a plan of action for those companies. It was the creation of yet another media event. The message is the medium or the medium is the message. News is made, but jobs and investments are not. Statements are made about jobs and investments and, suddenly, Tees and Hartlepool become greater ports.

The hon. Gentleman was also right when he said on Second Reading that the number of people employed by the authority had steadily declined. I have no idea why the hon. Member for Stockton, South—who rapidly left the Chamber once it reached midnight—asked how many jobs had been lost.

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): It is important to put on the record that not only have there been job losses, but since the employment of contract workers an increasing number of workers have come to my surgery with problems of compensation for accidents.

Mr. Bell: That is an important and sad statement. In a speech on a motion for the Adjournment in December 1989 I referred to the fine health and safety record of the port authority. If one of the consequences of these changes, and the fact that the dock labour scheme has been abolished, is a fall from the high standard that we have come to expect, it will be a sad day for those working at the docks and for the contractors.

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh also spoke on Second Reading of a cash injection of many millions of pounds into the local economy. He said that that would have a knock-on effect, creating a host of jobs in the construction, transport, leisure and other industries. My hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) cannot be here tonight because of ill health, but he put the kibosh on that bit of parliamentary-speak when he pointed out that the port authority had been investing in property, finance, aviation, air travel, timber, importing, transport, display signs, storage, security, fencing and engineering. None of that has been denied.

I wrote to the Minister asking for an inquiry into the affairs of the port authority. He had a lengthy consideration of the issues that I raised, but reached the conclusion that there were no grounds for an inquiry. What does that tell us? It is that the port authority was acting properly when it made investments in property, finance, aviation, air travel and so on. It had the power, so it did not need to come to the House to privatise the port. The powers existed and the investments were made. I went through every one of them with a fine-tooth comb on Second Reading.

Mr. Leadbitter: It is not only a case of the power being there. My hon. Friend may recall that, in my speech, I referred to the holding company: under the Bill, it will have financial control.

Here is a proposition. Investors may make a large-scale investment in the port, with a long-term payback and the prospect of a smaller financial return; or they may make a short-term investment with a quick payback and higher profitability. What would they decide? That is the difference; that is where the port will lose out under the new system.

Mr. Bell: How many companies over the past 11 years have taken the Tory route to easy investment—as they perceived it—borrowing from the banks to advance themselves by moving from hotels to property, construction or some other business, and then going down the Swanee? We have seen three examples on Teesside alone of substantial firms—involved in, for instance, construction work, and knowing what they were doing—being lured by the Tory philosophy of quick profit, investing in property and finding that they could not make ends meet. They have lost out, brought in the administrator and shed labour, leaving work that had to be finished by other firms.

We are seeing the lure of quick profit again now: wherever that profit may be—whether it is in the south of England or in Amsterdam—that is where Tees and Hartlepool proposes to invest. The idea of investing in the ports and building them up will be deemed of secondary importance.

Mr. Leadbitter: Which is more likely to be successful—a port authority whose objective is to look after a port's operations and maintenance—that is, the port of itself—or a port within a group of other interests, a group that may invest unfortunately and lose out? Will a port's chances be lessened if it is part of a group in which other interests and decisions are involved, and will they be increased if it is a port authority of itself? The answer is obvious—except, of course, to the chief executive.

Mr. Bell: As my hon. Friend has said, we must return to the question of accountability. To whom is the present trust port accountable? We know where its priority lies: its priority is the port, and that is where its investment is directed. If its accountability is redirected to its shareholders, what will happen to the port?

I had a chat with a very senior bank manager the other day. He said, "In my youth we lent money against proper security, and we got a return on it. Now we are obliged to invest to keep up with the competition: we have to show a return on that investment, and it does not much matter what the security is." If a port authority is answering to shareholders who want a quick buck—another phrase imported from the United States—its interest in the port will be diminished still further.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool, in his lucid speeches, made points that have escaped members of the THPA who think that they are involved in a new vogue, "Privatise and be damned". And that, indeed, will be the consequence of privatisation.

Opposition Members have said time and again that there are adequate powers for the THPA to invest locally, expand locally and take all the action that would keep it on the local map, and also enable it to retain all those who work in the port and in the subsidiary industries mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam).

On Second Reading, the hon. Member for Langbaurgh said that it was a myth that reconstituting the port would prevent a local say in the way that it is run. Can the hon. Member tell the House whether the company will eventually be quoted on the stock exchange? Does he share Mr. Wellington's view that it will not be quoted, or Mr. Hackney's view that it will? If it is to be quoted on the stock exchange, will the local community have a say in how the port is run? The existing committee includes trade union representatives in the form of dock workers, as well as local council representation. In that way, the local community can oversee the running of the port.

In his Second Reading speech, the hon. Member for Langbaurgh mentioned that the trust port dated back to 1808. None of us wants to be caught in a time warp, but the hon. Gentleman described how members of the local community, including four women—so it seems that the north-east was in the forefront in women's rights even in 1808—had the interests of the port at heart.

Mr. Holt: I highlighted those four ladies not because they exercised their own rights but had duties imposed upon them, as riparian owners of part of the port authority. When the king wanted to ensure that the estuary was kept clear, he instructed those owning the land on each side to keep it free. The four ladies that I mentioned happened to be among those who owned land on the Tees at that time.

Mr. Bell: That was a simple coincidence or a matter of convenience.

Mr. Holt: It is a matter of fact.

Mr. Bell: Nevertheless, women's rights were being advanced in the north-east as long ago as 1808. I suppose it was a proper response for a Tory Member to explain that, if women had any rights in those days, they were based on their riparian interests.

On Second Reading, the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) suggested that the authority's commercial headquarters should remain within the area. However, that amendment does not appear in the Bill.

Incidentally, I am glad to see present in the Chamber at least two Labour Members of the Committee, but hard as I look, I cannot see any of the Conservative Members who sat on the Committee. I have no idea what has happened to them.

Mr. Cryer: Is it not disgraceful that the Chairman of the Committee has not turned up either, especially given that the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) so often used his casting vote against amendments? By contrast, Labour Members of the Committee remain sufficiently interested to follow the Bill's progress in this Chamber.

Mr. Bell: As my hon. Friend said, the Chairman of the Committee represents constituency interests on the Isle of Wight, which are rather divorced from those of Teesside. When it was put to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) that members of the Committee should visit Teesside and Hartlepool and the port, and benefit from local input, the Chairman declined and refused to allow the Committee to make an official visit of that kind. It is

[Mr. Bell]

the regular practice of many Committees to visit the location in question on any Bill, but on this occasion that was not allowed. Members of the Committee were instead compelled to make an unofficial visit, at the risk of having to offer the House an explanation for their action—but at least the THPA was able to provide the necessary facilities to enable that visit to take place.

Mr. Harry Barnes: The Committee record shows that the initial vote on the proposal that it should visit the Tees and Hartlepool port was 2:2. Discussions led up to that vote. Hon. Members had different views about the necessity of the visit, and that was legitimate, but the casting vote should have been used by the Chair for the good of the Committee. It was obvious that my hon. Friend the Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) and I were insistent that a visit should take place, and that it would be disruptive to the Committee if the casting vote was not used to allow such a visit. However, the Chairman refused to use his casting vote in such a way and that caused disruption to the Committee for about nine weeks.

Mr. Bell: Those people who say that the Labour Opposition have delayed the Bill in Committee and on the Floor of the House should take note of the points that my hon. Friend has just made. That delay need not have happened if there had been a common sense approach in Committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may recall that the hon. Member for Tynemouth, who had come to support the hon. Member for Langbaurgh on Second Reading, suggested that the commercial headquarters of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority should stay in the area. That amendment is not on the face of the Bill tonight. We have not had a Report stage, on which that amendment, had it been made properly, could have been debated because there is no such amendment—there is merely an undertaking that that will be incorporated in the other place.

You will be aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the criticism of the Bill that it was effectively a Government measure, since they did not have time to make a public Bill of the privatisation, and had urged the promoters to take the private Bill route, thus corrupting parliamentary proceedings.

It is true that, within the framework of private Bills, there was nothing hybrid or public about the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, but the then Minister for Aviation and Shipping said on Second Reading that the Government intended to privatise all such ports but they did not have the time. So that we may understand that we are discussing a Government Bill, I shall quote the Minister for Aviation and Shipping who stated:

"We believe that there are advantages in the main commercial trust ports being transformed into companies. So far we have not been able to make room ourselves for the legislation needed to bring about such a change. Meanwhile the Clyde and the Tees and Hartlepool port authorities have promoted their own private measures."—[*Official Report*, 12 February 1990; Vol. 167, c. 105.]

We have already covered this ground in points of order made on Second Reading. I do not propose to labour them tonight.

I raised the second issue earlier as I wished to draw it to the attention of the House, and you said that I could mention it in the debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In Committee on which my hon. Friends the Members for Derbyshire, North-East and for Blyth Valley sat, the promoters accepted two proposals made by the Committee: first, an undertaking that would be incorporated in the Bill, and, secondly, a promise which would not be incorporated. The undertaking was that the headquarters of the successor company should remain on Teesside. That is not in the Bill. The promise was that there would be a share option scheme for employees. We have only the Tees and Hartlepool port authority's word on that, as it will not be incorporated in the legislation.

Because of assurances given by the promoter, the amendment on the Teesside headquarters was not referred back to the Floor of the House so that there could be an appropriate Report stage. When a Committee considers a Bill that has been referred to it by the House, and when it requires amendment, there is an obligation on the Committee to refer it back to the whole House. I prayed in aid during my earlier point of order the wording of a recent special report by the Committee that considered the King's Cross Bill. It said:

"We are quite clear that if a House of Commons committee considers that a Bill referred to it stands in need of amendment, then it is the duty of that committee to make that amendment."

That was not the case in this instance. Again there was corruption of the procedures of the House and a disregard for hon. Members whose duty it is to scrutinise legislation, whether it be Committee work, or a private Bill, or a public Bill.

It is also our duty to scrutinise Select Committee work. Our duty is to hold Ministers of the Crown, and even Committee chairpersons, accountable. We were not given that opportunity because the procedure used was clearly designed to avoid having a Report stage. The House ought to draw attention to that time and again.

I said earlier that our democracy is diminished by a thousand small cuts, not by a frontal attack either by the Government or by Ministers. It is diminished by a variety of small cuts of the kind that are evident here. One thing is said in the Finance Bill Committee about how much money has come to the authority; another thing is then said by the Minister—that very little money has come to it.

The Tees and Hartlepool assets stood at £52·508 million—a hefty sum of money for any trust port. The Opposition say that it should stay within the community. Therefore, this Third Reading ought not to take place and the Bill ought not to be passed. We ought not to have to go through this laboured exercise of privatising the port.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) mentioned the number of jobs that were lost following the demise of the national dock labour scheme. About 3,800 jobs have been lost in the docks industry since privatisation. The structure within which workers had security has been replaced by the market free-for-all.

In his short speech the hon. Member for Langbaurgh said that there had been lengthy scrutiny of the legislation. There was proper scrutiny in Committee. Again, I commend my hon. Friends who served on it. I commend also the local authorities that opposed the Bill from the beginning. Spurious points were made by the hon. Members for Langbaurgh and for Stockton, South about how many letters had been received. They did not take into account, however, the objections of Langbaurgh borough council, Hartlepool borough council, Stockton borough

council, Cleveland county council and the Transport and General Workers Union. All those councils were duly elected to represent their constituents and to act in their best interests. The Transport and General Workers Union has a vested interest on behalf of its workers who worked, and who still work, in the docks.

From the very beginning there has been a great deal of opposition to the Bill. I personally regret that Middlesbrough borough council did not add its voice, in the sense of petitioning against the Bill in Committee. It passed a motion objecting to it, but that was not sufficient. It ought to have followed up its objections with a properly-lodged petition.

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh said that the head office would always be located in Cleveland, even if it becomes North Yorkshire and even if there is a change of Government. The Opposition believe in regional assemblies. We believe in a regional assembly for the north. Cleveland county council may become part of that assembly and Cleveland may become Yorkshire and Durham again. Where would that leave the port authority's location on Teesside?

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh referred to considerable interest in the fact that 10 days ago a roll-on/roll-off service had been inaugurated with Hamburg. He did not say that it could have been inaugurated at any time in the history of the trust ports without a private Bill and without privatisation. The eastern European market to which he referred could have been developed without any of the procedures that we are discussing.

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh mentioned the clear undertakings that had been given, but I challenge the possibility of them being kept in the many years that lie ahead. Following an intervention by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), I referred to the clear undertakings given from the Dispatch Box for other companies such as Jaguar and BP and for the golden share. Guarantees of Government control have been given for a host of companies whenever a statement has been made, but when an offer has been made by British Aerospace or anyone else those undertakings have been eroded and discarded.

Mr. Holt: It is not so long ago that the House received a deputation of Indians from Canada, who brought with them the parchment that had been signed by a British colonel on behalf of the King when he granted lands in perpetuity to Canadian Indians in the 1700s. That was signed in good faith, but time moves on. The undertakings that were given by the port authority and I were given in good faith. No one can speak of what will happen in 200 or 300 years' time.

Mr. Bell: I have seen Mr. John Hackney, the chief executive, in many lights but not as a British colonel in the Army serving in Canada 200 years ago. We must look after our constituents, but even we do not look 200 or 300 years ahead. We look three or five years ahead, by which time Mr. Hackney tells us the company will be privatised. If the company is to be floated on the stock exchange within three to five years, we have a right to ask how valid the undertakings are. How can we be sure that the headquarters will be based in Cleveland, and how can we be sure that investment will be made?

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh used his opportunity of speaking on Third Reading to criticise the attitude of Cleveland Labour Members to the Teesside steel industry. He said that only he and the hon. Member for Stockton, South asked questions about the Teesside steel industry. I sat on the Bill to privatise the steel industry. My hon. Friend the Member for Redcar and I are aware of British Steel's investment in Teesside. We do not have to make spurious points when investment is forthcoming or say, "We are the ones who asked questions on the Floor of the House." We can get our assurances, make our points and get investment privately. We do not have to make media events from what will happen.

We knew, and we work to keep it this way, that the Teesside plant would be successful. From whom was it under attack? It was from the Tory Government of 1979 onwards. My memory goes back to when two blast furnaces were ordered for Redcar because demand was going to be so great. We built the Kielder dam to supply water from Northumberland right through to Teesside for those two plants. It was a Tory Government who decided that——

Mr. Holt: It was Lord Rippon.

Mr. Bell: It was decided by Geoffrey Rippon because it was feared that there would be a drought in 1976 or 1977. I shall not digress too far, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It was certainly a Tory Government—the Government elected in 1979—who scuppered the second blast furnace and the second steel mill. That meant that we had to concentrate on one steel mill. We know who to hold responsible for that episode.

Ms. Mowlam: My hon. Friend is making an important point. Opposition Members are interested in the long-term industrial development of Teesside—strategic development with secondary and tertiary industries feeding off our main industries. We are not interested in what Conservative Members constantly indulge in—cheap points intended to get media coverage. The work put in by county and district councils and by other bodies in the area has been towards long-term investment, and that is what we want, having lost 43,000 jobs in the past 10 years not only in the docks generally but at British Shipbuilders, at Smith's Dock and in the dismantling of ICI and British Steel.

I should also like briefly to reinforce the point about individual shareholders——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Lady is both too long and too wide.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful for your protection, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend is perfectly right, and has encompassed, in a short period and very succinctly, the points that I have laboured to make. Those of us who have the interests of Teesside at heart, especially in relation to the steel mill, are not obliged to come to the House and make statements about how much we have done. We know that long-term investment is the result of many consultations over many months and years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool was perfectly right to say that the Government have not been neutral. We suspect that they are not even being neutral tonight and that the payroll vote may be called in to secure Third Reading. Judging by the effervescence that is in evidence in the Chamber, those who constitute the payroll

[Mr. Bell]

vote are coming back after a sojourn in more clement and favourable surroundings than one is likely to find in the House. As I said earlier, the Minister said that he would be voting for the Bill.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool referred to the private Bill procedure and to the amount of money that had been spent on the Midland Metro Bill, which we discussed earlier. We have not been told just how much money the THPA has spent on this exercise. I estimate that another £1 million-worth of the trust ports' money has been spent in connection with the Bill—whether on hiring new press officers to put out lovely press statements in *The Daily Telegraph* telling us about the stock market flotation or on hiring bankers such as Rothschild, who no doubt have a strong interest in the ports of Tees and Hartlepool, or simply in terms of the amount of time that has been spent. I am sure that all that will add up to £1 million.

The Government are to take 67·5 per cent. Add to that a further £1 million and bear in mind the fact that the THPA already has the power to do what it will with its assets and one wonders why we have got ourselves into this intellectual and ideological bind——

Mr. Holt *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 127, Noes 28.

Division No. 328] **[12.59 am**

AYES

Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'l's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mellor, David
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wheeler, Sir John
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Miss Ann Widdecombe and
Mr. William Hague.

NOES

Armstrong, Hilary
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Golding, Mrs Llin
Leadbitter, Ted
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Michael, Alun
Mowlam, Marjorie
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Ruddock, Joan
Skinner, Dennis
Turner, Dennis
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Kevin Barron, and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 127, Noes 27.

Division No. 329] **[1.11 am**

AYES

Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'l's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Jack, Michael

Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mellor, David
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waller, Gary
Wheeler, Sir John
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Miss Ann Widdecombe and
Mr. William Hague.

NOES

Armstrong, Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Golding, Mrs Llin
Leadbitter, Ted
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Michael, Alun
Prescott, John
Ruddock, Joan
Skinner, Dennis
Turner, Dennis
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Ms. Marjorie Mowlam and
Mr. Peter L. Pike.

Question agreed to.
Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Towards the end of the last debate I had occasion to reproach the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam). In case the House is beginning to doubt the quality of my eyesight, I assure the hon. Lady and the House that my remarks were aimed only at her intervention.

European Company Statute

Postponed proceedings resumed.
Question again proposed.

1.21 am

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for calling me again after an interregnum of some six hours. Six hours ago I was discussing the exchange rate mechanism and European monetary union. My main point was that we cannot have fair and workable European monetary union or a single European currency until we at least have a single European market, let alone a single European economy.

European monetary union and a single currency can come only after we achieve a single European market and a single European economy. Premature entry to the exchange rate mechanism will result in a stronger currency and, therefore, higher interest rates than we would otherwise have. That in itself would lead to a larger current account deficit than would otherwise be the case, speculation and sudden rather than gradual devaluations.

Premature entry to European monetary union would lead to the much quicker development of a federal state of Europe with little time for the introduction of democratic controls. That would have two main effects. First, it would result in the exposure of the United Kingdom economy to the full gale force of German economic competition before we are truly ready to face it. That would result in vicious and unnecessary damage to British businesses and companies, leading to loss of jobs and damage to the long-term control and wealth-creation ability that we would enjoy if our economy were healthy and more ready to take on more direct competition.

Secondly, it will lead to an increase in impositions such as those in the documents that we are debating—impositions which will have deep social and economic effects. They include the imposition of non-executive directors, of worker participation and of tax reforms. I mentioned them earlier before we broke at seven o'clock, so I will not go over them again. All these impositions are important, and will have a tremendous effect upon our nation. They will be introduced by measures such as that now before us, which are slid through without adequate time for discussion.

I agree with the general aims of these proposals, but they do not allow for evolution, which is what we must achieve. Therefore, I urge the House not to agree to the instrument.

1.25 am

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): The instrument covers a number of important points. The memorandum submitted by the Department of Trade and Industry, signed by the Under-Secretary, says that the European company statute will deal with formation, registration, capital, shares, debentures and the attached rights, boards, general meetings and their rights, accounts and audits, winding up, liquidation, insolvency and suspension of payments. The last four categories are listed under paragraph (f).

With EEC-wide companies, those categories will create enormous problems. We have enough problems with United Kingdom-registered companies without extending the same ease of formation to companies in the 12 member states. I can illustrate that with the example of roofing

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

firms that carry out work, provide a guarantee and then go into liquidation and are wound up. Because of a separate legal identity of a company, the debts go not with the directors but with the company. Often, people who have paid to have their roofs given a specialist treatment are way down on the list of creditors. The document makes no reference to the order of priority of creditors, which is most important.

In our legislation, outstanding wages and salaries and national insurance payments are first on the list of priorities for payment when the assets of the company are realised, but the customers are way down it. Therefore, in this example, people whose roofs have been affected by shoddy workmanship by a cowboy operator are unlikely to get anything at all if the company goes bankrupt. In our constituency work, we have all come across cases of people with a legitimate complaint about a company that they cannot pin down. They write to the liquidator, usually a firm of accountants, and it says that if there is anything left after the assets have been realised and the proceeds distributed, the complainant will hear from the liquidator. In practice, the complainant hears nothing at all. Very often, the company then appears in a different guise—Roof Repairers 1991 Ltd. instead of Roof Repairers 1983 Ltd.

There are some restrictions in company legislation, but, in my view, and I suspect that of many of my hon. Friends, they are not sufficiently well controlled to ensure that there cannot be any exploitation of company legislation. This convenient notion that companies are a separate legal entity, different from the legal identity of the directors, is no help. With the proposed European company statute, that would be repeated EEC-wide over 12 nation states. Shoddy Roof Repairers (Strasbourg) Ltd. would be able to operate in Bradford, Leeds and Halifax, and the problems of chasing it up would be compounded by the fact that it was based in Strasbourg and not in the United Kingdom. That is an important consideration. Although after paragraph (f)—

"winding up, liquidation, insolvency and suspension of payments"—

there is (g)—

"relief for tax losses of overseas branches"—

and (h),

"sanctions for infringements",

there is no certainty. The fact that there will be a long journey to the EEC member state where the company is registered will be an impossible difficulty for most ordinary people. For example, there would be the air fare to Strasbourg, a city which is on the border between France and Germany. It would not be necessary to travel to the edge of the EEC in my example, but it would cost about £300 to go to the company's headquarters to obtain redress. There would be real problems for ordinary people.

I accept that the problems would not be so great for other companies that were creditors and had assets and income that could be used to pursue recalcitrant companies, but we are dealing with companies that would provide all sorts of goods and services in the manufacturing and service sectors while operating throughout the Common Market.

There are dangers that are not made clear in the documentation. I hope that the Minister will elaborate on them, and I note that he has expressed reservations about the proposal. He has stated in his memorandum that the Government do not see a need for the ECS and believe that a shortcoming is the heavy reliance on national law. It is a confusing position when certain aspects of a company would be based on Common Market legislation while other parts of its operation were based on national member state legislation. That means that there will be a duality of legislation. As company legislation is fraught with difficulties in any event, there would be even greater difficulty for the ordinary person. He would have to consult lawyers with international experience such as my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell), who is an international lawyer of great expertise and reputation. He would be of the sort to be consulted. Perhaps a United Kingdom solicitor would be consulted as well. It would be a complicated position which would be unnecessary in my view. I am gratified that the Government share my view.

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): Hon. Members on both sides of the House have expressed their worries about these matters. Some of them stem from what my hon. Friends and I consider to be Government inefficiency in negotiations. I am sure that my hon. Friend will be interested to know that some of us believe that that is a front to disguise the Government's real position, which is opposition to worker participation.

Mr. Cryer: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for intervening. Worker participation is the last item on the list set out in the memorandum and with which the ECS deals. I have a different view from many others on the issue. I do not think that a seat on the board is especially effective. I think that the right to recall a director or directors by the workers to give them an account of what is happening should be built into any worker participation scheme. The French have the safeguard, for example, of the right of trade union representation in companies with 30 employees or more, and only if there are no trade union representatives are non-trade unionists invited on to a representative board, which is not a company board but a consultative board which a company has to consult. The next Labour Government should seriously consider providing the same right as that which exists in French law, whereby no one can be dismissed for economic reasons without the approval of the French Minister for Employment.

That law was not introduced by a terribly left-wing Government. Indeed, there have not been any terribly left-wing Governments in France. The last left-wing Government had Mr. Delors as finance Minister. He made such a mess of matters by remaining in the exchange rate mechanism, and its predecessor the snake, that rigorous economy measures had to be introduced. He was pushed out of the French Government into the Commission at £100,000 a year, where he has managed to do a great deal of damage. At least in France the elected Government of the day, whether left, right or centre, have the power over the owners of capital to say whether people can be dismissed for economic reasons. Successive French Governments have exercised that power for more than a quarter of a century and the French people do not question it. It means that employers—small, medium and large—accept that if they want to dismiss people they must have sound economic reasons, which they must present to the Government. They cannot arbitrarily dismiss people.

That is an important safeguard for workers. Similar legislation in the United Kingdom would provide a safeguard for ordinary working men and women.

Ms. Mowlam: I thank my hon. Friend for giving way a second time. He might be interested to know that France has again led the way with a recent court ruling that favoured the creation of a European-level works council for the airbus project. France is already setting up the parallel structures that are needed for that sort of legislation in Britain.

Mr. Cryer: Airbus Industrie is a successful combination, but not a Common Market-wide combination. It has thousands of workers in several countries. British Aerospace in Manchester makes components for the airbus, as does Aerospatiale in France. It was necessary to develop some combination for a complicated and highly technical process, and that has been done. It is welcome, but it does not depend on the existence of the Common Market, and neither does the actual production of the airbus. The memorandum supplied by the Department of Trade and Industry states that the ECS would require companies

"to involve their workers in one of three models of participation . . . but in the event of a failure to agree the boards would have the final say."

That shows that, even under this proposal, workers will not have a great deal of power.

The memorandum also states that where negotiations fail

"a national model would apply. This would have to provide for at least the same information and consultation as would be required if a model were agreed by collective bargaining."

I suspect that the Government have reservations about the legislation because of the worker participation aspect. Indeed, the Minister says so in his memorandum. I would favour the right to greater information. The last Labour Government established the Bullock committee, which made a number of recommendations. They were bitterly opposed by the then Conservative Opposition, and, because we were a minority Government, they went no further.

I do not think, however, that we should necessarily rely on the Common Market for suggestions and recommendations—and, indeed, legislation—about worker participation: we can develop our own provisions, and after the next general election, when we have a Labour Government, we shall be able to develop a system that will be the envy not only of the other 11 member states but of the whole continent.

While I share my hon. Friend's view about the Government's attitude, I feel that this country should be prepared—under a Labour Administration—to develop the proposals for worker participation much more radically than is suggested in what is, in fact, a fairly timid document.

I have other reservations. The proposals represent a move towards a federal United States of western Europe, which is the motivating factor in the EEC Assembly in Strasbourg. What if hon. Members were required to declare European company investments and shareholdings, as they are required to declare United Kingdom shareholdings through the Register of Members' Interests? It would be necessary to comb the 11 other member states' registers to check out any complaints, and to ensure that hon. Members were following the rules. It is difficult enough to keep abreast of Members' interests in United Kingdom companies without having to trawl through all that extra material.

The scrutiny of Members' financial interests carried out by the Strasbourg Assembly—some call it a Parliament, but I refuse to grant such a grand title to what is really no more than a consultative body—is shoddy. In Strasbourg itself, the register of Members' interests is, in theory, available to the public; in practice, it is kept in a room to which there is no public access. In the triangular paperchase of the Common Market in Brussels where the committees meet, no such register is available at all; and there is no publication of a printed document like ours, available to members of the public for easy reference. The Assembly has a very indifferent attitude to something that we consider very serious—something that has been debated here for many years, and has been changed on occasion as a result of various developments.

The register is available in Luxembourg but no meetings are ever held there, so it would be necessary to undertake a journey of several hundred miles—counting the return journey—to consult it. Members of the public, who could not see the register in Brussels, would have to make a special journey to Luxembourg; they could not see it in Strasbourg—although in theory it is open to the public—because the public cannot reach the place where it is kept. If that is an example of European concern about the need for public representatives to declare their interests, it is not a very good one; and, if it illustrates the views of the EEC and its appointed Commissioners about public and private company formation, it does not do so very promisingly.

On the whole, I do not think that the measure has much to recommend it. Certainly every Opposition Member wants more worker involvement, and the Common Market always puts forward some proposal intended to tempt people in that regard. The social charter mentions the right to trade union membership, but it has been modified in such a way that it would not permit the workers at GCHQ in Cheltenham to have their rights restored. We still have to depend on this House for such legislation, and the next Labour Government will introduce a Bill to restore the rights so disgracefully removed from those working at GCHQ. We will not rely on the EEC for that.

In the same way, worker participation is a good idea, but it is a sprat to catch a mackerel. The directive does not confer radically important rights. It recognises the existence of workers, gives them a few crumbs, and might tempt some people to conclude that, on balance, the directive is of some benefit. I do not think that it is, not least because of the difficulties that a European statute would create, which I described at the beginning of my speech. On balance, it would create more difficulties than benefits, and worker participation can best be dealt with by national legislation that will set an example to other member states and to the rest of Europe.

It may be argued by some that the EEC could be a way of getting around a Tory Government. I have never subscribed to the view that one can in that way relieve the Labour movement of the obligation to secure a majority in this House and to achieve its aims and objectives through making proper use of this Parliament. We should not rely on outside bodies and organisations to get around the Government. When a Labour Government is elected, exactly the reverse could occur, with the Tory Opposition

[Mr. Cryer]

attempting to get around our legislation by turning to the Community. There are always people in such institutions willing to agree with an opposition party that a country's elected Government should not be taking certain action. Such tactics undermine a democratically elected Government.

No one despises the present Government and their policies more than I, and I want to be shot of them. However, the way to achieve improved workers' rights is not to skirt around the Government and become involved in the shambles that is the Common Market but to work for the election of a Labour Government. Every day that passes brings us nearer to a general election and to the next Labour Government who can implement their own legislation—and demonstrate that we can take the lead in company legislation, workers' rights and trade union law within not only the EEC but the whole of Europe.

1.47 am

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): I refer first to the need to strengthen workers' rights in companies that are wound up or go into liquidation. I can cite a practical example relating to the Amalgamated Engineering Union, which concerns the liquidation recently of Parkfields plc in the constituency of the hon. Member for Bolton, West (Mr. Sackville), but many of whose former employees live in my constituency.

The company was formerly owned by British Rail Engineering Ltd. When it was privatised, those members of the work force who remained with the new company were given absolute guarantees on the continuation of their employment rights and the transfer of engagements. They were meant to ensure that people who had been employed by British Rail for anything from 10 to 25 years would, if they worked for Parkfields, continue to enjoy the same rights and conditions as before.

Just over eight weeks ago, Parkfields plc, which has 39 subsidiaries throughout the United Kingdom and the EEC, was wound up. Cork Gully, a subsidiary of a major company in the City, was given the responsibility for trying to secure some resources from the bankrupt company for creditors. Men who had negotiated, through the trade union, several thousand pounds worth of redundancy payments only weeks before the winding up of the company found that when the cheques were presented to the bank they were not met. Employees had been given cast-iron guarantees about transferring their employment engagements from British Rail to Parkfields and giving a commitment to that company. The company asked them to give up their commitment and to accept a financial contribution for their loss of employment, but when they placed the cheques in the bank they were bounced by Cork Gully.

Some members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union lost between £18,000 and £22,000 and were informed that they were unsecured creditors. The remainder of the work force—in excess of 100—had made arrangements with British Rail about their concessionary passes. They were informed by Cork Gully that they must return them within 24 hours or find themselves in legal difficulties.

I approached British Rail about the passes. Mr. Reid, the new chairman, immediately recognised the problems that had arisen because Parkfields plc had failed to keep the promises it gave to the workers on privatisation. He extended their rights to use their passes until the end of this month. Cork Gully has made it clear to British Rail that it will not provide resources from the wind-up fund for the continuation of the passes.

People who worked for British Rail for more than 20 years were given commitments by the then Secretary of State for Transport at the Dispatch Box, and subsequently by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, that, by agreeing to transfer their engagement to the new, privatised company, they could continue their employment with no loss of years spent with the company, redundancy arrangements, levels of pay and other fringe benefits. But when the company was wound up that was found to be incorrect. The workers merely found that they were unsecured creditors. Surely it cannot be correct for the Government to give to workers commitments which are found to be absolutely worthless when a company is wound up.

I hope that the Under-Secretary of State will have a word with his colleague in the Department of Transport about this sorry state of affairs. People who have given a lifetime of commitment and work to an industry find that when the company is wound up there is no chance of their receiving the benefits that they are entitled to, which were rejected out of hand, disregarded, and discarded by arrangements which give them no protection whatsoever.

I also wish to mention worker participation in relation to the AEU and the Transport and General Workers Union, of which I am a member. Those unions lost a substantial number of members in the Piper Alpha disaster. The second part of the subsequent Cullen inquiry dealt with worker participation and its effects on health, safety, terms and conditions of employment upon rigs and on the development of the rights of workers to be represented on those topics.

There are about 56 companies operating in the North sea, employing 31,000 employees in 43 oil fields and 24 gas fields. During the Cullen inquiry it became clear from the representations of the 36 multinational companies represented by the Offshore Operators Association that they recognised that specific to the sub-contracting arrangements was the fact that worker participation was not allowed, whether it was on health and safety matters, conditions of service or trade union recognition.

The purpose of the EEC legislation to protect worker participation is to take account of what happened on Piper Alpha. That disaster occurred precisely because of the conditions on the rig at the time of the explosion. Trade union participation in health and safety matters was not allowed.

This is one of the most important industries in the United Kingdom. About 36 multinational companies, based in other EEC countries, work in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea. They are not obliged to enter into commitments about worker participation. Due to the Government's intransigence, worker participation is not allowed on North sea oil rigs. That has serious consequences for workers' health and safety and working conditions.

During the next four to six weeks a comprehensive report is expected to be laid before the House. Among the Cullen inquiry findings there is expected to be the finding that because the 36 companies operating in the North sea

have deliberately opposed constructive policies for worker participation they have therefore weakened fundamentally the safety regime in the North sea.

I have been involved in discussions this week, on behalf of my trade union, with a number of sub-contractors operating in the North sea. Some of them rely on their contracts with the 36 major oil companies operating in the North sea. Since the Piper Alpha disaster they have recognised the need for worker participation in matters such as health and safety, training and general conditions both onshore and offshore, particularly on the rigs. Their employees work a two-week cycle on the rigs. The sub-contractors are prepared to reach an agreement with the trade unions representing the work force, but some of the major North sea employers have made it clear to them that to reach such agreements with the work force would mean the end of their contracts with them. That gives the green light to North sea operators that Britain, due to the connivance of the Government, is not prepared to countenance worker participation in health and safety and other matters.

One would think that party political differences would be put on one side when considering a report such as that prepared by the Cullen inquiry into the loss of more than 100 lives in some of the most horrific conditions ever envisaged in an industrial accident. It was one of the most detailed inquiries ever held into health and safety. Despite all the evidence given to the inquiry, the basic right of workers in the North sea to participate in matters relating to their health and safety and other issues has been rejected by multinational companies who operate in the British sector of the North sea. They are not prepared to allow their workers to participate in matters that affect their health and safety.

Ms. Mowlam: To reinforce my hon. Friend's point about worker participation, "Business Brief" is one of the sources of information about the detailed discussions that have taken place in Europe on worker participation. It says that worker participation has proved to be a tough problem, because of British intransigence, between this country and German workers who wish to hold on to the advantages that they have gained. The Italians tried to take the initiative in order to break the deadlock on worker participation. However, it failed. That led some observers to conclude:

"there will be no significant progress on the draft Directive until there is a change of Government or attitude in the United Kingdom."

Mr. McCartney: I thank my hon. Friend for her helpful comments. Significantly, evidence given to the Cullen inquiry showed that among all the companies operating outside the United Kingdom there was legal recognition of workers' rights to participate in training, health and safety and recruitment. If such conditions can operate outside the United Kingdom, I cannot understand why, following Piper Alpha, the Government do not take an active interest in persuading the 36 multinational companies operating in the North sea to adopt a different attitude to worker participation.

I can understand the Government offering the excuse that they were ignorant of the position prior to Piper Alpha. I do not agree with that argument, but, from the Government's point of view, it may be a legitimate excuse for what happened. But no excuse can be given now as the Cullen inquiry is likely to report that two thirds of workers on North sea rigs are employed by sub-contractors. Their negotiating rights, therefore, are not recognised by the main contractor.

That inquiry is likely to report that two thirds of the work force in the oil and gas fields, but particularly the oil fields, are employed by sub-contractors and have been involved in industrial disputes this summer on the need to hold discussions about health and safety. There is nothing to prevent the main contractor from refusing to allow them back on to the rig, even if their employment rights and status have been recognised by the sub-contractor.

These matters are serious because what is at stake is not just the right of an employee to have a say in what happens. When a major industry such as oil, with the support of the Government, can deny Parliament the right to recognise workers' ability to defend themselves against unsafe work practices we cannot idly stand by and allow the Government to undermine the major steps that have been taken by the Community to defend those workers.

There is not enough time to go into other issues and other industries, although I should like to do so. For the second time in the past week, I shall attempt to keep on your good side, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Government cannot simply turn a blind eye to what is happening in Europe and the wider world. Even in the United States, the so-called cradle of capitalism, there is an awakening about the rights of workers to be involved in their industry and of companies to tap their talents and enthusiasm through an organised trade union or with them individually. The east Europeans attempted to hold back freedom, but the Government cannot hold back the need of the western world to involve workers in the development and maintenance of their industry or in research and development and new ideas.

Workers' rights are here to stay. If the Government do not go along with that—if they do not help in the process—they will be swept aside both in the next general election and by developments in Europe. We are either part of Europe or we are not part of it. We cannot pick and choose. The Government cannot decide to agree with some aspects of the European process and simply ignore others that it considers to be ideologically unsafe.

If we are in Europe and if we want to develop Europe, we must do so for the benefit of all working people. We cannot leave market forces to dictate people's living conditions, their health and safety and their terms and conditions of employment. Workers have an absolute right, in a market economy, to share the negotiating capabilities of their counterparts elsewhere in the EEC. In dangerous industries, such as the North sea oil industry, they must have an absolute right in law to a direct say in the development of health and safety practices. Without that say, workers will not only have their proposals rejected by management; they may lose their lives, as happened at Piper Alpha. Those workers have gone, but their families have to live with the situation. As we discuss legislation dealing with workers' rights, let us keep it in mind that for many in industry the ultimate sacrifice is not the loss of their job but the loss of their life.

2.6 am

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The hon. Lady has addressed the House once. Does she have the leave of the House to speak again?

Ms. Mowlam: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I begin by referring to a comment that the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) made much earlier. He said that he thought that Opposition Members had misunderstood the Government's position. We said that the main reason why the Government were not happy with the proposal was that an attempt had been made to include worker participation. The hon. Gentleman said that that was only one of a number of reasons why the Government were not happy.

Let us look at the draft instrument, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) referred on a number of occasions. Under the heading "policy implications", the precise reasons for the Government's opposition to the proposals are set out. Paragraph 19 says:

"The Government do not see a need"

for the European company statute. That does not strike me as a strong reason for not being happy with the proposals. Paragraph 21 says:

"On taxation, the Government agree with the Commission".

Paragraph 22 explains:

"On other issues the Government is not opposed to the ECS in principle".

It is in paragraph 20 that we find stated clearly the Government's main reason for objecting to the proposals:

"The Government are opposed to the compulsory worker participation provisions in the ECS".

The hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes said that that was only one of many reasons why the Government were not happy with the proposal. In fact, an analysis of the policy implications shows clearly that it is, in fact, central to their objections.

For once, the Government have been reasonably consistent. Their opposition to worker participation is well known. I see the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment in his place. I well remember reading documents on worker participation in the European Parliament in the early 1980s, when the hon. Gentleman's opposition to the concept was both direct and virulent.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Eric Forth): I hope so.

Ms. Mowlam: The hon. Gentleman puts it on record: he says that he hopes so. Having left the Department of Trade and Industry for the Department of Employment, he states clearly, in his usual direct and open style, that he is still deeply opposed to worker participation. We argue that it is because the Government oppose the concept that they are unhappy with the proposed European company statute. I am sure that, as the hon. Gentleman is in expansive form, he will remember the opposition in the European Community to the fifth directive, to the Vredeling consultation and to the 13th directive. On all those, the Government's opposition to worker participation has been clearly stated. I am not sure why we should assume that the Government's position in relation to the European company statute would be any different.

The Department of Trade and Industry provided United Kingdom Members of the European Parliament with a briefing on the European company statute. It contains a breakdown of the Government's arguments about the statute. Page 4 refers to three options on worker participation which the Government claim are compulsory and will be forced on European companies that might be based in the United Kingdom. Paragraph (c) states that the third option

"allows for some flexibility in the participation arrangements,"

That is a clear acknowledgement that flexibility is possible. However, because the Government believe that worker participation should not be adopted, the paragraph continues:

"Moreover, it cannot be assumed that this flexibility would be retained in any Statute. It should, for example, be noted that the draft Fifth Directive requires the equivalent option to make provision at least for the participation arrangements set out in option (a) and (b) above."

This point is central to the European company statute on worker participation, and it is clear from the Department's brief that it prefers not to have worker participation in any shape or form. I present that evidence to the House because it shows the opposition and it provides ammunition, argument and the details to the European Parliament with which to oppose the directive. This is not a minor or marginal aspect. Instead, the Government's unwillingness to provide greater information or consultation with workers in this country is central to their opposition to the statute.

I have other information to support my argument. The "European Industrial Relations Review No. 179" provides a good synopsis of different parts of European legislation and the different views of different countries on particular statutes. I refer to that document to establish that it is not just the Opposition who can see the Government's dislike of worker participation so clearly and strongly. The briefing shows that the rest of Europe shares our perception. The review states on page 1:

"Serious differences of opinion are emerging within the EC over worker participation . . . the UK Government has adopted a hostile attitude towards this kind of provision which seems to render it increasingly isolated in a European context."

That is clear evidence of the Government's isolation and hostility towards worker participation, and that is the general view held in Europe.

It is clear that the Italians have tried several initiatives to try to break the deadlock in the British intransigence towards worker participation. The Germans are also opposed to any watering down or half-hearted measures which might replace the present conditions for workers' rights contained in the company statute. It is only because of Germany sticking to its guns on this matter that we have the chance to discuss worker participation on a minimal level. We should like to see a great deal more worker participation. Thanks to other countries in Europe, at least we have the basis.

The British Government's unwillingness to be flexible and to adapt in respect of this statute, as with other directives referring to worker participation, has made it so difficult to make progress on them. Other countries in Europe have tried desperately to shift the Government to a point at which we could have agreement on a statute of this nature with worker participation in it, but that is not to be unless there is a change of Government or a change of attitude in the United Kingdom. Such change will be needed. Ironically, that is what the rest of Europe believes will be necessary if we are to get worker participation.

Our support for workers' rights and the need for information and consultation is entirely consistent with the positions that we have adopted. My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) mentioned the

Companies Bill. The amendments to that Bill were the kind of disclosure and publication of company accounts that we feel is necessary so that workers in a company can see information and be consulted on facts. The hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) has blinding flashes of common sense and rationality on the topic. He actually said that the second option on offer seemed to make a lot of sense. However, he was soon called back into rank and did not stick to his point. Conservative Members can clearly see that what is in the statute is not terribly radical or terribly extreme—it is a basic right to which workers should be entitled.

The Government talked a lot about wider share ownership and about increasing people's ability to participate. The European company statute refers directly to the rights of shareholders. We have heard Minister after Minister saying that wider share ownership has not worked and that, despite the Government's desires, some individuals have taken one or two shares and not traded them—much like Green Shield stamps—but have held on to them.

Mr. Cryer: I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the resolution about the European company statute. The Government's resolution states that the statute

"should contain a minimum of regulation consistent with the aim of providing adequate protection for those who may be involved with a company formed under the statute."

It does not say anything about workers or the consumers of a company's products. It is a narrow resolution.

Ms. Mowlam: I thank my hon. Friend for pointing that out. As I am sure he is aware, the narrowness of it was dealt with in last week's debate on the single market and financial services. Opposition Members complained bitterly that, whether it be this European company statute, the usage directive, the second banking or the capital adequacy directive—whatever the Government are bringing forward—they do not bring forward a consumers' directive. That has been discussed in the European Parliament and in the Commission. The Commission thinks that the earliest date that a consumers' directive will be in operation is 1991, when many other directives and draft instruments will be in place. I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. In the narrow definition on the Order Paper today, even the rights of consumers are not taken into account in any meaningful way by the Government.

I do not wish to try your patience, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but, as the debate started six hours ago, it is essential to point out that my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) mentioned two named individuals. I do not know exactly what he was referring to, but it is clear that hon. Members would regard with dismay and worry the programme on Cambodia. If the Minister sees his way clear to writing the letter for which my hon. Friend asked, Opposition Front-Bench Members would appreciate a copy.

My penultimate point is—*[Interruption.]* The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment might find this debate ridiculous. I am sorry that he does. The debate began earlier this evening. Opposition Members were quite happy to discuss the matter at a sensible hour this evening. Conservative Members caused hon. Members to return to discuss it at 2.19 in the morning. Like him, I should like to be tucked up in bed —*[Interruption.]* Yes, I do have certain standards—but Opposition Members are not responsible for the timing of this debate.

We had a good discussion earlier in which the Minister asked directly whether the Opposition were asking for a European company law. I said that that was not the essential point and that we should have liked different negotiations which would lead to a different point. However, when I thought about this over dinner, I realised that the takeover directive is, in fact, European law on the statute book, and that it has not negated national law. The two do not have to work in opposition—they can work in parallel. National company law has not been devalued or replaced by European company law. The two systems can work in parallel and need not add to overcumbersome legislation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South has outlined his clear desire to see the implementation of the worker participation section of the European company statute. He said that it is essential that progress is made at a national level and that the United Kingdom should take the lead in Europe. It is important to add that, again, the two need not work in opposition; they can work in parallel. We should push hard—a Labour Government would do so—for legally enforceable workers' rights, for rights to which everybody should be entitled, but that does not mean that we should not push the present Government towards making changes in Europe and within the existing legislation.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way on that point because I had intended to raise it. I am sure that she will recall that lead used to be used at a workplace in my constituency, but is no longer. I know that she will also recall the fact that the fault lies entirely—or rather mainly —with the Health and Safety Executive. If trade union rights had been adhered to in that place and if there had been worker participation, three of my constituents would not have ended up in hospital with lead poisoning.

Ms. Mowlam: I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention, which fits into much of our discussions earlier this evening. If we have such difficulties on a national level although we have legislation to protect workers' rights, what about the problems that we face when trying to get retribution or a response when there is an accident in France involving a company that is based in Germany, with British workers? Without a proper legal framework to protect workers, we shall be in an untenable position.

The European company statute had been discussed in detail in the European Parliament where much more time was spent on it than we have been able to spend today. A reading of the proceedings of the debate in the European Parliament shows clearly that all other countries voted with a large majority in support of the statute. The vote was 175 to 23 in favour, with two abstentions. That shows the support for the statute in the rest of Europe.

I refer now to two or three of the points that were made in the European Parliament in support of the statute. Stress was placed on the close links between the industrial and social aspects. The structuring of the European company is regarded as an opportunity to give concrete form to the social dimension of the internal market——

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): The hon. Lady said that hours ago.

Ms. Mowlam: The hon. and learned Gentleman may remember much of what I said earlier, but I did not talk then about the social dimension of the internal market, and I did not—as I am about to do—mention the difficulties that the Government now face, driven as they are by an ideology that hypnotises them not to see the parallel between the social and industrial dimensions. It is when those two work in unison, which Labour Members and members of other parties in the European Parliament are keen to see happen, that a European company statute will have a meaningful impact for society as a whole. I inform the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) that I did not make that point earlier.

Some other points were made in the European Parliament in support of the European company statute. Labour Members regard the statute as fine in principle but would like to see some changes. Members of the European Parliament see the social dimension as a fundamental component of the internal market, not as a mere adjunct to it. It will be indispensable. We have argued that on numerous pieces of European legislation in the House. We are worried, as with the European company statute, about the distinction between a directive and a regulation. We are fearful that the regulation may go through but that the directive on worker participation will lie on the table and will not be implemented at the same time. That anxiety was expressed clearly by many Members of the European Parliament. Labour Members believe that we are in danger of seeing that fear realised, due to the Government's intransigence in Europe over many years of discussions.

The debate in the European Parliament emphasised clearly that there were several options for worker participation in the European company statute. Many speakers expected it to be incumbent on the management and staff of any undertaking to reach agreement on the model of worker participation to be adopted. They also expected that no European company would not apply any model of worker participation. That has been the crux of our argument on this part of the European company statute. There are three options. Flexibility is built into the statue. By default there could be a reversion to the national option. A European company could negotiate an agreed option beween management and workers in a particular European company. We believe that that would give enough flexibility. The Minister said that that would have to be in the statutory framework. Yes, and a good thing too, because without such legal protection and unless the general principle is agreed, workers' rights will not be protected.

We clearly understand that the detail would have to vary from company to company, country to country and circumstance to circumstance. We readily accept that. We want to see established the principle that it is a legal right of every worker to be provided with information and to be consulted. It is clear that the Government are not only out of date and out of time with British companies, but out of step with the attitude in the rest of Europe.

The European company statute clearly shows that Labour Members are in tune with the rest of Europe. For the Minister, Europe stops at Eastbourne or perhaps the Channel islands, with their offshore implications. For the Prime Minister it is probably the Isle of Wight. We see the need for a European company statute. We happily agree with the Minister that it may not be used much in the early years. It may not be used without some changes to remedy the confusion that exists in parts of it. We readily acknowledge that. If the regulation is not accepted, the next Labour Government will negotiate that detail carefully. But we shall be sure that the worker participation element is included. We believe that that element is the main reason why the Government have blocked the directive.

2.28 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) raised an important point about insolvency and re-formation of companies through their directors. That matter is covered in sections 1(15) to (23) of the draft. We agree with the hon. Gentleman that they are not satisfactory, particularly in relation to national law. It is an area of company law provisions which we shall look at carefully to make sure that there is a satisfactory means for winding up and at least similar precautions and protections to those in current United Kingdom insolvency law.

I agree with the general line taken by my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne). I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) for his many good points on company law and accountancy problems, several of which will be taken up by the Government in forthcoming negotiations. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) that the Government wish to encourage on a voluntary basis the many good models of employee share participation and employee participation in general. Britain has much to be proud of, because in recent years many good models have been developed and many schemes pioneered. As my hon. Friend said, the National Freight Consortium is seen by people all over the world as an example of great success.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) raised a series of issues that are the responsibility of my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade. I am sorry he is not in the Chamber but I think that the hon. Member for Linlithgow is in touch with my hon. Friend who, I am sure, will read the report of the debate and will contact the hon. Gentleman if he has helpful information.

I should like to rebut three points made by the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam). She said that the Government's position was not clear, but that is far from the case. I made our position quite clear in the debate and it is set out in the explanatory memorandum. I like to hear the views of the House and have noted several useful comments which we shall follow up in the negotiations.

The Government are against several elements in the current proposal. We oppose some of the company law proposals, the taxation proposal, the voting base of the measure and the particular forms of mandatory worker participation in the directive. However, it is not true to say that we are against a particular style of worker participation or against employee participation in general because, as I made clear in the debate, we are against a certain kind of mandatory worker participation.

Secondly, Labour still refuses to come clean on whether it would negotiate a comprehensive framework of European law that would deal with the problems of 12 different types of company. I do not know whether the

Opposition cannot say or will not say, but it seems that they have no idea of their policy on the relationship between European and national company law. It is a great pity that they cannot clarify this crucial issue.

The hon. Member for Redcar tried to claim that if a Labour Government were handling these negotiations and had in front of them a more general proposal for a European company statute, they would make rapid progress. The hon. Lady says that that we are unable to do that. When Labour were in government for five years from 1974 until 1979 there was a more general proposition on the table and not an inch of progress was made. That shows that the realism of office made Labour realise that there are all sorts of company law problems in the proposals. I am glad that Labour will not have the chance to find that out again.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 63, Noes 4.

Division No. 330] **[2.32 am**

AYES

Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boswell, Tim
Brazier, Julian
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carrington, Matthew
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Hague, William
Holt, Richard
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Jackson, Robert
Kirkhope, Timothy
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waller, Gary
Widdecombe, Ann
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Greg Knight and
Mr. Neil Hamilton.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
McAllion, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Skinner, Dennis

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Ian McCartney.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8404/89 on the proposal for a European Company Statute; and supports the Government's intention to seek to ensure that if there is to be a European Company Statute, it should contain a minimum of regulation consistent with the aim of providing adequate protection for those who may be involved with a company formed under the statute.

Wages Councils

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

2.43 am

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): It is with some relief that I rise to begin the Adjournment debate at nearly 2.45 am. I am sure that that relief is shared by the Minister and your good self, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In a written answer earlier this year the Secretary of State for Employment confirmed the Government's decision not to abolish the wages council system for the present. He announced that such was the Government's concern about the effect of the wages councils that he intended to keep their operation under close review. We know from the Secretary of State that the Department of Employment has a close working knowledge of what is happening to the wages council system, and the Under-Secretary of State is ideally placed to respond to the report published only last month and entitled "Crime without Punishment: The Story behind Wages Councils Underpayments". The Minister laughs at the notion of such a report being published, and the record will show his flippant attitude.

The report was published by the Low Pay Unit and the National Union of Civil and Public Servants and it chronicles a state of affairs which calls into question the fitness of Ministers at the Department to continue in their high office. It reveals that those who have been entrusted with administering the wages council legislation enacted by the House are turning a blind eye to a crime wave of illegal underpayment of minimum wages. It shows that they are, if nothing else, aiding and abetting those employers who commit the criminal offence of illegal underpayment. That is nothing short of a national disgrace. Those inside and outside the House are indebted to the Low Pay Unit and to the National Union of Civil and Public Servants for bringing that scandal to our attention.

Wages councils protect 2·5 million of Britain's lowest paid workers. The protection that they afford cannot be described as excessive, unreasonable or unrealistic. A few examples of current wages council rates will testify that the rates are too low rather than too high. The made-up textile sector has a basic hourly minimum of £2·22 and an overtime hourly minimum of £3·33. The equivalent figures for the hotel and restaurant sector is £2·33 and £3·50. For the hairdressing sector, it is £2·40 and £3·60. Those wage rates hardly begin to compare with the wages earned last year by Sir John Nott, which we understand from the weekend press to have been £1·5 million. The wages councils' rates show that the workers protected by them earn £90 gross for a 39-hour week, and take home considerably less.

Given that the Council of Europe's decency threshold is currently £163, it can hardly be argued that it is unreasonable to expect employers to pay wages council rates. Certainly the House does not believe it to be unreasonable. That is why legislation was enacted to set up wages councils, and why it has never been repealed. That is why illegal underpayment has been made a criminal offence. That is why Ministers have been charged with establishing a machinery—the wages inspectorate—to give effect and teeth to the wages council system.

[Mr. John McAllion]

Until the House decides otherwise, it is the clear and bounden duty of Ministers to make that legislation work, to bring to justice those who criminally offend by illegal underpayment, properly to resource the wages inspectorate, and to make the wages councils as effective as possible. That is why the report is so disturbing. It reveals such a record of neglect and dereliction of duty by Ministers that, if honour were the criterion, it would require the resignation of those who have failed properly to discharge their duties to this House.

The report highlights a number of areas in which the Department and its Ministers have fallen down. First, they have done so in the resourcing of the wages inspectorate which, in effect, is the police officer of the wages council system. Five years ago, in 1985, the Government proposed the abolition of wages councils but were forced to back off by the hostile response from churches, voluntary organisations, trade unions and even from the majority of employers. At that time there were 120 wages council inspectors; today there are just 71—a reduction of 41 per cent. in five years. Using the Department's latest estimates, that means that there are just 71 inspectors to oversee 379,253 establishments and to provide cover for the 2,472,400 employees—a ratio of one inspector to 35,000 employees. That represents under-resourcing on a disastrous scale, with the inevitable result that far fewer establishments are visited—a quarter fewer in 1989 than in 1986—and there is far more reliance on the less effective checks provided by questionnaires and postal inquiries.

What unscrupulous employer can seriously be expected to fill up a form admitting that he is illegally underpaying his workers? There is growing evidence of widespread disrespect for the laws passed by the House, with 11,000 workers underpaid to the tune of £1·38 million in 1989 and arrears of payment owed to workers up by £74,000 on the 1988 figure. Those are, of course, wages inspectorate estimates, and they are likely to be underestimates as they take no account of the long hours worked in wages council industries or of employers who do not register with wages councils because they are not legally obliged to do so even though those very employers are the most likely to be guilty of illegal underpayment.

The Government are fond of boasting that they are creating a climate in which free enterprise can flourish, but "Crime without Punishment" shows that the climate is one in which criminal underpayment is encouraged, along with widespread disrespect for our legislation. The so-called party of law and order seems to put on kid gloves when it comes to dealing with unscrupulous employers, and the results are there for all to see: widespread illegal underpayment, widespread illegal failure to post wages council orders, widespread failure to keep records of wages paid and hours worked—in effect, widespread exploitation of some of the poorest workers in the European Community.

A Government who were genuinely anxious to uphold the rule of law would be clamping down on such law-breaking—but not this Government. They continue to cut back on the proper policing of the wages council system. They ignore their own statistics, which point to a crime wave with nearly 23,000 offences in 1989 alone. They fail to act against those who commit those criminal offences—there were just 10 prosecutions in England and Wales in 1989, and not one in Scotland. That is a lamentable record.

The Government's record on low pay contrasts starkly with their record on pursuing wrongdoers in other areas —for example, those who defraud the Department of Social Security. Every opportunity has been seized to increase the number of DSS fraud investigators to a present level of 820, while at the same time every excuse has been used to cut the number of wages inspectorate staff to the current pathetic level of 71. We cannot avoid the conclusion that the Government are prepared to crack down on lawbreakers who are poor, but equally prepared to condone lawbreaking on the part of employers who are better off.

Free-marketeers, of course, will dismiss all this, and will point to huge underlying economic changes in developed capitalist economies such as ours—the shift away from heavy industries such as shipbuilding, steel and coal which were heavily unionised and employed mostly well-paid male work forces towards the newer service industries employing mostly female part-time workers, often non-unionised and generally low paid. They will point to the example of the United States, where during the Reagan years there was a massive expansion of low-paid employment in the retail and catering sectors. They will try to tell us that there is no alternative to the low pay option, and that at least it represents a lesser evil than the mass unemployment of the early 1980s which was so plainly the creation of the present Government.

Seen in that context, the Government's policies are, at any rate, obvious and explicable. The weakening of trade union power has opened the way for the expansion of low-paid employment; the contracting out of public services is a means of promoting low pay through the lowest tender procedure; the rescinding of the fair wages resolution and the deratifying of International Labour Organisation conventions 94 and 26 has exposed Government contract workers to low pay. The threatening and bullying of social security claimants out of benefit and into whatever low-paid work is available is part of that same strategy. So, too, is the continued undermining of the wages councils which are the subject of this debate.

The Government have enthusiastically embraced low pay as part of the answer, and in so doing have failed to understand that low pay is really part of the problem. If wages councils are abolished, either officially or by the Government's current back-door strategy, Britain will be alone in Europe in not having any legislation to protect low-paid workers.

As it is, Britain falls lamentably short of European standards. The Council of Europe's decency threshold of £163 must seem like a mirage to the 10 million low-paid workers in this country who earn less than that. And Britain alone refused to sign the European social charter, with its rights for workers to be paid a sufficient amount to provide themselves and their families with a decent standard of living. Britain refuses also to adopt a civilised attitude to workers' rights and living standards.

Ministers fail to understand that, in promoting low pay, they are not helping Britain to catch up with the rest of Europe but are leaving us further behind. It is vitally important for the Government to heed the advice of those with special knowledge of low pay and who produced the report to which I have referred, and to commit themselves to the reforms that it outlines. The Government must also

restore, strengthen and extend the wages councils machinery to cover emerging areas of low pay such as contract cleaning and the security industries. They should also re-ratify ILO conventions Nos. 94 and 26 and introduce legally binding minimum wage protection for all citizens, as exists elsewhere in Europe.

Those are just a few of the reforms which would help to protect workers from the exploitation to which they are currently subjected. They would help also to end the obscenity whereby, at one end of the pay scale, it is not considered excessive for one man to earn £1·5 million while at the other end of the scale £2·20 per hour is regarded as too much.

The case against low pay is overwhelming, but the Government's case for abolishing the wages councils has yet to be made with any credibility. I suspect that that will remain the case even after the Minister has replied.

2.57 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Eric Forth): I congratulate the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) on bringing this important matter before the House even at this late hour. I listened to his arguments carefully, but they owe more to emotion than to reason. The hon. Gentleman's arguments reflect some depressingly familiar propaganda of a kind regularly produced by organisations which seem more intent on discrediting the Government than on helping the very people whose cause they purport to fight.

The irresponsible allegations made today were prompted, as the hon. Gentleman admitted, by publications such as "Crime without Punishment"—a product of co-operation between the National Union of Civil and Public Servants and the Low Pay Unit, which are scarcely unbiased or independent sources of information, analysis or conclusions.

I will deal immediately with the alleged crime wave of underpayment. The hon. Gentleman argues that one third of all the establishments visited by the wages inspectorate were found to be paying less than the minimum remuneration required by the relevant wages councils. That figure is a complete misrepresentation of the true state of affairs. First, it relates only to the results of checks in which inspectors actually visited establishments—and such visits are targeted specifically on establishments where underpayments are more likely to be found.

Secondly, the discovery of an underpayment at an establishment visited does not mean that all the workers there are underpaid. Normally, only one or two of them are found to be underpaid as a result of such visits. The only valid yardstick of compliance is the proportion of workers in the system who are found to be underpaid in all the checks—not just those carried out by visits—which are conducted by the wages inspectorate. This figure runs consistently at around 3 per cent. to 4 per cent. No one in his right mind could describe that figure as indicating "a crime wave of underpayment", which shows the extent of distortion offered by the report cited by the hon. Gentleman today. Nor is there any foundation for the suggestion that the level of underpayment is at an unprecedented high, or that it is increasing. Last year's fractional increase in the amount of underpayment discovered is attributable to the inspectorate's increased success in targeting its work on employers more likely to be underpaying. I should point out to the hon. Gentleman that the inspectorate's work is now more tightly focused on discovering underpaying employers than it was in the days of the last Labour Administration.

Not only do wild allegations about the state of compliance offend those involved in running the system, but they also arguably damage the situation of those who are vulnerable to underpayment. The more that pressure groups and others mislead the public as to the state of compliance, the more likely it must be that some employers, albeit not many, will be tempted to transgress on the grounds that they will be in good company.

Not content with misrepresenting the extent to which workers are underpaid, those who wish to discredit the Government also allege that the Government are undermining enforcement in other ways and the hon. Gentleman has done that again today. They argue that changes in the numbers and grading of inspectors weaken the system, and they maintain that the inspectorate's approach to the job—the methods that it uses—encourage non-compliance. I rebut those charges entirely.

The number of inspectors is lower than in 1979, but our reasons for doing this were entirely justifiable. In 1981 we curtailed the expansion of the wages inspectorate on which the Labour Government had embarked towards the end of their term because the overriding need in Government was to reduce public spending generally to a level which would not wreck the economy. In reducing the size of the inspectorate, however, we simply brought inspection back to the level which obtained for many years prior to 1978. In 1986, we reduced the numbers for an equally good reason—it was simply not necessary to have the same number of inspectors to check compliance because checks had become easier and quicker with the simplification of the wages orders following the 1986 legislation. We also anticipated that compliance would be higher following the reforms, and our expectations in that respect have been realised.

Experience of enforcing the simpler orders has also shown us that the work of some of the higher grade inspectors can be safely regraded so that all the basic inspection work is done at executive officer level. Again, therefore, the suggestion that we are embarking on a wholesale regrading is quite inaccurate. Of the 71 posts for "on the road" inspectors, only 17 were in the higher grade. There is absolutely no intention to change the number of inspectors or the volume of work that they undertake.

The hon. Gentleman also seeks to indict the Government by implying that they encourage the inspectorate to adopt a "soft touch"—he used the term "kid gloves"—in dealing with employers. That is an entirely baseless accusation. The methods that the inspectorate uses are essentially those which have been found effective over many years, and indeed some of the devices that it uses to enable it to make the best use of its time were introduced by the last Labour Administration.

In this context, I am thinking in particular of the much misunderstood "questionnaire" procedure in which employers are asked to state the amount that they are paying their employees. This method accounts for only a minority of checks carried out and is mainly used by inspectors to help them "screen" establishments for likely underpayers. The fact is that in test checks some 95 per cent. of employers are found to be completing the questionnaires truthfully and accurately, which means that

[Mr. Eric Forth]

the inspectorate is better able to focus its attention on those respondents whose replies indicate cause for concern.

We are also attacked for not prosecuting enough of the employers who fail to meet the requirements of the legislation. The ratio of prosecutions to establishments underpaying is higher since 1979 than it was under the last Labour Government, but that really misses the point—that under all Governments the inspectorate has pursued a policy of achieving compliance primarily through advice and persuasion and not by prosecution. Some four-fifths of all the establishments found to be underpaying are being inspected for the first time, and it is rarely appropriate in those circumstances to haul them before the courts. The vast majority of employers readily put right any deficiencies in the amount that they are paying. Nor is it sensible to run people into the courts because the notice of the current minimum rates is not pinned up or the right records have not been kept, if it is perfectly clear when the inspection takes place that no worker is being underpaid. Of course, where there are doubts about the employers' willingness to comply with the law the inspectorate will keep a tight check on the situation and take legal action if necessary.

The hon. Gentleman also made some comments about the Government's attitude to wages councils in general. He quoted—I think accurately—what the Secretary of State said earlier in the year about our position as regards wages councils, which is a matter of record. I emphasise that that is based not on an ideological stance but on a practical approach to the matter. For example, the work of virtually all independent economists supports our contention that there is a price to be paid for any attempt at minimum wage fixing and that that price is in jobs and employment. It is no argument to say that other countries are unaffected or untroubled by machinery of the kind that the hon. Gentleman cited. Some, such as the Netherlands and the United States of America, do not raise the level of their minima for years, and organisations such as the OECD and the European Community itself have commented on the need for countries with minimum wages to consider the impact of those arrangements on job levels.

It is worth pointing out, because it is relevant to the debate, that the United Kingdom's unemployment level is significantly below that of most of our major European partners and competitors. That is something which Opposition Members choose to ignore when it suits them, but we still regard it as very important.

Secondly, our emphasis on maintaining and improving employment levels reflects not a disregard for people's living standards but the absolute opposite as lack of employment opportunities, not low pay, is the major cause of low living standards. Only 4 per cent. of those full-time workers who are in the lowest decile of earnings are in the lowest 10 per cent. of incomes.

Thirdly, the facts simply do not support the accusation that the abolition of the wages councils would lead to what people sometimes call "poverty wages". Indeed, the whole notion that that phrase conjures up is false. As I have said, the link between low pay and low living standards is weak. Four fifths of wages council workers are contributing a second income to the home. They are not people living in households with low living standards.

The Labour party's proposals for the introduction of a national minimum wage fly in the face of logic and ignore the facts that I have outlined. The effect of introducing a minimum at the level currently envisaged would be to reduce employment very quickly by around 750,000. This estimate does not even allow for the full restoration of differentials, as supported by the recent statements of eminent trade union leaders such as Eric Hammond and Bill Jordan.

The right way to help those on low pay is to continue our policies of deregulating the labour market wherever this can reasonably be done, thus stimulating enterprise and initiative, creating more jobs and raising living standards all round. I believe that our success in freeing up the labour market is evident in the fact that more people are at work in Britain today than at any other time in our history.

I hope that I have answered some of the specific points made by the hon. Gentleman and refuted some of the unsupported and unsubstantiated allegations made in the report to which he referred. I am glad to have had this opportunity to put the facts on record.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at seven minutes past Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 23 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

DEATH OF A MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: I regret to have to inform the House of the death of Norman Findlay Buchan esquire, Member for Paisley, South and I desire, on behalf of the House, to express our sense of the loss we have sustained and our sympathy with the relatives of the hon. Member.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

CITY OF DUNDEE DISTRICT COUNCIL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

ZETLAND MASONIC SICK AND WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

Considered; to be read the Third time.

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers

1. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what new proposals he will be putting forward to improve the pay and general standing of teachers.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. John MacGregor): The remit that I gave to the interim advisory committee on 14 September as regards teachers' pay and conditions in 1991-92 invites the committee to build on the far-reaching improvements introduced in teachers' pay following its excellent report of last year. I announced on 23 July my intention to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity with a view to restoring teachers' negotiating rights in time for the 1992-93 settlement.

Mr. Townsend: Is not it a little shaming that local education authorities like Bexley have to recruit teachers from abroad due to the lack of the home-grown variety? Will my right hon. Friend make it crystal clear that teachers are a special case and that if we are to look after their recruitment, retention and general standing in the community, they must have a significant pay increase?

Mr. MacGregor: My hon. Friend knows that the position was greatly improved this year in areas where there were previously shortages. Only a handful of schools have vacancies this year. The number of teachers recruited from overseas was very small and in most cases was for special purposes. There has been a big improvement and that is due both to the increases in teacher supply which we are bringing about and to the general increase and improvement in teachers' pay and conditions.

Mr. Win Griffiths: The Secretary of State will know that many of those teachers recruited from abroad are already leaving schools because they are disillusioned. Will not he admit, that despite his valiant efforts on pay last year, teachers' salaries over the past three years are still lagging behind inflation? Will he now commit himself to ensuring that in this year's pay settlement teachers will receive an award that, at the very least, will keep pace with this year's inflation, if not improve on it? Until that is achieved, teachers, who are facing many extra burdens as a result of the national curriculum, will not teach with any enthusiasm in our schools.

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Gentleman made several points and I will deal with one or two of them quickly. I repeat that the number of teachers recruited from overseas is very small in relation to the total teacher supply. Indeed, there are advantages in such recruitment and that practice has always been followed. On average, teachers have had an increase of 50 per cent. in their pay since 1986 and it is well up in real terms over the past 10 years. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that there is much greater flexibility in the teaching salary structure now and many teachers in particular shortage areas are receiving well above the average. There has been a substantial improvement and I indicated in my remit to the interim advisory committee the general shape of what I hope the teachers' pay settlement will be next year.

Mr. Patrick Thompson: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the general standing of teachers would be helped greatly if teachers and leading teachers in our schools were consulted more often than are administrators, politicians and others? May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his recent decision on single sciences, which was reached according to the very principle that I have just described? That is good for the recruitment of teachers. Let the advice of good teachers be taken more often.

Mr. MacGregor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He will know that I talk to an awful lot of teachers, not just to my advisory bodies, as I go round the country, and that they come to see me. The single science decision—I am grateful for my hon. Friend's comments on it—in part reflected that. My hon. Friend will recognise also that, with the introduction of local management of schools and with decisions being taken much more at school level, it is much easier now for governing bodies and heads to consult teachers in their schools.

Mr. Straw: Why does the Secretary of State continue to mislead teachers and the public by making wholly untrue claims about the increases that teachers have enjoyed over the past four years, when the only increase that they have had in real terms was between 1986 and 1987? As the Select Committee report and the Secretary of State's own teachers' pay committee make clear, teachers' pay in real terms has been cut in each of the past three years. What kind of improvement in teachers' morale does the right hon. Gentleman think can be achieved when he and his colleagues have cut teachers' pay for each of the past three years? If he wants to improve matters, will he here and now

give a categorical assurance that he will fully fund any increase in teachers' pay recommended by the interim advisory committee?

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Gentleman must take into account the fact that there is now much greater flexibility in the teachers' salary structure system. Therefore, a considerable number of teachers will have had substantial increases in the past few years. In the period of this Government, teachers' pay on average has increased by 30 per cent. in real terms; that compares with an average increase of 6 per cent. under the previous Labour Government. I shall be making further comments about teachers' pay for next year. At present, of course, the interim advisory committee has hardly embarked on its work. I shall make comments at the appropriate time when the education part of local authority total standard spending is announced. I noticed that, in the Walden interview, the hon. Gentleman was all over the shop when asked about Labour's commitment to extra spending. It was not going to come from extra taxation; it was not going to come from extra borrowing; it was not going to come from anywhere.

Teacher Shortages

2. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what further initiatives are currently being considered by his Department to help relieve the problems of teacher shortages in particular subjects in the south-east.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mr. Tim Eggar): We already have in place a range of measures that are helping to relieve teacher supply difficulties in the south-east.

Our September count of vacancies revealed that all local education authorities, including those in London and the south-east, had succeeded in filling the great majority of the posts that were vacant at the beginning of the summer.

Mr. Taylor: I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister of State, welcome him to his debut with chalk and blackboard in the House and wish him a long and successful stay in his position.

In Surrey, the problem is becoming quite serious. The readvertisement of jobs for primary school teachers is running at about 27 per cent., and for secondary school teachers it is now 31 per cent. Will my hon. Friend assure the House that the measures that have been announced will be brought in as soon as possible so that local pay bargaining can increase the potential for giving bursaries to teachers in special subjects, in particular maths, modern languages and science? Will he also make sure that local management of schools provides even greater flexibility so that Surrey and other counties in the south-east can fill their vacancies?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend will reflect upon the need for his own county council to consider whether local funding is appropriate at some time in the future. Surrey has taken advantage of a scheme run by my Department, that has enabled the setting up of courses specifically for women returners who have experience in teaching modern languages. As a result of one course alone, Surrey was able to recruit 22 modern language teachers.

Mr. Flannery: Does the Minister of State realise that the Select Committee would never have published its report on teacher supply, which took nearly two years to complete, unless the position was deadly serious? Does he realise also that talking about being able to put a body in front of every class, whether it be in the south-east or elsewhere, is nonsense? The number of applications for major teaching posts has fallen catastrophically. Whereas there used to be 20 or 30 applications, the number has now dropped to one, two or three, and the people who are employed are not necessarily the people who are wanted? As the problem is more serious than that, will the Minister please treat it as being more serious and settle it once and for all?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman appears not to be aware that the overwhelming majority of classes have permanent teachers who teach children on a well-established basis. The level of teacher vacancies in our schools is almost exactly the same as it was 10 years ago when the Labour party left government. Those are the facts. It is no good the hon. Gentleman exaggerating the position.

Mr. Dunn: Does my hon. Friend accept that the only way to eliminate teacher shortages in the south-east is to abolish national pay scales and to move to a system of regional pay with school-centred pay bargaining? The second thing that could be done to improve teacher morale in the south-east would be to ask the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) to keep his mouth shut for at least a year.

Mr. Eggar: I am sure that the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) will pay attention to the advice given by my hon. Friend. We should all benefit from that advice being followed.

Pupils (Testing)

3. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his deliberations about standardised testing for seven-year-olds.

5. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy on the testing of children at the ages of seven and 11 years as a means of monitoring standards in schools.

Mr. MacGregor: I made an oral statement to the House on 18 October and published the specification for the first standard assessment tasks to assess seven-year-olds in 1991. Copies of the specification have been placed in the Library and the Vote Office.

The formal assessment of seven and 11-year-olds is a key part of the national curriculum and will contribute enormously to the effective monitoring and raising of educational standards in schools.

Ms. Mowlam: Will the Minister think back to when he and his friends took the 11-plus and remember how some of his friends were labelled a success while others were labelled a failure? Will the right hon. Gentleman reassure the House that the results of the testing for seven-year-olds will not be made public?

Mr. MacGregor: The assessment, or testing, of seven-year-olds is designed to enable teachers and pupils in

all schools to be aware on a systematic basis of the level that has been reached by individual pupils so that their strengths can be built on and their weaknesses tackled. Reporting will be to the parent. We have not proposed statutory obligatory reporting of the overall school results for seven-year-olds, but I hope that schools will publish aggregate figures and I shall encourage them to do so.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that what parents really want is to know what their children are being taught and that they will therefore warmly welcome the tests that he has introduced? Does he further agree that, far from tests creating failure,s, the absence of testing would create failure, because no one would have any idea of what is being taught in some of our schools, especially in Labour authorities?

Mr. MacGregor: I agree with my hon. Friend on both points, but I would go further. I believe that through the standard external tests—not just the assessments by teachers—parents want to know how their children are progressing with the basics, such as reading, arithmetic, writing and basic scientific skills. That is what the tests concentrate on, because that is what parents and most teachers want.

Mr. Nellist: What standards are being set for, and what lessons are being learnt by the primary school children at St. Paul's school in Staffordshire, whose parents were told a couple of weeks ago to bring in not only their own pens, pencils, rubbers and hand towels, but—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nellist: —but their own toilet rolls? Is not it a fact that not one education—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must be given a chance to put his question.

Mr. Nellist: Is not it a fact that not one Education Minister on that Front Bench would allow any of his children to learn a lesson like that about the inadequacies of the education provision in this country? Why should our children have to learn that lesson?

Mr. MacGregor: I do not see what that has to do with the testing of seven-year-olds. The matter that the hon. Gentleman raised is for the local education authority. I believe that there was some misunderstanding of what was said at that time. It has nothing to do with the testing of seven-year-olds or with raising standards.

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: My right hon. Friend will have noted that the general public invariably dismiss what politicians say but like to listen to what royalty and religious figures say. Will he endorse the comments made today by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, a leading mother in Britain, who said exactly what we say—that we should get back to basics with standardised testing?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is out of order to bring the royal family into our arguments.

Mrs. Hicks: The standard test brings us back to the three Rs—reading, writing and arithmetic—so that children, parents and teachers know what children should learn. Is not it despicable that many educationists who talk about the decline in education are the very people who are against testing?

Mr. MacGregor: The vast majority of parents welcome what we propose to do next summer on testing seven-year-olds. As my hon. Friend says, the external testing will concentrate on the basics, which are the fundamental parts of education for all children. I am sure that it is right to do so at the age of seven.

Ms. Armstrong: The Secretary of State recognises that the real role of testing at that early age is to aid children's learning and identify their strengths and weaknesses. How can teachers work on those weaknesses and give parents the confidence that problems that have been identified will be worked on without the additional support and encouragement which Surrey county council has costed at about £400,000 a year?

Mr. MacGregor: The hon. Lady will know that we have increased the spending per pupil in all schools across the board, not just primary schools, by over 40 per cent. after inflation. It is absolutely typical and it does not surprise me, but it is tedious to hear Labour Members pretend that they would be willing to spend more on education. They know perfectly well that they always include the phrase, "as resources allow". It was perfectly obvious from the comments made by the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) on television recently that the Labour party will not increase spending more than we are doing. It is a bit rich of the hon. Lady to put forward that argument. We are increasing spending per pupil.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: My right hon. Friend will be aware of the anxiety felt by many at a report published at the beginning of September that showed that in 10 local education authorities reading standards have declined during the past 10 years. Does he agree that it is important that an assessment at the age of seven takes into account not only the standards achieved by individual children but the methods used by teachers to ensure that children can read properly? Does he also agree that parents are interested as much in how their children are doing in relation to other children as in how they are doing in an absolute sense?

Mr. MacGregor: The evidence from reports on some reading tests is not clear. That is why I have asked for testing to be done much more nationally. We shall have the results by Christmas. It is important to stress that that evidence is not clear. The educational psychologists who compiled a report said that it provided only prima facie evidence. However, one thing is clear. If, in any school, there is a decline in reading standards, it is to do not with resources, but, as those same educational psychologists said, with teaching methods. It is from that point of view that I shall consider the evidence. My hon. Friend is entirely right. The whole point of the national curriculum and of testing at seven is not only to make comparisons but to ensure that we have national information about reading standards compiled on a comparable basis.

Student Loans

4. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the operation of the student loans scheme and access funds.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Alan Howarth): The loans scheme is up and running and the access funds are in place.

The Student Loans Company opened for business last month and I am delighted to tell the House that, as of yesterday, 14,500 students have already applied. The company is operating very efficiently, as I saw when I recently visited it.

Mr. Darling: If the student loans scheme is so good, why have only 14,500 students applied for it? Why are the Government spending £1 million on advertising the scheme, especially when, yesterday, Edinburgh university announced a freeze on all staff recruitment because of its dire financial position? Do the Government accept that money should be spent on funding our university education, or are they happy for it to fall further and further behind as the rest of Europe races ahead?

Mr. Howarth: The hon. Gentleman overlooks the fact that funding in real terms has increased by some 9 per cent. during the period of this Government and, last year, in cash terms, an additional 10 per cent. was made available. During the three years of the present survey about £1 billion will be added to higher education expenditure for all purposes. Universities, far from being deprived of funding by the Government, have had a significant increase in funding and, correspondingly, are increasing the opportunities available to students in higher education.

Mr. Quentin Davies: Will my hon. Friend take this opportunity to give the House an idea of the impact of the introduction of student loans on applications for student places this year?

Mr. Howarth: I am extremely encouraged, as is the House, I hope, that 14,500 applications have already been made to the scheme. In response to the first point of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling), I believe that that is an encouraging start to the scheme, especially considering that universities and polytechnics returned for the new academic year only in the past fortnight.

Mr. Andrew Smith: May I welcome the Minister to his new responsibilities? I should point out, however, that the 14,500 applications that he has just mentioned represent less than 2·5 per cent. of the Government's target of take-up. Is not that an abject failure? Does he believe that the student loans scheme offers the means by which students can pay supplementary fees for courses?

Mr. Howarth: Supplementary fees are not under discussion. The student loans scheme is designed to support student maintenance. The hon. Gentleman should not ignore the central fact that our new system of student support means more money for students. The uprated grant and the new loan represent an increase of 25 per cent. on last year's grant. There is no question but that it is welcome to students and all the indications are that this autumn enrolments have again risen substantially.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Does the Minister accept that although there has been an increase in university funding, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals believes that the money spent on advertising the loans scheme could have been better spent on better direct grants to students and on funding colleges?

Mr. Howarth: It is absolutely right that the scheme should have been publicised to students—the higher education institutions asked the Student Loans Company to undertake a publicity campaign. It must be right that students should be helped to be aware of the new entitlement to a loan, and students are finding it attractive. The higher education institutions have been thoroughly briefed on the procedures and students have been made aware of the opportunity available to them. We have already witnessed an encouraging number of applications for loans in the first fortnight of the new academic year and all the signs are that the scheme will be a great success.

Mr. Burt: Is not it true that Opposition Members and representatives of the National Union of Students spent a lot of time during the passage of the student loans Bill trying to frighten students away from applying to higher education institutions in order to make out their case that student loans would deter such applications? Will my hon. Friend confirm that applications for university and other higher education institutions this year verify the continual upward trend of students going into higher education? Does he agree that the student loans Bill made no difference at all?

Mr. Howarth: My hon. Friend is right to suggest that there has been a politically motivated campaign to discredit a scheme which is intended to work for the benefit of students. The only achievement of the NUS in its campaign against student loans was to cause a large traffic jam on one occasion in London. It has had to accept that students are welcoming this new opportunity and I was pleased to note that, recently, it advocated that its members should take advantage of the scheme.

Rural Schools

6. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the effect local management of schools is having on small schools in rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Michael Fallon): We have said that we shall monitor the effect of local management of schools carefully. LMS was introduced for the benefit of all schools. We expect small rural schools to share in those benefits.

Mr. Pike: Does the Minister recognise that small rural schools have particular problems arising from LMS? Will he see that local education authorities are able to continue to give the support necessary to ensure a balanced and fair education in those schools, or do the Government intend to put a nail in the coffin of small rural schools?

Mr. Fallon: There is ample scope for protecting small schools through the formula. Local education authorities may take account of the higher unit costs of delivering the curriculum in small schools and the salary costs in schools with fewer than 10 teachers. Lancashire does both.

Mr. David Nicholson: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he has just said about small rural schools and for the written answers that he has given me in the past two days about the way in which LMS will apply to such matters as school meals and the recruitment of rising-fives. Will he confirm that if parents at a school agree to support, and are prepared to pay the cost-effective price for, a proper school meals system, LMS will help that process?

Mr. Fallon: I agree with my hon. Friend that there is much scope for further delegation of the current costs of supporting schools and of a number of services.

Sir Cyril Smith: Does the Minister agree that local management of schools would be better performed if the management were thoroughly representative of all shades of opinion in the community? Is he aware, for example, that in my authority, every secondary school governor is a Labour councillor and that not one Conservative or Liberal Democrat councillor has been elected to the board of a secondary school in the whole constituency? Do the Government have any plans to ensure that in future, local management is more representative of the whole community?

Mr. Fallon: We have no further plans, although I sympathise with the hon. Gentleman. We have already ensured that a larger number of governors are parent governors and that there is a representative on the governing body from the business community.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his appointment to his new post after two years' enforced silence in the Whips Office. Does he draw any conclusions from the fact that Labour authorities have kept back more of schools' budgets from the schools than have Conservative authorities? Does he agree that it is part of Labour's continuing negative and destructive attitude to education? Labour is against any form of reform, be it city technology colleges, grant-maintained schools, assisted places or the local management of schools.

Mr. Fallon: Only about 60 per cent. of the education work force is teaching. There are innumerable advisers and bureaucrats—an army of suede shoes—and, for example, Lancashire holds back about 23 per cent. of its schools budget, about £78 million, or £110,000 per average Lancashire school.

Scottish Education

7. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the number of Scottish students entering Scottish universities for 1990-91.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Reliable figures for admissions to universities this autumn are not yet available. The number of Scottish-domiciled first year students entering Scottish universities last year was more than 5 per cent. higher than in 1988.

Mr. Douglas: May I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, before putting my supplementary question, to say how sad hon. Members in all parts of the House must have been to hear of the death of Norman Buchan, the hon. Member for Paisley, South? He had enormous interest in the topic of education but, moreover, enormous interest in freedom of thought and expression. No matter how much one might disagree with Norman, one could always be absolutely sure that he would defend one's right to make one's point here, as much as he would want to have his point of view expressed. It is with great sadness that I rise to put this supplementary question, although he would be among the first to recognise that democracy in this form in the House must go on.

May I ask the Minister to say what stresses and strains are being put on Scottish students at university, in particular through the loss of certain benefits and through the harassment that they are experiencing as a result of the threat of arresting their tuition fees to pay the poll tax?

Mr. Howarth: The House will have heard with great respect and sympathy the tribute of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) for his friend the hon. Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan), and we all share those sentiments.

With respect to the matter that the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West raised in his supplementary question, he should recognise that more resources are now available to support students. We calculate that the average claim for benefit made by students would have been £327 in the current year. As the value of the loan outside London is £420 and there are, in addition, access funds, it is clear that most students are better off. The access funds are there to assist any students who may be found to be in genuine financial difficulty. As to what the hon. Gentleman referred to as harassment, I hope that he will accept that students have a responsibility to meet their community charge. Equally, local authorities have a responsibility to take any steps available to them to recover arrears. Arrestment of payment due to, or on behalf of, individuals is one such step. The exercise of the powers of local authorities and any challenge to them is a matter for the courts.

Mr. Allan Stewart: May I associate myself with the tribute to the late Norman Buchan, who was a constituency neighbour?

Will my hon. Friend the Minister confirm that a higher proportion of school leavers in Scotland enter higher education than in England? Is not it also the case in Scotland that all school leavers who are qualified and wish to do so receive places in higher education, either in Scottish universities or in the central institutions such as colleges of technology, which have expanded a great deal under the Government?

Mr. Howarth: The quality of Scottish education has always been much respected south of the border, both at school and university level. It is noteworthy that rather more than a quarter of students in Scottish universities come from south of the border, which is a measure of the respect given to and attractiveness of Scottish university courses.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Does not the Under-Secretary understand that he stands condemned by his own words for his inability to understand the particular problems facing students? Does he really say to the House that any steps to recoup the poll tax are acceptable? In Scotland, tuition fees are being pursued by regional councillors so that students will have their poll tax deducted. Is that acceptable at a time when students are being denied access to social security benefits, when the grant system has been undercut and when there have been rising costs in accommodation, whether in the private or public sector? What will the Minister do to ensure that our students have a fair deal?

Mr. Howarth: As I said just now, the exercise of their powers by local education authorities in that regard is a matter for the courts. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the rights and wrongs of what they are

doing. The hon. Lady also ignores the increase in resources available to the vast majority of students and the fact that access funds worth £25 million have been made available to universities and colleges so that they can use them to ensure that students are not in need. Beyond that, I trust that the hon. Lady is not implying that it would be in any way right for students to refuse to pay their community charge.

Schools-Industry Links

8. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent initiatives have been taken by his Department to develop closer links between schools and industry; and what resources have been committed for 1990-91 to help foster such links.

Mr. Fallon: The Department collaborates closely with other Government Departments in a range of activities including, in particular, an initiative to stimulate and support local education-business partnerships. We are also co-funding the new Foundation for Education Business Partnerships. This year, we expect to spend some £250,000 in direct grants to school-industry links; that is in addition to the considerable resources devoted to that purpose by local education authorities.

Mr. Knapman: May I congratulate my hon. Friend on his consistent support for closer relationships between industrialists and educationists, because it is important that local education and training is directly tailored to the needs of the local community? What progress is being made by the education-business partnerships initiative recently announced by the Department of Education and Science?

Mr. Fallon: The partnerships initiative is making good progress. Already, about 90 per cent. of secondary schools have links with industry, as have more than half of all primary schools, but there is still more to be done.

Mr. Hardy: Such initiatives are clearly desirable, but would the Minister care to tell us how we can further pursue them in my constituency, since, if the level of present central support and rate capping persists next year, we seem bound to lose up to six teachers in every secondary school? Does he realise that teachers who would be involved in the initiative cannot be sure that they will retain their employment and thus take part in the initiative that the Government are eager to sponsor and applaud but quite unwilling to fund?

Mr. Fallon: The Department provides a considerable amount of money to help fund the initiatives and many heads, governors and teachers are co-operating closely with their local industries.

Sir John Stokes: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the difficulties is the apparent reluctance of some of our well-known industrial leaders to speak on this subject on radio, television or directly to schools and to point out the satisfaction, scope and challenge of a career in industry?

Mr. Fallon: I agree with my hon. Friend. The object of school-industry links is to improve young people's readiness to cope with the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of working life, and to give them proper understanding of the enterprise culture and the importance of wealth creation.

Graduates

9. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from Sir David Smith FRS, principal of Edinburgh university, on the subject of graduates using degrees for public service rather than making money for themselves.

Mr. Egger: None, Sir, although the hon. Gentleman has kindly sent me a copy of Sir David's speech.

Mr. Dalyell: Whose fault is it that the world-ranking university of Edinburgh yesterday had to freeze staff appointments?

Mr. Eggar: Responsibility for financial matters rests with the university. The Universities Funding Council is available to provide advice and help to the university, if it is asked to do so. In his speech, which the hon. Gentleman sent to me, Sir David pointed out that Scotland benefited from the system of GB-wide higher education funding to the tune of some £30 million to £40 million, according to Sir David's calculations.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is high time that academics became more businesslike in the use of the substantial amounts of public money that they receive?

Mr. Eggar: There is always a need for all higher education and other education institutions to think carefully about how they deploy their resources. Much progress has been made in the higher and further education sectors, but more remains to be done.

Dr. Bray: In universities such as Edinburgh, with a distinguished record of scientific research, the greatest discouragement falls upon those whose public service lies in such research. Is the Minister aware that the practical effect is that an increasing proportion of postgraduate students now come from abroad?

Mr. Eggar: It is right that there is a great deal of interchange of postgraduates among universities throughout the world. That is an increasing trend in all developed countries, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman welcomes it. We need to continue to increase our scientific research. A great deal has been done and we have a fine record in scientific research in this country.

Mr. Oppenheim: Will my hon. Friend remind the hon. Members for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and for Motherwell, South (Dr. Bray) that graduates who go into the private sector help to create the wealth to pay for those who go into the public sector?

Mr. Eggar: Graduates make a major contribution to our country, whether they go into the private or the public sector. I readily accept my hon. Friend's point that if successful graduates did not go into the private sector, we should not create the wealth that enables us to fund universities.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the Minister's reply, I beg to give notice that I shall seek to raise the matter on the Adjournment.

Student Accommodation

10. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on student accommodation.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Higher education institutions are autonomous bodies, and it is for them to decide what accommodation to provide for their students. Approximately half of the students in higher education are accommodated by their institution or live at home with their parents.

Mr. Griffiths: Why have the Government done nothing to tackle the serious problem of accommodation for students, and left students in Edinburgh and elsewhere sleeping on camp beds in common rooms and using staff accommodation in hospitals? Is not it time that they conducted an inquiry and took effective action to make adequate accommodation available?

Mr. Howarth: The hon. Gentleman completely fails to understand that Britain provides far more accommodation for students than any other country. Some 37 per cent. of students in higher education in Britain are accommodated by their institutions. That is a much higher percentage than elsewhere. In France and Germany, it is about 10 per cent. and in other European Community countries it is as low as 3 per cent. The hon. Gentleman overlooks the fact that during the period of office of the previous Labour Government it was decided that accommodation matters were not part of the University Grants Committee remit and that student accommodation should not receive a public subsidy. We have provided £25 million in access funds to enable institutions to help students who are in need. I pay tribute to accommodation officers in all universities for their successful efforts to ensure that students are accommodated.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including one with the Emir of Kuwait. I also attended the arrival of the President of the Italian Republic, President Cossiga. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening, I shall be attending the state banquet given by Her Majesty the Queen in honour of President Cossiga.

Mr. Barron: Will the Prime Minister make her next instruction to a Minister one to the Chancellor of the Exchequer telling him to end the tax dodgers charter that was created by her and is used by her super-rich friends at a cost to the country of some £1 billion a year?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friends, successive Chancellors of the Exchequer, have reduced tax right across the income range, greatly to the benefit of all people. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will remember that when we took over, the level of income tax was up to 83 per cent. on earnings. It is now down to 40 per cent. on both earnings and savings.

Mr. Heseltine: Has my right hon. Friend had a chance to see the reports in this morning's newspapers that the Saudi Defence Minister, Prince Sultan, is reported to have said that he sees no harm in an Arab country giving to its Arab sister a site, land or a position on the sea? Will my right hon. Friend confirm her understanding that that represents no change in the position of Saudi Arabia that Saddam Hussein must not gain from his aggression? Secondly, will she confirm her understanding that it is imperative that no signals are sent to Saddam Hussein that the world coalition against him is losing its nerve?

The Prime Minister: I totally agree with my right hon. Friend. We were in touch this morning and our ambassador in Saudi Arabia was given a formal assurance that Saudi policy had not changed, that Prince Sultan had been misquoted, that Saddam Hussein must totally withdraw from Kuwait, the legitimate Government must be restored and that compensation must be paid for the damage. Then we shall have to deal with problems such as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons so that this matter does not ever arise again.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister say today that she is completely against the freezing of child benefit?

The Prime Minister: Our policy on child benefit was set out in the last manifesto. We have honoured it and shall continue to do so.

Mr. Kinnock: Since the Prime Minister is now the Minister in charge of child benefit, will she say whether she agrees with one of her Ministers who said yesterday that she wanted an end to the freezing of child benefit and that her "personal view" was that

"improving Child Benefit is preferable to bringing in a Tax Allowance as a Tax Allowance would not hit the right target."

Is that the Prime Minister's personal view as well?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman must await a statement from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security on his annual review of social security benefits. Our family policy has increased payments to the family. Indeed—*[Interruption.]* Whereas Labour cut—*[Interruption.]* They hate facts, Mr. Speaker. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister has been asked a question; she must be given a chance to reply.

The Prime Minister: Let me compare our family policy with that of our Labour predecessor. Labour cut family support by 7 per cent.; under the present Government it has increased by 27 per cent. more than inflation, and for families with young children our support is among the most generous in the EC. Has the right hon. Gentleman got it? His Government cut support for the family by 7 per cent.; we have increased it by 27 per cent. more than inflation.

Mr. Kinnock: Surely, in her new role as the person in charge of child benefit, the Prime Minister does not expect us to wait for a statement from the Secretary of State. She could tell us herself exactly what is going on—or is it possible that she is starting to make a bit of a habit of dodging responsibility?

The Prime Minister: I am very pleased that the Government whom I lead can boast that they have increased family support by 27 per cent. more than

inflation. Despite his meaningless words, the right hon. Gentleman's Government cut it by 7 per cent. Furthermore, by means of family credit we have helped poorer families in particular: they now receive three times as much over and above inflation as they used to receive under Labour.

I do not wonder that the right hon. Gentleman is forced to go for trivia: his record is so bad. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Riddick.

Mr. Riddick *rose—[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Riddick—come on. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Riddick: Mr. Speaker—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Come on, let us settle down.

Mr. Riddick: Would my right hon. Friend care to join me in condemning the free riders—many of them Opposition Members—who are refusing to pay their community charge, and who expect everyone else to pay for the local services that they receive? Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is now a case for turning the poll tax into exactly that—for taking the vote away from people who have not paid their community charge, and giving it back to them only when they have done so?

The Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. If we continue at this rate, we shall make very slow progress.

The Prime Minister: People who do not pay their community charge must be dealt with by the law. The House passes the law; the law courts uphold it. Those who pass the law in the House must be prepared to set an example by upholding it as well.

Those who, by an act of will, do not pay their community charge are expecting to receive all the services themselves and to pass on the cost to their neighbours and constituents. That is most reprehensible.

Mr. Ashdown: The Prime Minister has said that she will not accept the imposition of a single European currency. Does that mean that she will never accept such a currency, whatever the conditions?

The Prime Minister: A single European currency would mean a form of economic and monetary union under which the House gave up control of economic and monetary policy. Is the right hon. Gentleman's policy to come into the House only to denude it of its powers?

Mr. Lord: Is my right hon. Friend aware that many people believe that the A-level examinations are now the only true benchmark of academic achievement in our schools? Will she assure the House that there are no plans to alter or undermine those examinations?

The Prime Minister: I know of no plans to undermine the most excellent A-level examinations. When our young people go to university, they provide the basis for one of the highest rates of achievement in degrees anywhere in the world.

Q2. **Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Pendry: When the Secretary of State for the Environment was in Tokyo last month, he promised to inject some £3 billion into the north-west economy should Manchester win the bid for the 1996 Olympic games. Is the Prime Minister aware that many organisations as diverse as chambers of trade, chambers of commerce, trade unions, investment agencies and local authorities insist that that sort of investment must be made in any case, if the infrastructure of the north-west is not to be in danger of collapse? Olympic games or not, will she back the north-west and give it the money that it deserves?

The Prime Minister: The Manchester Olympics committee is an excellent organisation. The Duke of Westminster is in charge of it—*[Laughter.]*—and he has great faith in the infrastructure—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: One reason why Manchester's bid was so excellent is that the road and air services to Manchester are extremely good and there is excellent hotel accommodation within easy reach. The infrastructure is first class, and the committee has given me to understand that it is obtaining any necessary finance from the private sector. We firmly backed the bid, but we made it clear that no public sector money would be forthcoming.

Q3. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Thurnham: Is my right hon. Friend aware that this country is the first in the world to carry out commercial field trials for the new ozone-friendly refrigerant gas R134A? Will she ensure that the Government follow that private sector lead? Should not the Opposition realise that voluntary measures work best?

The Prime Minister: I am aware that my hon. Friend has first-hand knowledge of that matter. I know that the new gases have been produced, and I understand that ICI is to set up the first commercial plant for the production of ozone-friendly refrigerant gases. That is excellent news for the country and for the environment.

Q4. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Orme: How can the Prime Minister reconcile the statement made by the Secretary of State for Employment on Sunday that the Government now have an incomes policy, especially in the public sector, of about 7 per cent., with the fact that chairmen, managing directors and chief executives are having pay rises of 30 per cent? Is not it outrageous that this country is being robbed of £5 billion a year through tax evasion? Are not the low-paid having to pay for the Government's disastrous policies?

The Prime Minister: The Government do not have an incomes policy for the public sector of 7 per cent. or any other figure. Each settlement must be negotiated separately. My recollection is that a figure of 7 per cent.

was given in evidence as the then underlying inflationary pressure—I think that it related to nurses' pay—and it has no more relevance than that. We negotiate each pay claim in accordance with the need to retain and various other factors, including, of course, what the taxpayer can afford to pay.

Mr. Gregory: Is my right hon. Friend happy with the slow progress on competitive tendering being made by socialist authorities such as York? Does she agree that either inefficiency or corruption is behind such slowness, and that the community charge in such authorities is unnecessarily high as a result?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Competitive tendering leads to more efficient services at lower cost and, therefore, to a lower community charge. It should be followed by all who are interested in keeping their community charge down and their efficiency up.

Q5. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Ms. Ruddock: Does the Prime Minister recall that her last words at the world summit for children were:

"We will go away from here knowing that it is what we do that will count"?

If she really believes that, will she today announce the restoration of the full value of child benefit, or does she regard that as trivia?

The Prime Minister: The trivia was attempting to say that I was in charge of everything. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House wants to hear the answer.

The Prime Minister: The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Lady refuse to turn their attention to the Government's excellent record on family support. The children's summit was more concerned with children overseas and the amount of help that they need and, as the hon. Lady knows, the Government's record on overseas aid to children in need is very good indeed. Let me give the hon. Lady some additional statistics. We have given extra help to poor families on income support or family credit, which is now worth £350 million a year, and the average family credit payment is now £30 a week—three times what it was under Labour, even taking inflation into account.

NEW MEMBER

3.32 pm

The following Member took and subscribed the Oath:

David Frank Bellotti Esq., for Eastbourne.

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

3.33 pm

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Foreign Secretary returned from a long visit to the middle east on Friday—I know that he was in Luxembourg yesterday. Does he intend to make a statement to the House? Some of us wonder whether the Government's position on occupations, be they in the west bank and Gaza or Kuwait, are an example of double standards.

Mr. Speaker: I have not been told that a statement is to be made today.

BILL PRESENTED

MEDICAL ACT 1983 (AMENDMENT)

Mr. Nigel Spearing, supported by Sir Anthony Grant and Mr. Sam Galbraith, presented a Bill to amend section 36 of the Medical Act 1983 to enable the Professional Conduct Committee of the General Medical Council to exercise greater discretion in respect of conduct which they judge cannot be regarded as acceptable professional conduct; And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 14 December and to be printed. [Bill 203.]

Animals (Welfare in Transit)

3.34 pm

Mr. Terry Lewis (Worsley): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the welfare of animals being exported alive from the United Kingdom; to require adequate periods of rest, sufficient food and water, and regular veterinary inspection during transit; and for connected purposes.

The House will be aware that until now United Kingdom law has been sufficient to provide significantly for the welfare of farm animals transported alive. Right hon. and hon. Members will know also that EEC regulations will shortly take the place of our own legislation, which will have enormous consequences for exported animals—unless the Commission and Council of Ministers can be persuaded to adopt a more humane approach.

That approach should be based on practices recommended by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. By 1 January 1993, frontier controls between member states of the Community will be lifted and it will become a free trade area. The directive on international transport will be replaced by new legislation covering the transportation in Europe of all animals, whether within national boundaries or between one member state and another.

The new regulations impose requirements relating to the transport of all animals. Instead of customs checks, inspections of animals and of vehicles will take place at markets, staging, transfer and assembly points and slaughterhouses rather than at the point of departure. Random checks will also be made by the competent authorities on vehicles in transit.

Under the previous European regulations, veterinary inspection of all animals was required prior to their transportation from one member state to another. Such inspections will in future be required only if the animals are to travel for a longer time than is specified before they must be rested, fed and watered. In the case of cattle, sheep, pigs and horses, that will be 24 hours.

There is growing concern about the impact that 1992 and the abolition of tariff barriers between EEC member states will have on the live food animals export trade. There are fears that the creation of a free market will result in diminishing standards of welfare for all the animals caught up in that trade. The worry is that new European transport regulations will not only take the place of existing directives but supersede national legislation so that trade between member states will no longer be known as exporting or importing.

The transportation of live sheep over long distances to slaughterhouses in France, Italy, Germany and other member states is of particular concern. As I said, many journeys can take more than 24 hours, and one can have little confidence that other member states will enforce transport legislation as strictly as does the United Kingdom.

Under present United Kingdom law, animals that are being transported must be fed and watered every 12 hours unless the journey can completed within 15 hours. That legislation will disappear, so theoretically it will be possible for sheep to be bought at market in Scotland and transported to Dover and then over the channel into France—but one must doubt whether feeding and watering will take place when it should, because of the

French Government's known inability properly to enforce transport regulations. Who will ever forget the disgraceful images on our television screens this summer of French farmers abusing innocent animals in such a scandalous and uncivilised way? Despite the regulations, was that not a uniquely French form of protection, and will not it arise again in other forms after 1992?

Foremost in the campaign to secure post-1992 standards compatible with those of the United Kingdom is the RSPCA. Through its European organisation, Eurogroup for Animal Welfare, it is attempting to ensure that the new regulation, which has yet to be finally agreed by the Council of Ministers, is as detailed and as strict as possible. It has also been trying to ensure that the provision is properly implemented and enforced throughout the Community.

The campaign has been based on the policy that food animals should be slaughtered as near as possible to the point of production. The recent problems caused by French farmers—to which I have already referred—and their willingness to perpetrate outrages on lorry loads of live sheep coming from the United Kingdom and other countries have shown, yet again, that it is impossible properly to protect the welfare of live animals being transported through the Community.

Moreover, I would argue that there is absolutely no need to transport animals long distances to slaughterhouses. British farmers get the same price for their lamb whether the sheep are taken to a slaughterhouse in the United Kingdom and the carcases transported to France or to other markets or are transported live to a French slaughterhouse. One consequence of an increasing trade in live animals being transported to slaughterhouses on the continent would be the loss of business in abattoirs in the United Kingdom.

It seems logical, therefore, that the distances that animals travel to slaughterhouses should be limited in the new European legislation and that we should follow the principle that United Kingdom animals should be slaughtered in United Kingdom slaughterhouses, French animals in French slaughterhouses, and so on. To that end, we should insist on the introduction of a provision in the new transport regulations that would limit to a maximum of eight hours the journey times of animals destined for slaughter. That is a practical and logical proposal, as it would allow farmers the choice of several suitable abattoirs as well as reducing the possibility that animals will suffer unnecessarily. The regulations will also apply to animals originating in France, Germany, Holland and so on, which will all have to limit the journey time to eight hours.

The fact that the amendments have been passed by the European Parliament does not guarantee that they will be accepted by the Commission or the Council of Ministers. The Commission has stated that it is prepared to accept the principle of limiting the journey time of animals destined for slaughter, but so far it has not suggested that the journey time should be anything other than the period after which feeding and watering are due, which is 24 hours.

We in the House and our colleagues in Europe must therefore bring pressure to bear on Ministers of Agriculture to accept the eight-hour limit on the journey time of animals going to slaughter. Such a rule would go a long way towards dissuading people from re-establishing the trade to the continent in live horses for meat. Many people have been worried about that, because the United Kingdom is having to drop its existing legislation prohibiting trade in live horses and ponies.

An eight-hour limit on the journey time of animals going to slaughter will not harm British farmers in any way. It will assist the United Kingdom slaughtering industry and, more important, it will be of great benefit to the animals. It seems illogical that we can export sheep to a slaughterhouse in the south of France, which will then make a profit on that transportation, only to export the majority of the carcases to Italy. Why cannot British sheep be slaughtered close to the point at which they were reared and why cannot the carcases then undertake the long journey from the United Kingdom to Italy? There is already a substantial trade in meat—in lamb, beef and pig carcases—from this country to other member states. At present, for every live sheep that is exported, seven lamb carcases travel the same route. It does not seem such a big step to make that eight carcases and no live sheep.

I fully recognise the unfortunate balance of power problem in this matter between the United Kingdom Government and the European Community, but I believe that the passage of my Bill—I hope, with Ministers' blessing—will serve to demonstrate our determination to prevent the dilution of our more humane procedures.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Terry Lewis, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Ron Davies, Mr. Peter Hardy, Sir David Steel, Dame Janet Fookes, Mr. Nigel Spearing, Mr. Simon Hughes, Mr. Roger Gale, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Alan Meale and Mr. Doug Hoyle.

ANIMALS (WELFARE IN TRANSIT)

Mr. Terry Lewis accordingly presented a Bill to provide for the welfare of animals being exported alive from the United Kingdom; to require adequate periods of rest, sufficient food and water, and regular veterinary inspection during transit; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 26 October and to be printed. [Bill 204.]

Exchange Rate Mechanism

[Relevant document: Minutes of Evidence taken before the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on 25th July 1990 on Economic and Monetary Union (House of Commons Paper No. 620)]

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition. Furthermore, as 39 right hon. and hon. Members have already submitted an application to speak, I propose to place a 10-minute limit on speeches between 6 pm and 8 pm. I am afraid that that may mean that some Privy Councillors will be called within that 10-minute period. In fairness to all, I hope that right hon. and hon. Members who are called will bear that limit broadly in mind.

3.45 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. John Major): I beg to move,

That this House congratulates the Government on joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism of the European Monetary System; notes the clear evidence that the Government's tight monetary and fiscal policies are reducing inflationary pressures in the economy; and believes Exchange Rate Mechanism membership will reinforce the Government's counter-inflationary strategy and help to strengthen the framework for a sustained improvement in economic performance.

Sterling's entry into the exchange rate mechanism is undoubtedly an important economic event and, moreover, an event which has long had the general support of the House, industry, commerce, the City and most, although inevitably not all, economic commentators.

This debate is a welcome opportunity to set out the rationale for entry; the potential advantages and constraints that it brings with it; and to consider also the effects of standing aloof from membership. I wish also to address the details of entry: the rate; the timing; the bands; and the necessary discipline of membership. And, of course, I shall touch also upon how entry affects the wider question of economic and monetary union, which is, I know, of great concern to the House.

It is now 12 years since the European monetary system and the exchange rate mechanism were established. At the outset, in 1978, the last Labour Government decided not to join the exchange rate mechanism. Since then the question whether and, if so, when we should join has been an important and contentious issue at the very centre of political and economic debate.

Two years ago my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out our commitment to join the mechanism and the conditions in which we would do so. On the free movement of capital, the single market, competition policy, and the liberalisation of financial services those important conditions have effectively been met for some time. It is possible to quibble about them only if excuses are being sought not to enter the ERM.

For some months the key remaining condition has been that domestic conditions – and our inflation performance in particular – should enable us to accept the exchange rate discipline. In economic terms, what mattered for that was not what happened in the months leading up to membership, nor was it the distortions in comparative inflation performance caused by different methods of measuring inflation. The important factor was that our inflation performance would enable us to converge and thus enable us to compete at the chosen exchange rate. It was for that reason that we did not join the mechanism until we were absolutely sure that our tight monetary policies were having their intended effect and inflationary pressures were easing.

That is now the position. The evidence that this has now happened comes first from the monetary aggregates. The growth of narrow money, M0, has fallen in each of the last five months and is now back well within the target range I set for this year. M4 growth—broad money—has fallen steadily throughout 1990 and currently stands at its lowest point for nearly three and a half years. Bank lending has also decelerated sharply.

In the real economy the picture is the same. The indicators show that the economy is slowing, as indeed it must if inflation is to fall. That is clear in the high street, it is clear in the housing market, it is clear in the figures for car sales, and it is clear in activity generally. It is clear also in the gradual and welcome recovery in the savings ratio, which hit its low point of 4·9 per cent. in the third quarter of 1988 and has now risen again to 7·7 per cent.

It was those conditions—that amalgam of conditions which are now clear—which prompted me to cut interest rates by 1 per cent. at the same time as entry. Some external commentators claim that it was too early; others claim that it was too late. I am confident that events will justify the timing of that reduction in interest rates.

If I had cut interest rates before joining the exchange rate mechanism, I believe that it would have been viewed by the markets and by commentators as driving the exchange rate down before entry or, alternatively, as a signal that entry was to be delayed. Both of those were wrong and both would have weakened the exchange rate and thus our anti-inflationary position. It was for those reasons that I announced both those steps at the same time to ensure that the markets were fully aware of our position as we entered the mechanism and were fully aware of what the immediate prospect was for monetary policy.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On timing, in so far as it is quite clear from a series of parliamentary questions given to me by Ministers that people in the Bank of England, senior civil servants and some Ministers knew of the Chancellor's intention to make his statement at 4 o'clock on that Friday, and in so far as it is also known that Ministers and civil servants may well have met people in City institutions in the five days prior to that Friday, why cannot we now have a leak inquiry into how three separate markets in the City rose substantially in the 90 minutes before 4 o'clock, in conditions in which some people made millions of pounds in capital gains in a few minutes? Why cannot we have a leak inquiry into that? Let us have the truth.

Mr. Major: If the hon. Gentleman has any information whatsoever to suggest that there was advance knowledge of entry into the exchange rate mechanism— *[Interruption.]* Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would do me the courtesy of listening. If he will give that evidence to me, I shall ensure that it is placed before the proper authorities and that the appropriate action is taken. Unsubstantiated allegations do not help. If the hon. Gentleman really believes that there was a leak, he should provide the information so that it can be properly examined and not make widespread scatter-gun allegations for which at the moment he has provided no evidence.

As we have seen repeatedly throughout the past 30 years or so, inflation is always one of the last measures in the economy to register that the growth of demand is falling away; and the rise in oil prices in the past few months has complicated the picture this time and, conceivably, may yet push up the headline total further. But I now have no doubt that we shall see inflation falling substantially throughout next year. It will do so particularly quickly from next April, and for two reasons: the underlying rate will improve and some of the unusual adverse factors that have artificially boosted the headline rate will drop out next year. Our inflation performance will improve therefore both in absolute terms, and, just as importantly for entry into the mechanism, relative to those of our European competitors. I shall make a detailed forecast in the autumn statement in due course.

There was, therefore, no reason for further delay in meeting our long-standing commitment to join the ERM. There is a further point of some importance. The persistent market rumours of entry and non-entry were damaging to stability and created uncertainty for industry. Week after week some chance remark, some speculation, some unsubstantiated rumour changed the value of sterling. I wished therefore to end the damaging uncertainty at the earliest possible moment, and I believe it was right to do so.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East) *rose*——

Mr. Major: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way for a moment.

The House will remember that I answered questions on this matter for an hour a week ago. I shall be here at the Dispatch Box on Thursday and a vast number of hon. Members—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps hon. Members would listen for a moment. A vast number of hon. Members wish to speak today. I shall give way to a small number, but perhaps not as generously as I sometimes do.

Mr. Harry Ewing: I am grateful to the Chancellor for giving way. If the right hon. Gentleman is pleading that the reason that he took this country into the exchange rate mechanism was to get rid of all the rumours about whether we would or would not join, is not that the fault on the one hand of the Prime Minister, who constantly said that we would not join, and of the Chancellor himself on the other hand, who constantly said that we would join? Which of the two of them was the City and the country to believe?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman will do well tomorrow to read my speech in *Hansard*. He will then see that I made it perfectly clear that we entered because I thought that the conditions were right for our entry. I set that out plainly. I also set out a subsidiary matter that weighed on my mind —that the essential reason for entry was that the market conditions were met and the preconditions that we had set out were now right for sterling to enter the mechanism.

The belief that we should end the uncertainty and that we should enter early was also held by others. We got a great deal of advice. In June we were told:

"We do not urge the Government to wait until some unspecified rate of inflation or fulfilment of the Madrid conditions is attained. We urge them to commence discussions now."—[*Official Report*, 15 June 1990; Vol. 174, c. 636.]

That was not an overenthusiastic Member of the European Parliament speaking—it was the Opposition Front Bench in the persona of the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith). Nor was that an isolated comment. In August the hon. Gentleman was strongly supported in that view by his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), who said:

"I don't think there is ever going to be a perfect time for Britain to enter the ERM, and I think therefore that we should take the opportunity to do so at the earliest time."

That is what I have done and the reason why Opposition Members attack us is that they know that we have taken the right decision and they do not want to acknowledge it. They want to hide the fact that their party is split asunder on the issue. *[Interruption.]* Oh yes. Of course, Opposition Members want it both ways. If we had delayed they would have questioned our intention of going in. They would have said that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was preventing us. Now that we have gone in they question our motives and claim that my right hon. Friend has been pushed. The simple truth is that my right hon. Friend first stated our commitment to entry during stage 1—over two years ago. She and I have been discussing possible dates for months. Four months after the start of stage 1 we found an appropriate date and honoured our promise. That is what Opposition Members cannot stomach. Their attitude is the typical triumph of expediency over conviction—[HON. MEMBERS: "Your attitude."] That is their attitude.

Now that we are in the ERM we need to be entirely clear about what it means. First, maintaining the exchange rate will be an important discipline. Tight monetary conditions will have to be sustained to put continued downward pressure on inflation. Joining the ERM in no way replaces the need for a tight monetary policy; it reinforces it. Indeed, making a success of the ERM means making a success of our own domestic monetary policy, not abandoning it. That is why joining the ERM is in no sense a soft option or a short-term one.

The euphoria with which some people greeted the news of our entry seemed to me mistaken; and the argument that entry has short-term advantages and a long-term cost is wholly misleading. In fact, it is a complete misunderstanding of the ERM. In the short term, membership will require tough action to ensure that we achieve low inflation thereafter. The rewards are long term with that very low rate of inflation. That does mean making no further reductions in interest rates until it is prudent to do so.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): My right hon. Friend has referred to the prospect of reductions in interest rates. Is not it probable that, if we were within the narrower band of fluctuations within the ERM, as certain other European countries are, we would enjoy lower rates of interest, as they currently do? As it is a matter of enormous interest to millions of mortgage payers and others in Britain, can my right hon. Friend say a little about the conditions that must be precedent upon our becoming part of the narrower bands of the ERM?

Mr. Major: I shall turn shortly to the question of the narrow band.

In case there was any misunderstanding a moment or so ago, I was saying clearly that membership means that we shall be in a position to make no further reductions in interest rates until it is prudent to do so. I hope that that point is fully taken on board. I shall turn to my hon. Friend's specific point in a second or so.

[Mr. Major]

What we have undertaken is an express obligation to keep sterling within the bands around our central rate of DM2·95. We take that obligation seriously and we intend to meet it. We decided to enter the mechanism with wide 6 per cent. margins to give sterling an opportunity to settle down. It is a widely traded currency and it is necessary to give the markets some time to assess the implications for entry and the domestic response to it. But when conditions permit, and only then, we will move into the narrow 2¼ per cent. band to which my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) referred.

I want to add a word about fiscal policy. Throughout the 1980s my two predecessors have successfully used fiscal policy to buttress monetary policy. That is precisely what we shall continue to do in future. But what we shall not do is to resort to fiscal fine tuning, the effects of which tend to be unpredictable and, in many cases, unworkable. I have no intention of returning to the era of mini-Budgets, but we will keep to our policy of a balanced budget over the medium term.

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy) *rose*—

Mr. Major: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall make a little more progress in the interests of several other hon. Members who wish to speak.

It is clear that membership of the ERM will impose an extra discipline on the Government's conduct of economic policy. But, equally, membership of the mechanism requires businesses and industry to take tough decisions of their own. Companies must understand the need to contain their costs—principally, but not, of course, exclusively, their wage costs. For them, joining the ERM means that devaluing our currency to bail out uncompetitive firms is no longer an option. It was never an attractive one and now it has gone. It is ruled out by our commitment to maintain a broadly stable exchange rate. If the costs of British companies rise, inevitably orders will be lost, profits will be squeezed, jobs will be shed, and companies will put their futures at risk. That has always been true, but ERM membership will make it even more apparent, for the devaluation option is no longer there.

For business, staying competitive means relating wage rises to what is realistic and justifiable. That means what can be afforded by the individual company facing tight competition in the international market with no help from a falling exchange rate.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): On that point, does my right hon. Friend agree that the necessary exhortations to pay restraint would be very much helped if senior leading industrialists who are on performance-related pay related their pay to not only the profits but the losses that they sometimes sustain?

Mr. Major: I share that view strongly. Leadership in this matter must come from the top, and I hope that it will do so.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is not the truth of the matter that the exchange rate mechanism is another name for a Common Market incomes policy? Why should people who work for a living, the real wealth creators, have a wages or incomes policy stuffed down their throats by the Government when the bosses got increases of 28 per cent. the year before last and 33 per cent. last year? In the past 10 years the wealthiest 1 per cent. in Britain have received cumulatively £26·2 billion in tax cuts; now they are calling upon the workers to bail out this Government, but they have no intention of doing so. Everyone who is fighting to get a living wage needs the support of Opposition Members to sustain that living wage.

Mr. Major: Well, so much for unity on the Opposition Benches about joining the ERM.

On the substantive point that the hon. Gentleman makes, he will be aware that I have said before—I reiterate [illegible] my remarks to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant)—that I share his view that the sacrifices that may need to be made on wages must apply to those at the top of industry as well as those elsewhere.

The hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) should be aware, however, of the consequences of taking his theory a stage further. The consequences for people not obeying that necessary discipline will be lost jobs. I cannot compel people to negotiate sensibly, but I have an obligation to make it absolutely clear to people what the effect of not negotiating sensibly will be. That I am seeking to do, and that I am prepared to do; and I share the hon. Gentleman's view that that applies to all people in industry and commerce and not just to those on the shop floor. What does that mean? It means negotiating what can be afforded by the individual company facing the international competition in the market. In essence, it is that which will determine our performance.

There can be no more negotiating around the benchmark of the retail prices index as though that represented the minimum increase it was reasonable to expect. I know that that kind of inflationary psychology is deeply embedded in the consciousness of British industry. I believe that, over the years, it has damaged us greatly, and, if it continues, it will cost us jobs in the future. I do not for a second underestimate the cultural change that that will mean for many wage negotiators, but the sooner they make the change the better. That psychology needs to be shaken out of the system, for the Government cannot keep companies competitive—they can only warn them of the dangers that they face. Their fate is in their hands—the hands of those on each side of the negotiating table who will determine the future of their companies and their work forces in the next few years.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): I am grateful to the Chancellor for telling the House that the Government cannot bail out companies that persist in using the RPI as a benchmark for wage increases. If the Opposition accept that, will the right hon. Gentleman accept that he should not allow his Ministers to use the RPI as a benchmark for price increases in former nationalised industries now in private ownership? The electricity industry has not yet been privatised, but its prices are set to rise every year by an RPI-related formula. Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to instruct the Secretaries of State for Energy and for Trade and Industry to give up that practice, which is applied to British Telecom, water and gas charges?

Mr. Major: Some of those increases are less than the retail prices index and many of the others are far more specifically related to investment performance than to anything else.

Those are the constraints and restraints which management and work forces will need to accept if we are

to make a success of membership of the exchange rate mechanism. I know that they are not easy, but I believe that they are worth while because they will help us to achieve lower inflation by reinforcing existing policies. I am delighted that, fully understanding those points, the CBI has given such a warm welcome to our decision to enter the ERM.

In recent years, the average inflation performance of the countries participating in the ERM has been significantly better than that of all those outside the mechanism. Between 1979 and July 1990, inflation in countries within the mechanism fell by nearly two thirds; in European countries outside the ERM, by one sixth; and in OECD countries outside the mechanism, by two fifths.

As inflation in member countries has come down, the prospects for steady, sustainable economic growth have improved, and that is the prize to be achieved. The growth rates in Germany, France, Italy and a number of smaller mechanism countries have increased in the last few years and the prospects for growth continuing at favourable rates in the future appear good. I believe strongly that that is a goal worth pursuing by us as well.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr) *rose*——

Mr. Major: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way. I have given way on a number of occasions, and I am conscious of the number of hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate.

Moreover, maintaining a broadly stable exchange rate will assist British companies to plan ahead and to invest with greater certainty about the future. Since the mechanism has been in operation, there have been a few changes of parities, but there has been no substantive realignment since the beginning of 1987.

That stability will enable firms to develop their business strategies in Europe and be well placed for the opportunities of the single market. They will no longer face the problems of exchange rate movements disrupting their plans by imposing on them unexpected cost increases or pricing their goods out of the European market. It will mean, in my judgment, that Britain will prove still more attractive to inward investors. We already attract more direct investment from abroad than any other Community country. Membership of the ERM can only add to that.

During my statement last week, a number of hon. Members expressed concern at the exchange rate at which we had entered. For some of them the argument was a surrogate for outright opposition to entry at any exchange rate. But others are concerned lest the rate we have chosen is too high. That reflects a longstanding argument over whether devaluation is required for economic success. It is a legitimate argument which has a long political pedigree, but I believe that it is wholly wrong.

I believe that our central rate can be sustained, and I will explain why. Some hon. Members fear that the exchange rate will damage exports and encourage imports. But experience in recent years suggests that other factors are more important. The volume of our exports, excluding oil and erratic items, is up 8 per cent. on last year, and our share of world trade in manufactures increased in 1989 and is likely to rise again this year. Japan and Germany, with the firmest exchange rates over the last decade, also have the best current account performance.

The rate that we have chosen is also sterling's recent market rate and the average real exchange rate over recent years after making adjustment for differential inflation performance. Other subsidiary information suggests that we have not put sterling at a competitive disadvantage. Independent analyses suggests that DM2·95 is sustainable. Indeed, a report by CBI economists only recently advocated entry into the mechanism at around the bands that we have chosen. Some comments that I have read have focused on the dollar. I would only make the point that our membership of the ERM does not in any way determine the sterling dollar exchange rate.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): The inflation-adjusted real exchange rate of DM2·95, or the right hon. Gentleman's choice of that rate, is 20 per cent. higher—that is, an appreciation of sterling against the mark—than it was in the first half of 1987, which was the last time we were in current account balance with the rest of the world. We are now disastrously in deficit. We are going in at an exchange rate 20 per cent. higher against the mark than it was when we were last in balance. What does the right hon. Gentleman say about that?

Mr. Major: We are in deficit because of the growth of demand, which is self-evident from the change in our position during the past year as sterling has appreciated and the trade gap has begun closing. Therefore, there is no reason why British companies should not compete successfully in Europe at present exchange rates, and, in the medium term, with lower inflation, they will compete even more successfully.

Although entry to the mechanism is part of our commitment to stage 1 of economic monetary union and the single market, it in no sense commits us to the Delors approach for stages 2 or 3. I assure the House that there has been no shift, no weakening in our opposition to the imposition of a single currency and a single monetary authority. We remain opposed to that, and I believe that our opposition has the overwhelming support of the House. That does not mean that we shall play a wrecking role at the intergovernmental conference—the IGC. We have no intention of doing that. We shall continue to advocate our plans for the development of the hard ecu.

We believe that our proposals are practical, evolutionary and based on markets and choice. They offer a realistic solution that would enable the 12 to move forward together without risking damaging rifts in the Community. They leave open the possibility of the hard ecu evolving towards a parallel currency and then a single currency, but only if that were the wish of Governments and peoples. That is subject for ever to the check of the House of Commons.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The House will have made particular note of the right hon. Gentleman's use of the word "evolutionary". The matter that isolates Britain in Europe, divides the Conservative party and splits the Cabinet is whether his hard ecu is to be regarded as the ultimate, final position or is a transition to a future European single currency. If in due course, his hard ecu proposals were to be used as a transition mechanism to a single European currency, would the Chancellor oppose that?

Mr. Major: If the right hon. Gentleman reads what I have just said, he will have his answer.

[Mr. Major]

Our proposals are those that I have set out on a number of occasions and are subject to the check of the House of Commons at future stages.

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): While I fully understand the Chancellor's reluctance to have anything to do with the date of 1994 proposed by the German Chancellor, cannot he say that if everyone were prepared to go ahead with the hard ecu in 1994 we should be happy to go along with them?

Mr. Major: We must wait and see how the IGC develops. But the only way in which this country could proceed would be on the basis of the hard ecu, for in my judgment there is no will in the House or country to surrender the use of sterling as our currency.

During the past half an hour or so, I have set out in some detail what I believe will be the effect of membership of the exchange rate mechanism and our policies. I hope that in the next few minutes the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) will set out his views with equal clarity. Judged by what he has said, there is more agreement between us than he may imagine. He shares my view that entry is not an alternative to the economic realities—he has said so—can work to the advantage of the British people—he has said so—and can help in securing stability—he has said so, and I agree with him about that.

I hope, therefore, that as I have done, the right hon. Gentleman will set out his party's policy precisely—on rates, bands, timing, and fiscal policy. He committed himself to entry some years ago, so he has had ample time to consider the implications. If he does not do so, the suspicion will arise that Labour's commitment to enter the mechanism has been nothing more than a device—a clever device but a device none the less—which was intended to hide the fact that there is no real determination to tackle inflation at the heart of the Labour party's policies.

The conditions that they devised for entry into the mechanism are frankly incredible. They involve fundamentally subverting the whole purpose and structure of the EMS. The main reason why many people on all sides of the political spectrum have come to appreciate the benefits of the mechanism is that it provides a buttress and an anchor against inflation. That is precisely the feature of the mechanism which the Labour party planned to ditch.

That could not have been clearer from the remarks made by the Opposition in the House last week. Time and again they made it plain that their inclination would always be to take the easy option and to go for devaluation. When the right hon. Gentleman replies, will he tell the House: would he devalue or would he fight inflation? He cannot do both, and if he is to be credible he must tell us which he would do.

I noted with interest that the Opposition's amendment commends credit controls similar to those in other exchange rate mechanism countries. I wonder which countries he has in mind, for France had credit controls, but abandoned them at the end of 1987, Italy had bank loan ceilings, which were last used in 1988, the Netherlands had an informal corset—it lapsed some months ago. Germany has never used credit controls proper, although it uses a reserve asset ratio, as we use Treasury bills. In Europe, only Spain, Greece and Portugal have credit controls. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman can tell us whether he equates our economy to theirs, and what sort of credit controls he plans to introduce. Under a Labour Government no doubt that is the sort of economy that we might move to.

The truth is that membership of the exchange rate mechanism involves maintaining an agreed range for the exchange rate and it requires tight monetary discipline to counter inflation. In short, it involves all the things that the Labour party has set its mind against.

For us, the ERM stands for stability—for effective, reliable management; it stands for low inflation—for an end to ruining money. For the Opposition it means credit controls—and excessive restrictions on mortgages. It stands for all its old policies of expropriation, renationalisation and meddling. I commend our policy to the House.

4.23 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

"while recognising the potential opportunities for economic stability afforded by the inclusion of sterling in the Exchange Rate Mechanism, notes the failure of the Government to achieve the reduction in inflation repeatedly stipulated by the Prime Minister to be the essential condition to be satisfied before entry; considers that political expediency rather than economic considerations prompted the Government's decision to participate in the Mechanism from 8th October; regards the Government's continuing refusal to use credit controls similar to those employed in other Exchange Rate Mechanism countries as imprudent; deplores the fact that the task of achieving economic success within the Single Market and the Exchange Rate Mechanism has been made immensely more difficult by Government policies which have resulted in the United Kingdom experiencing a large and persistent current account deficit, 10·9 per cent. inflation, rising unemployment and losses in domestic and world manufacturing market share; again urges Her Majesty's Government to adopt policies that are essential to the achievement of a productive and competitive economy, particularly those required for improvements in the quality of and opportunities for education and training, for the development of a modern economic infrastructure, including an adequate transport system, for the promotion of sustained investment in civilian research and development and for the instituting of a vigorous regional policy; and concludes that if such policies, long advocated by Her Majesty's Opposition and long resisted by Her Majesty's Government, are not adopted, producers in Britain will continue to work at considerable disadvantage by comparison with those in other Exchange Rate Mechanism member countries and the nation will continue to lag behind the standards of economic success and social progress achieved in other European Community countries.'.

May I begin by saying how grateful we are to the Government for providing the time for this debate on their decision to take sterling into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system on 8 October.

As the Chancellor said, that was a decision of immense importance; it will have effects on every person, family and business in Britain; it will have significant influence on shaping all future economic policy and very obviously, it can have major implications for the constitutional future of our country and of the European Community. There can be no one in the House or outside who does not regard the decision to enter the exchange rate mechanism as being truly worthy of the adjective "momentous", and since that is self-evidently true, it is all the more difficult for us and the British people to understand the refusal by the Head of the Government who made that decision to participate in

the debate. *[Interruption.]* Let the Prime Minister speak for herself. It appears that the Prime Minister has chosen this significant occasion, of all occasions, to become untypically reticent, to embrace a previously undisclosed shyness, to become—how shall I put it—a sort of crypto-Trappist.

Today and on previous occasions since entry to the ERM, the Chancellor has made a characteristically suave presentation of the circumstances in which the decision to put the pound into the ERM took place. We heard a repetition today of the way in which he put it at the Mansion house last Thursday. There is nothing wrong with that at all. It is one way of demonstrating total consistency, but it is causing some problems on the Government Front Bench.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): The right hon. Gentleman should take a look at his lot.

Mr. Kinnock: I look at my lot with great pleasure.

In the Mansion house on Thursday the Chancellor said that inflation was definitely coming down. He said:

"There was therefore no further reason for delay in entering the mechanism. And it was, of course, those very same conditions that indicated that a reduction in interest rates was now appropriate. I decided, therefore, to announce the two moves at once."

It was a smooth and soothing explanation—and absolutely unconvincing to everybody concerned. Hardly anyone believed the Chancellor. In the markets and in the newspapers the general and justifiable feeling has been that his action was far more political than economic. Mr. Robin Marshall, chief economist at Chase Manhattan, said:

"Major comes out of this looking like Mrs Thatcher's poodle."

Mr. Peter Spencer, chief economist at Shearson Lehman, said:

"The base rate cut was clearly dictated by No. 10".

I can see from the friends that they have in the City that Conservative Members are hearing exactly the same thing. Those economists were only two of many people in similar positions who put the view that agreement to ERM entry was nothing more or less than the price paid by the Prime Minister for the 1 per cent. cut in interest rates that she needed to take to the Tory party conference. Never has so much been done that affects so many to please so few. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinnock: Of course, those accusations of political rather than economic motivations are serious and they could have serious consequences. They call into question the credibility of the Government's commitment to the ERM. In spite of that seriousness, the witness whose testimony is essential simply refuses to be called. At the Dispatch Box where, on this momentous issue, the Prime Minister should speak we have merely a question mark. The reason for the Prime Minister's unwillingness to speak is quite obvious. The right hon. Lady has been saying since 1985 that we will go into the ERM only "when the time is ripe" and she could hardly say in this debate, "Inflation is 10·9 per cent., we have a huge balance of payments deficit, the economic consequences of the Gulf crisis are unknown, output and investment are down, so the time is not ripe. In fact, it's pretty rotten—but we have entered the ERM in any case, regardless of everything that I have ever said before."

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Does the right hon. Gentleman himself think that the time was pretty rotten? Or have his conditions been satisfied? Can he conceive that his condition that the ERM should be accompanied by a Europewide reflation will ever be satisfied?

Mr. Kinnock: Our case was never made in the way in which the hon. Gentleman professes that it was made. Our argument has been, and remains, that when, from time to time, Europe is faced with the threat of Eurosclerosis—the hon. Gentleman will be familiar with the term—the case for joint growth strategies exists and is widely accepted. *[Interruption.]* I realise that Conservative Members are very reluctant to allow any answer to be given to a Liberal Democrat on this particular day: there is a certain Eastbourne sensitivity about. None the less, I shall reply to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) —*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We shall make very slow progress at this rate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was heard in relative silence; I ask for the same treatment for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Kinnock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A different order of decency and discipline applies on this side of the House.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley) *rose*——

Mr. Kinnock: I will respond to the hon. Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) if he will first permit me to reply to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed.

It is true that my right hon. and hon. Friends and I have been making the case for entry into the exchange rate mechanism, because of its basic attractiveness, to which the Chancellor referred. It gives the British economy the necessary stability, allowing us—together with other policies—to secure an advance in productivity and competitiveness. That is still our case for entry: for that reason we welcomed Britain's entry on the date on which it took place, and will continue to argue that ERM membership is right.

That stability, however, is put in jeopardy if the Government's commitment and the sincerity of the Prime Minister are not even evidenced by the right hon. Lady's willingness to come to the Dispatch Box. I am sure that the Government will have noted the reactions to the circumstances in which Britain entered the ERM, and the excuses that they presented for their timing. The fact remains that our ERM membership is legitimate, valid and to be worked on to the advantage of our country.

Mr. Oppenheim *rose*——

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham) *rose*——

Mr. Major *rose*——

Mr. Kinnock: I will give way to the Chancellor, by all means.

Mr. Major: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his courtesy.

A moment ago, the right hon. Gentleman had something to say about the interest rate cut and the timing. May I remind him of what he said three days before we entered the ERM? First—at the Labour party conference —he said that the Government should cut the very high

[Mr. Major]

interest rate and should be negotiating entry into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. That is precisely what we did. Why will the right hon. Gentleman not give us unalloyed credit for doing it at the right time and in the right way?

Mr. Kinnock: The Chancellor negotiated nothing, other than a little deal with the Prime Minister to swap a 1 per cent. interest rate reduction for ERM entry. That was the only bit of negotiation.

Mr. Major: If the right hon. Gentleman will permit me, I will correct the misconception in his mind. Uniquely—somewhat to the irritation of our European partners—I told them the terms of entry that we sought before I went to them. We obtained those terms of entry, absolutely and entirely. I think that that is quite a success.

Mr. Kinnock: I really do not think that obtaining DM2·95 to the pound in a 6 per cent. band required all that much negotiating skill.

The Chancellor asked me about a speech that I made. Let me tell him precisely what I said. I said not only that we wanted entry to the ERM, and would certainly have brought it about had we been in office, and not only that we wanted a reduction in interest rates, which we would also have introduced, but that we would have accompanied those moves with two other policies essential to the proper working of our economy in an intensely competitive European Community and trading world.

First, we should institute exactly the same form of credit controls as those still operated in comparable countries with great success, and which result in much lower interest rates. The Banque de France operated such a policy only last Wednesday, to ensure that France could retain its position within the ERM while lessening the burden of interest rates on the productive sector of its economy. Conservative Members know that that is precisely what happened. Secondly, and most important, we still want a commitment—and I shall again make the case for it this afternoon—to a proper, comprehensive, modern, supply-side policy, something which the Government have never introduced and will never introduce.

Mr. Oppenheim *rose*——

Mr. Kinnock: I must continue. I gave way to the Chancellor, who asked an interesting question which required a prolonged answer.

The Prime Minister's absence from the Dispatch Box is further explained by the fact that she came to the House in June 1989, from the European Community summit, and told us that she had made it clear that before ERM entry,

"We must first get our inflation down."

She told me that

"One condition"

of entry

"depends on us".

It was that

"we get inflation well down".

She was saying that repeatedly during all the following 15 months, right up to and including her visit to Switzerland where, on 20 September, she said:

"The Madrid conditions won't be changed and they include getting inflation near to the European average."

Nothing could be clearer, nothing could be more absolute, nothing could be more implacable than those words from the right hon. Lady——the prima donna of the Madrid conditions.

Against that background, the Prime Minister plainly felt that it was beneath her dignity to come to the House today to justify her abandonment of that paramount condition on inflation, while simultaneously standing on her head. That is why she will not speak.

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding) *rose*——

Mr. Kinnock: I must continue. If Conservative Members have any questions, please address them to the Prime Minister—although she never provides any answers.

The Prime Minister felt that she could not say that she knew that the whole Government——*[Interruption.]* Perhaps I could have some order, Mr. Speaker. She knew——*[Interruption.]* The people watching this exhibition will pay due regard to the continual interruptions by Conservative Members. They are not making genuine inquiries; they are trying to disrupt the business of the House. Everybody will understand that. The more that I pursue the question of the Prime Minister's motivation, the noisier they are likely to become.

The Prime Minister knew that the whole Government had been chanting that cardinal Madrid condition, but, because their policy of high interest rates was throttling the economy, interest rates had to be cut, even though the only way to do that, without sending the pound plummeting, was simultaneously to join the ERM and desert the Madrid conditions. It was not so much a case that the lady was for turning, as a case of the lady twisting in the wind——a wind of looming recession and greatly increasing political unpopularity.

Of course, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor tried to make the best of the mess. The Chancellor said that the prospects were good and that the market conditions and the market rate were right. He said that there was an ideal conjunction of events—precisely the right conjunction of events. I note that he has not repeated those phrases in the House today, but I am sure that he will not disown them.

The Prime Minister was similarly fulsome. She took out the portable pulpit that she has taken to using in Downing street and announced that it was suddenly possible after all to put sterling into the ERM because

"of the uncontestable signs that the economy is working in the way that we intended it to."

Unemployment is rising, bankruptcies this year are up by 35 per cent., industrial output is falling, inflation is still rising, the business community is warning that there is recession in several industries and recession threatens the whole economy, but the Prime Minister describes all that as

"uncontestable signs that the economy is working in the way that"

the Government

"intended it to".

Could there be any greater self-condemnation of the Government? Could there be any clearer admission of incompetence and failure over 11 years? The Government could not even clip 1 per cent. off the highest interest rates of all major industrialised countries without joining the ERM—10·9 per cent. inflation and all. What a mess.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): On behalf of the Labour party and a future Labour Government, the right

hon. Gentleman has said that the ERM will help to bring stability. On behalf of the Labour party and future Labour Government, will he give us some idea about what he thinks the ERM will help to stabilise and roughly how he thinks that will be achieved?

Mr. Kinnock: The exchange rate. That is the whole purpose of the mechanism. If the hon. Gentleman does not have that basic piece of knowledge, I am not suprised that he takes the view that he does. I am sure that he has. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It will be impossible to call all those who wish to participate if the Leader of the Opposition is continually interrupted. I notice that the three hon. Members who have recently been rising all wish to speak later.

Mr. Kinnock: Inflation is vexatious when it is as high as it is and so largely the result of the Government's policies, but the Chancellor tells us that it is not the actual rate of inflation but the prospective rate of inflation that matters. When he went to the IMF meetings in Washington at the end of September he said

"What matters . . . is less the difference between headline figures which measure what has happened over the last 12 months than the prospective movements in price levels from now on."

Forecasts have always been important. Obviously they are essential to economic navigation. But now it seems that they have gained unprecedented significance. Not only do they matter more than the actual rate of inflation with which people have to live, but they are important enough to justify the most momentous of economic decisions, such as entry into the ERM.

But if the Government have such boundless confidence in forecast inflation rates, I am bound to wonder why sterling was not put into the ERM a year ago. After all, at that time in his Autumn Statement last November the Chancellor told us that the prospective rate of inflation for this quarter of 1990—the period that we are in now—was 5·75 per cent. He was just about 100 per cent. out in his forecast. He tried to correct that in the Budget in March, seven months ago, when he said that his 5·75 per cent. forecast for this quarter of 1990 had been revised upwards to 7·25 per cent. That was only 50 per cent. out on the actual rate of inflation that we are experiencing now.

That record hardly fills us with confidence about the Government's judgment, especially when the Treasury had to admit yesterday:

"Since forecasts of the RPI were first published in 1976 only one year has seen a larger error than the forecasts for 1988 and 1989."

That is not much of a crystal ball, especially as an important indicator on which to base a judgment such as the Government's abandonment of the Madrid conditions.

But at least one Government forecast will be right. The rate of inflation will come down. If any economy is squeezed hard enough for long enough, and this one certainly has been squeezed hard and for a long time, eventually prices will almost certainly follow demand in a downward direction. But the damage already done to the economy by the high interest rate squeeze, and the damage that will be done to the economy, has pushed Britain back, pushed costs and inflation up and weakened our productive industries in the approach to the single market. What a fine preparation for the coming of the single market at the end of 1992.

Even if the crude recessionary slump contrived by the Government brings inflation down, it certainly will not keep inflation down. It cannot, as the Government have already proved. The Conservative party chairman's absence today is notable—it may be because he can count his supporters in the Cabinet on the fingers of one finger —so unfortunately I speak in his absence. A few weeks ago in September he said that the Government's interest rate strategy for bringing down inflation would work because they had done it "twice before".

But clearly, if the Government have used the strategy twice before and now have to use it a third time, it is not because it has worked; it is because it has failed. That must be the case. It will go on failing because, in the very act of being applied as an instrument against inflation, recession causes extra living costs, pushes up wage demands and imposes extra borrowing costs that bring bankruptcies, cancelled investment plans, instability and underperformance causing inflation to come back again, as it has.

We have had 11 years of repeated use of those policies alternating with pre-election credit sprees, but the Government have not yet learned the error of their ways. The only response that the Government have ever made to a mistake is to repeat it and then call that being resolute. Despite his many charms, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is no exception to that rule.

The Chancellor told us last week, and again this afternoon—it was an important point in his speech—that the only real problem afflicting Britain is excess demand. That, he said, is the single evil that causes inflation and the massive trade deficit. He says it with such charming bravura that he would convince anyone who did not know better that he had never been in a Government who had repeatedly generated excess demand for electoral purposes. Unfortunately, about the supply side the Chancellor says next to nothing.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Kinnock: No, I am sorry. I have given way several times.

I suppose that the Chancellor knows that if he did give real attention to the supply side he might have to do something more than undertake some City deregulation, some trade union legislation and give some tax handouts. If he really was interested in wanting Britain to succeed, he would do much more. If he really wanted to encourage enterprise and combat inflation, he would be doing what other ERM countries do and use more moderate interest rates in combination with credit controls instead of relying so heavily on high interest rates.

If the Chancellor and the Government really wanted to attack the rigidities, the bottlenecks, the restraints on the productive economy, they would have followed the example of Governments of other countries in the ERM. Those Governments have ensured proper investment in modern transport. This Government have not. Those Governments have invested more in civil research and development. This Government have not. Those Governments have wisely invested more in education and training. This Government have not.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): That is not true. Look at the OECD figures.

Mr. Kinnock: I am not so interested in the OECD comparisons. Why does not the hon. Gentleman go to a school or college in Britain and see the results of under-investment?

The whole country knows that the Government have failed to make the necessary investment. To see the results of the difference between both kinds of performance, it is only necessary to compare this country's oil-rich economy after 11 years of Tory Government and those of other ERM countries, whatever the political colour of their national or regional government, and none of which has any oil. The difference is that the Governments of those other countries have enabled a productive economy, whereas the Government of our country have disabled a productive economy

Whatever our future may be in the European Community, that situation must change, so that our industries may have a fair chance under the exchange rate mechanism. Many tough, determined and enterprising people are saying still that they are not enjoying a fair chance by comparison with their competitors in other ERM countries. There is a great deal in what they say.

It is not just a matter of the ERM, because attitudes towards the supply side must change as pressures build up within the Community to go beyond the ERM and stage 1 of the goal to which the Chancellor says that he is committed, of economic and monetary union. The Chancellor said also that movement towards a single currency is "not inexorable", and he is absolutely right. That movement is the result of a deliberate decision by free countries. It is not a consequence of faith or of dictatorial imposition.

If the Chancellor had said that, with the economy in its present state, monetary union was not in any case acceptable, he would also be right. Given Britain's deficit, inflation rate, inadequate training and substandard transport systems, there is no possibility, without great change, that monetary union could be tolerated.

The question that is increasingly posing itself is not whether monetary union is desirable to us but whether it is the ambition of others, including the strongest economies of the Community – with or without the United Kingdom.

The plain fact is that monetary union is something to which those other member states aspire, and they are intent on achieving it – if not within the next five years, then not very long after that. That is a certain prospect. The consequence of all that is that our future will be more strongly influenced than ever not only by what we would prefer to do for ourselves but by what others prefer to do for themselves, and which they will do for themselves.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West) *rose*—

Mr. Kinnock: Just a moment.

The European Community has not yet decided on the path to a common currency. There is much that we should and can do in this House and through government to shape the course of events. However, we are not helped much in that by the isolationism of the British Government – or at least that part of it that is controlled by the Prime Minister. Those parts of the Government that owe fealty to the deputy Prime Minister and to the Foreign Secretary are different, but I say to both Governments that, however we might try to influence events, it is imperative to ensure that the British economy is more productive and competitive, less prone to trade deficits and more resistant to inflation than it is now.

The Government should be the ally of modern industry in a way that the present Government have never been, nor ever will be. The pre-conditions that I describe have merit at any time, but they are of extra importance now. Only by gaining those strengths can we achieve convergence with the higher performance standards of our neighbours and fellow members of the exchange rate mechanism. That effort of upward convergence represents a sensible strategy, and it is among the aims of the Labour party.

Only by improvements in productivity will we be able really to choose between co-existing with monetary union if we choose not to join and thriving economically within currency union if we do decide to join.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Would Labour take Britain into monetary union or would it not? Will the right hon. Gentleman show some leadership?

Mr. Kinnock: When it comes to leadership, I am rather less susceptible to challenge than the Prime Minister at this precise time, so the hon. Gentleman would do well to keep his own counsel.

Those are the facts of life that we must face. There is no refuge from them, in the blithe hope that our economy can make such a bound forward in competitive performance that Britain will suddenly be able to recapture great swathes of world markets and will thus push the European Community to the periphery of our interests as an important trading nation.

Mr. Budgen: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way now?

Mr. Kinnock: No, I will not give way, because of time constraints.

Mr. Budgen *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) also has indicated that he wants to participate in the debate later. Perhaps he will get a chance to do so.

Mr. Kinnock: The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) will acknowledge that there were a number of disorderly interruptions earlier, which took up time. I regret that, but I shall respond to the hon. Gentleman on a future occasion.

There is no serious third way out of the stark choices that face us in the form of the Chancellor's proposals for the so-called hard ecu. That is a clever illusionist's trick from the right hon. Gentleman, but it is a trick nevertheless. The Chancellor claims to be against what he calls the imposition of a single currency, so he advocates a multiple currency system. He says that such an arrangement will consist of a hard ecu as a common currency, with all existing currencies used alongside it. However, he knows that the hard ecu, being almost incapable of devaluation, would render just about every other existing currency as redundant as the farthing and about as attractive as bent washers.

The Chancellor might have bamboozled the Prime Minister with his hard ecu. He might even enjoy being patronised by others in the European Community.

Nevertheless, if the hard ecu is ever adopted, the single currency that the Prime Minister so abhors would arrive not in the long term, as the Chancellor promises, but very quickly.

Some members of the Government know that. Right hon. and hon. Members may have read in the *Financial Times* this morning a report quoting the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who remarked in relation to the hard ecu:

> "I would argue personally that the next stage of having a single currency could actually happen more quickly going down this path."

I wonder whether the Prime Minister would say the same, or whether that is again a tale of two Governments.

As there is a strong and developing consensus in several other Community countries in favour of currency union, I repeat now what I have told many colleagues in the Community and in the Commission for some years. That community of democracies should never support the creation of a so-called independent central bank. It is no more appropriate for a democratic country or a group of democratic countries to allow monetary policy to be handed over to an independent, unaccountable bank than it would be for fiscal, public expenditure and taxation policies to be given over to such a bank.

If the Community seeks to achieve currency union between member states, then, whatever the implications for Britain, it will have to make arrangements for joint growth strategies, fiscal co-ordination and regional policies on an unprecedented scale. The regional policies would, by the very nature of currency union, require transfers between regions of the Community, just as transfers are made now between the German Länder, French departments and Italian regione, within their own national currency units. That is the dimension of the change that would need to occur if monetary union is to work to the advantage of the peoples of the Community. Even the most enthusiastic monetary unionist would recognise the truth of that.

Our country has been taken into the exchange rate mechanism by a Government who have been in power 11 years, and who found themselves cornered by the approach of two crucial European summits and boxed in by the expectation that the Government themselves have created that entry into the ERM would occur this autumn. They were a Government trapped by the approach of the Tory party conference, which needed pleasing, and by a looming recession, resulting largely from their own policies. They are a Government who were besieged, and who are besieged, by their own political and economic errors and failures. They are a Government who sought to use a 1 per cent. interest rate cut and ERM entry as a political escape.

They have failed in all of that. The interest rate cut is regarded with cynicism even by those people who yearn for relief from the crushing burdens of mortgage payments and business loans. The gush of City euphoria that greeted ERM entry went flat as quickly as the bubbles in the champagne that celebrated it. The Government's decision and the Government's timing are accurately seen as being determined by political expediency and concern for their own status and not by economic judgment made for the sake of the economy or the national welfare.

They are a Government who have been found out and, as soon as the British people get the chance, they will be a Government who have been put out.

5 pm

Mr. Nigel Lawson (Blaby): At the beginning of his speech and on a number of other occasions, the Leader of the Opposition said that we were debating a momentous decision. I entirely agree with him. It is sad, therefore, that his speech could not live up to that momentous decision. When the House is asked to debate what, in the right hon. Gentleman's own words, is a momentous decision, all we get from him is second-rate political knockabout.

This is only the third occasion in the past year on which I have sought to intervene in a debate. The first occasion was when I made my resignation speech. As many hon. Members will recall, I devoted a considerable part of that speech—although not all of it—to arguing the case for British membership of the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. Incidentally, I warned on that occasion that, although I was strongly in favour of entry, and although I believed it to be strongly in the interests of this country, it was certainly no soft option and no panacea. I mention that because others have subsequently seemed to be seeking to take a copyright on the phrase.

The second occasion during the past year on which you have been kind enough to call me, Mr. Speaker, was during the Budget debate. Perhaps with a certain monotony, I again devoted a significant part of my speech to arguing that we should join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system sooner rather than later. It is with particular pleasure, therefore, that on this, the third occasion, I can wholeheartedly and most warmly endorse the decision that the Government took to enter the exchange rate mechanism.

On the reasons for doing so and the advantages of doing so, I entirely agree with what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his speech. He set out the advantages and reasons very clearly. I have to say, however, that those reasons and those advantages have been valid for years. They are not reasons and advantages that have suddenly appeared relatively recently. The great thing is, however, that the pound is now in the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS or, as some might put it, we are committed to shadowing the deutschmark at a rate not very far from DM3 to the pound—*[Interruption.]* In response to hon. Members' sedentary reaction, perhaps I may say a little about that previous occasion, when we were living in sin, as it were, with the ERM, within the overall framework of the Louvre agreement. That period lasted from March 1987 to March 1988—a period, incidentally, during which inflation fell from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The claim that that was the cause of our current inflation is very difficult to sustain. If that were so, it would be difficult to see why we are repeating the arrangement now, albeit in more formal and thus improved circumstances. I know that some people felt that interest rates were reduced too much during that period. That is one of the myths that has been put about. In fact, at the end of that period, interest rates were precisely 1 per cent. below their level at the beginning of that period. That reduction of 1 per cent. was a result of the response to the stock market crash of October 1987—a time, I may say, when, as Chancellor, I was being urged by Opposition Members to cut interest rates far more and to increase public expenditure as well.

While on the subject of public expenditure, let me say this. I hope and trust that there will be no slackening whatever in the policy of firm control of public

[Mr. Nigel Lawson]

expenditure that the Government have been pursuing year in, year out. The abolition of the public sector borrowing requirement was a most important achievement and it is not something lightly to be thrown away. We have only to look at the United States to see what can happen when public borrowing gets out of hand. By-elections or no by-elections, the firm control of public expenditure remains as vital now as it has ever been.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor referred to the timing of the interest rate cut. In my judgment, he made a completely conclusive argument about why it would have been wholly wrong to have reduced interest rates in advance of the decision to join the ERM. For reasons best known to himself—one could guess at them—my right hon. Friend did not address the other possibility, of joining the ERM before reducing interest rates. I was interested to see the Governor of the Bank of England reported in the *Financial Times* as saying that he would have been happier had the interest rate cut followed entry into the ERM. I agree with him. This is not a small point because, sadly, the conjunction of the two has led to a degree of cynicism in the financial markets for which we shall have to pay a price. That price will be that the next reduction in interest rates will have to be deferred for longer than would otherwise have been the case.

Mr. Quentin Davies: My right hon. Friend will recall that the immediate impact on the markets of our entry into the mechanism pushed the parity of sterling up towards the top of the permissible band under the new system. Had we not reduced interest rates, might it have been impossible to hold sterling within the new bands?

Mr. Lawson: No. My hon. Friend knows perfectly well what happened to sterling shortly after that. There was an initial upward surge which never reached the top of the band. Had it been closer to the top of the band and interest rates had been brought down as a response to that, that would have created conviction in the market place; while what has happened, sadly, has not done that. That conviction will have to be earned. I am sure that it will be earned, but it will have to be earned.

I am quite sure that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was right initially to join with the wider margins. However, I hope that it will not be very long before we get to the narrower margins to which we are in any case committed under stage 1 of the so-called EMU. I hope that that will be a matter of months, and that when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor introduces his next Budget he will be able to announce that we are moving to the narrower margins.

Perhaps more importantly, I believe that it was right to choose a rate of DM2·95. Many people, including Opposition Members, have said that that rate is far too high. However, that is the voice of the perpetual devaluationlists who always find any rate too high, who espouse policies which would lead to rising inflation, and who cannot accept the discipline which membership of the exchange rate mechanism must produce.

There is, of course, no such thing as "the right rate". However, there is a range of plausible rates. The economy must adjust to the rate that is chosen. If the chosen rate is somewhat on the high side, although not too high, the economy will adjust to the discipline which is absolutely essential for getting inflation down.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): What is the right hon. Gentleman's view of the rising monetary aggregates at a time when it might have been sensible to join?

Mr. Lawson: I do not know what particular time the hon. Gentleman is referring to. However, I will return to that point shortly.

A tough discipline is essential. Sadly, the inflexibility of the labour market in this country means that it is all too likely that the reduction in the rate of growth of unit labour costs, which is essential, will be achieved not, certainly initially, by a reduction in wage increases, but by more and more men being laid off. We will see unemployment rising. That is a fault of the rigidity of the labour market in this country and, in particular, because the trade union leaders are far more concerned about those who are in work than about those who are out of work.

Mr. Skinner: As the right hon. Gentleman is talking about wage cuts, when is he expected to take a wage cut in his various jobs? As it seems to be a good idea for the workers, and as he has three or four jobs, when is he going to take a wage cut which he believes everyone else should take?

Mr. Lawson: That is the kind of intervention I might have expected from the hon. Gentleman. I can assure him that I do just as much to earn my pay as he does to earn his.

The real tragedy is that we did not join the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS at least five years ago. That was not for want of trying, as a number of my then Cabinet colleagues can testify.

In reply to the intervention from the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), let me say that at that time the monetary aggregates were moving in the right direction, inflation was coming down and it was very close to the Community average. If we had joined then, we would not have seen the sharp fall in sterling that occurred in 1986 which then led to the subsequent rise in inflation.

Mr. Morgan: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way to me?

Mr. Lawson: I believe that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) will be replying for the Opposition, so he will have his opportunity to speak then.

Mr. John Smith *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: There is another reason why it is a tragedy that we did not join five years ago. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why didn't we join then?"] Not only would it have been economically beneficial, but had we joined five years ago there would have been no danger of confusing the ERM and the EMS with EMU because at that time EMU did not exist; it had died with the Werner plan and the Delors proposals had not even been put on the table.

I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor that there is a world of difference between EMS, which is an aspect of economic management, and EMU, which is essentially political.

Mr. Rooker: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I put to you the constitutional point that people outside this place, when listening to an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer who was the longest serving Chancellor, will wonder why he tells us what did not happen but will not tell us why it did not happen. People will be utterly bewildered.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): That is neither a constitutional point nor a point of order.

Mr. Lawson: The ultimate objective of EMU is, as has been mentioned in the debate, a single currency managed by a single central bank. A single currency is inseparable from the idea of a single nation. A single currency means a federal Europe. The House should be aware that that is the case. Some hon. Members are aware of that and they welcome it, although many other hon. Members do not. I do not welcome it. It is important that that connection is recognised by everyone in this place and elsewhere in the country.

Some hon. Members may have been in Washington recently to hear Mr. Paul Volcker, who is a distinguished figure in the monetary field and who has no particular axe to grind in the European context. When he gave the Per Jacobsson lecture in September he was asked whether he could conceive of a number of countries having a single currency without there being a single Government. He said that perhaps that could exist for a very short time, but it would be totally unsustainable and within a fairly short time there would have to be a single Government. I believe that that is right.

But there is a danger of some of my hon. Friends getting a little too worked up about the issue, important though it is. Even if a date is agreed for stage 2, I foresee no possibility of a date being agreed for stage 3, which is the single currency. Indeed, it is possible that what is agreed by the other 11 on stage 2 will involve conditions, but there will be no date agreed, I am quite sure, for stage 3. As for stage 2, which is not a single currency, what stage 2 involves is not entirely clear. That is the vaguest part of the whole of the Delors report.

But one thing I believe is the essence of stage 2, or certainly could be interpreted as the essence of stage 2. It is something which I would thoroughly endorse and welcome, but it is quite clear that it would be anathema to the Leader of the Opposition and Members on the Opposition Benches who agree with his approach. Stage 2 would involve the national central banks becoming independent—independent national central banks co-operating closely together. That would be the essence of stage 2. That is something which I would welcome. The House knows that I mentioned in my resignation speech how I had made this proposal at an earlier stage so far as the Bank of England was concerned.

Mr. Budgen: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Lawson: To suggest that independent central banks are not compatible with democracy, as the Leader of the Opposition did, is absolute nonsense. It is to suggest that Germany is not a democracy, that the United States is not a democracy and that Switzerland is not a democracy. All those three countries have independent central banks. That is stage 2. That is something that should be acceptable to my right hon. and hon. Friends.

But stage 3, which is the single currency and for which no date will be set at all, is something that is so far down the road that, if it ever happens at all, we do not need to be concerned about it now. There is no need for divisions on this side of the House about that—no need whatever. The whole idea of a two-speed Europe cannot possibly arise unless there is this stage 3 development, which is many years further along the road.

It is dangerous when my party, the party of which I have the honour to be a member, begins to get so hung up on something which is really as remote as the idea of a single currency for the whole of Europe. Of course we will be asked whether we agree in principle. We say no. It is as simple as that. But that is not the immediate issue on the agenda. If that is to come about at all—and everyone in the Community knows that—it is a long, long way ahead, and we have to complete stage 1 first and then we have to have stage 2 of indeterminate length.

Mr. Budgen: My right hon. Friend is carrying on about his idea of independent central banks. Whereas those banks would be independent of the political process within their member states, surely they would have to be acting together, and they would be not independent of each other but operating as a co-ordinated European bank.

Mr. Lawson: No. My hon. Friend is mistaken. They would be acting together rather in the way in which the independent central banks acted together at the time of the classical gold standard, and they co-operated very closely in that context—independent national central banks working closely together. The European central bank would also have to be independent. There is no argument about that, except on the Opposition side of the House. The European central bank, if it came about, would indeed be part of the common currency, the single currency, and that is stage 3, but it is not the stage 2 situation about which I was talking a moment ago.

Finally, let me refer again to the position in the United Kingdom where, as a result of the tight monetary policy which I put in place and which my right hon. Friend has maintained, we are undoubtedly on track for lowering inflation, and very markedly lowering inflation. We are seeing now, of course, the downturn of the economic cycle. That should be of no surprise, particularly after such a long upturn. Very few propositions in economics can be advanced with total confidence, but one that can is that there always have been economic cycles and there always will be economic cycles.

What we are seeing now is the downturn of the economic cycle after a very long upturn. But I have no doubt whatever that the upturn will resume in due course, that the downturn this time will be very much less severe than it was last time, and that, when we resume the upturn, it will be on the basis of an underlying economy which, during the 1980s, has been transformed.

We have heard claptrap from the Leader of the Opposition about the supply side. Real supply side improvements do not occur under socialist strangulation and trade union domination. They occur as a result of the policies of freedom and deregulation which have been put in place by this Government. That is why there was a transformation of the underlying economy in this country during the 1980s, and every single leader of every single

[Mr. Lawson]

important business knows that to be true and will readily admit it. That is the reality on which our confidence for the future is based, and it is soundly based.

5.25 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): When I heard the former Chancellor announce last night that he would retire from politics at the next general election, I had to admire his timing. However, the timing over which he had no control was when Britain joined the exchange rate mechanism. He made it clear today—when he lifted the covers—that five years ago he would have advocated, and presumably was advocating inside the Government, British membership, and in the whole of those five years he was unable to induce the Prime Minister to take that step.

The stage 2 which the right hon. Gentleman has described accurately today, a stage that naturally involves independent central banks in the member countries, is even more unwelcome to the Prime Minister than was entry to the exchange mechanism about which he talked earlier. The various views that the right hon. Gentleman correctly attributed to the Leader of the Opposition are shared in full measure by the Prime Minister, who, at the Dispatch Box, has said that an independent central bank contravenes the democratic and parliamentary traditions of this country. Yet the independent central bank is a mechanism which is proven to work in controlling inflation and which, as the right hon. Gentleman says, operates in democracies such as Germany and the United States of America. That is a view with which I agree. But it will take as many years, and probably more, to persuade this Prime Minister of the merits of that view as it has taken to persuade her of the merits of joining the exchange rate mechanism. Persuading her, of course, involved the great watering down of conditions.

It had to be entertaining to watch the change of condition, from a condition that we would get our inflation down to the level of that of our European partners to a condition that we would get it proximate to that of our European partners. When that was not attainable, it became a condition that inflation had to be falling towards the level of that of our European partners; then it became apparent that inflation was not even falling towards the level of that of our European partners, so it had to be forecast to fall to the level of that of our European partners.

I must tell the Chancellor that, year after year, the Treasury has been publishing Red Books that faithfully forecast that our inflation would fall to the level of that of our European partners. On that basis we could indeed have joined the exchange rate mechanism five, four or three years ago and would have greatly benefited in terms of our interest rates and the health of our economy. Of course, as the Labour party has proved, conditions are generally devised to get round the situation——

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the conditions to which we were referring after Madrid had many other aspects which were realised only subsequently to the periods to which he referred as possible for entry? Any Government, if they have accepted, as this Government have accepted, that entry to the ERM can help inflation to come down—it is an anti-inflationary weapon—would be sensible to look at factors such as tightening monetary aggregates. The Chancellor took this country in the first time he was convinced that those monetary aggregates were on a declining trend.

Mr. Beith: But there were earlier stages before the right hon. Gentleman became Chancellor when some of the conditions could have been satisfied. We might even have accelerated the process of liberalisation of capital movements in the rest of Europe had we made it a condition four or five years ago.

I was saying that conditions are generally devised to get round the situation in which a political party has one set of people in favour of something and others who are totally against it. It therefore sets conditions which appear to appease all the various factions but which will, of course, be overlooked when a decision has to be taken.

The same is true of the Labour party's conditions for entry into the exchange rate mechanism, which included the idea of general reflation as part of the process. Similarly, the Labour party is beginning to suggest that there are conditions under which it would accept a single currency, monetary union and a European central bank, but the bank would have to be democratically controlled and have a commitment to growth as well as to price stability. That is rather like asking a referee to take a few shots at goal from time to time. The Labour party has misunderstood the whole nature of the bank's operations. It is another case of a series of conditions being set so that, for example, the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) can say—as he did—that he is satisfied that Labour's conditions would never be met. He was content with the policy then being pursued because he did not want to join the exchange rate mechanism. He cannot be quite so happy now.

Many Conservative and Labour Members take entry to the EMS to mean different things. There is a range of opinions spattered over the Order Paper. Some hon. Members believe that it should be "thus far and no further"; others believe that we should review whether to remain in the exchange rate mechanism; and still others express total opposition. The "thus far and no further" group clearly see the exchange rate mechanism as a stage beyond which the country must not go. That group is significant within the Government. Indeed, the Chancellor's Parliamentary Private Secretary resigned so that he could express that "thus far and no further" view. How on earth can the Government go on with a Prime Minister and probably other members of the Government who clearly hold that view when the Chancellor appears to be making apparently genuine and sincere efforts to proceed along the road to a single currency?

The result of the division of opinion is that it is not clear to the rest of Europe whether the Chancellor's single currency plan is a device to bring us to a single currency or a means of thwarting a single currency at any time in the future. Conservative Members must take one or other of those positions. They cannot both be true. The pretence cannot be kept up for long, and I suspect that, as the debate proceeds, the fact that that is so will become even more apparent.

There is another view of the exchange rate mechanism. There are those who believe that it is a renewal of our country membership of the club and that we can keep our options open as long as we appear to talk with some willingness about the future and have taken at least one

step in the European process. However, that will not do either, because these decisions cannot be put off for long. They must be discussed in December at the intergovernmental conference and will be back on the agenda time and again. The other member countries involved are keen to proceed—and they will proceed. The question is whether we are with them in that enterprise, whether we take a leading part in it or whether we stay aloof and try to retain some kind of country membership or second division status when they achieve a degree of union in which we do not share.

There are those who argue that there is a "soft" EMS membership in which we do not have to take the tough decisions but can continue to look for a reflationary approach. That is not on. It is not an option. We are in for a period in which it will not be made easier—as would be the case by devaluation—for British industry to absorb its costs and to ignore the inflationary consequences. We are in for a period of considerable difficulty, which is likely to lead to increased unemployment and which, if that sacrifice is to be justified in any way, must lead to the effective control of inflation. Unless we set in place more measures to accompany the exchange rate mechanism and to bring about that control of inflation, that sacrifice of others—it is always a sacrifice of others—will be wasted. People will be out of work, yet the country will not be in a better position as a result and the prospects for those people will not have improved either.

The Government need to tell us what they will do now that we are in the exchange rate mechanism. The benefit of having a debate on this subject is that we should be enabled to know what we shall do now. I submit that we should have a clear commitment to enter the narrow band as early as possible. If we are to have an exchange rate mechanism and to go along the road to exchange rate parity, let us show that we are serious about it and that there is no let out. We shall not suddenly have a significant devaluation, taking advantage of the broad band status.

We must also make it clear what will be done about fiscal policy. The Chancellor mentioned that, but did not talk about the whole of it. Public expenditure is one part of fiscal policy; the other part is taxation. The Chancellor has a Prime Minister who is anxious to say, "Don't worry, tax cuts are still around the corner," but tax cuts cannot be around the corner if we have not solved our inflation problem. The Chancellor may have to contemplate personal tax increases if he has no other weapon at his disposal with which to take demand out of the economy. However, the right hon. Gentleman still refuses to admit that, which suggests that he is not taking seriously the fiscal policy implications of fighting inflation.

If the Chancellor is not prepared to put aside the tax cuts strategy for the time being, he is effectively saying that he will have to be much tougher about public expenditure than the Chief Secretary has been in the current round. The Chief Secretary will be lucky if he gets away with the Government's forecast levels of public expenditure. If the Chancellor has no access to inflation as a means of controlling demand, in the early part of next year he will be inviting the Chief Secretary to contemplate much bigger public expenditure cuts. That will mean that the investment that industry needs if it is to become more competitive in the exchange rate mechanism cannot be made.

The ERM will not make industry more competitive. Industry must do that job itself to some extent, but it needs some help with, for example, getting better access to markets, better transport, and having a skilled work force, through investment in education and training. But those things will be impossible if public expenditure has to take the brunt of a tighter fiscal policy that is designed to deal with inflation.

The Government must come clean and tell us the end goal of all this. Are we genuinely heading for a single currency, monetary union and an independent central bank, or are we not? The present signs suggest that most of those objectives are not the Government's objectives. Indeed, the Government have set aside the obvious advantages to fighting inflation of having a more independent central bank because of the now wholly bogus argument about the control that Parliament is supposed to be able to exercise over monetary policy. Anybody who believes that the House of Commons is in control of monetary policy seriously misunderstands the way in which the British system of government works.

Therefore, for the health of the economy, we need to know where we go from here. We should be seeking to enter the narrow band and to end the talk of tax cuts. We should recognise that fiscal policy will be more important now that exchange rate policy is taking up interest rates to such a large extent. We should know what our end goal is and whether it includes measures that are designed to defeat inflation. In addition, we should be taking the lead. Britain should be the leading country. The City should be the financial heart of any monetary union of Europe. However, we shall forgo that place if we continue to hang back.

To ask anyone who believes that Europe offers tremendous opportunities to Britain and that we should be taking the lead to contemplate the two parties, the disunity of which is so widely scattered across today's Order Paper, is like asking someone who is fond of the classic serial and costume drama to choose between "Neighbours" and "Home and Away" for their television viewing. We showed at Eastbourne that there is another choice.

5.37 pm

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): For a long time I have felt it right that we should join the exchange rate mechanism. I am, therefore, glad to follow my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) in speaking from the Conservative Benches, because he played such a signal part in putting the supply side of the economy to rights by establishing the conditions under which the supply side could be improved.

I should like to be the first to congratulate my right hon. Friend on his distinguished career as Chancellor of the Exchequer. I wish that he had been successful in joining the exchange rate mechanism much earlier than has now proved to be the case. I have thought for some time that monetary instruments alone are not sufficient to exert the necessary discipline.

Controlling inflation is the ultimate economic responsibility of a Conservative Government. That responsibility has not been carried out successfully for a long time. I do not necessarily mean from one year to another, but for long cycles our rate of inflation has been consistently higher than that in other comparable countries. Indeed, it has been much too high for several decades, which has had unfortunate consequences. It has

[Sir Peter Hordern]

now become accepted that it is almost always right to borrow, because the value of assets will always grow with inflation faster than the nominal value of the loan.

For many years saving has been a mug's game. But since borrowing must always match savings, the rate of interest demanded to achieve that equilibrium has steadily risen. Unlike under all previous post-war Governments, that has not come about during the past year or two because of excessive Government borrowing. Indeed, it is very much the reverse. The extraordinary increase in personal borrowing and spending which took place two years ago happened because interest rates were reduced to 7·5 per cent. in May 1988. If that reduction had been coupled with the announcement that we were joining the ERM, it would have been perfectly justified, but, in isolation, that reduction in interest rates gave the wrong signal.

Not only the personal sector increased borrowing. The company sector vastly increased its borrowing, too. However, the difference was that companies borrowed to invest. The Labour party is wrong not to pay attention to the level of investment of the past few years. It was £32 billion in 1987 and rose to £46 billion in 1989. More important still is the high level of investment overseas. It rose from £108 billion in 1987 to £177 billion in 1989. Clearly, that level of investment, financed by bank borrowing, will slow down, but the existing investment will prove very worth while.

As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said earlier, the savings ratio is now rising fast. So there has been substantial investment and substantial growth. But there has also been substantial inflation. Some say that it is not possible to control inflation through interest rates alone. We have tried credit controls, or rationing credit, and prices and incomes policies. None of them worked or could work without causing far more damage than they were worth. But it is not only long experience and expectation of inflation that has led to higher interest rates. It is also the long expectation and experience that, no matter how much a manufacturer may increase his pay and his prices, he will always be bailed out in the end by a falling exchange rate.

We now do most of our trade with the European Community. The pound has fallen against the ecu. There were 1·69 ecu to the pound in 1985. In 1990 there are 1·39 ecu to the pound. The pound has also fallen against the deutschmark. There were DM3·7 to the pound in 1985. In 1990 there are DM2·9. The same is true if one measures the pound against the French franc, the Belgian franc, the guilder or even the peseta. For far too long it has been the normal expectation that sterling will slide against all European currencies. That is why wages are rising so fast and why directors' salaries are rising absurdly high, too.

I see no reason why the Government should allow business and industries to feel that they may always pay themselves more because the Government will always bail them out through a depreciating pound. I see no reason why our people should not benefit from cheaper prices brought about by competition. So I warmly welcome the decision to join the ERM.

There are some who criticise our entry because they say that we are making ourselves subject to the deutschmark and losing our sovereignty. I suppose that the time of our greatest economic prosperity was when we were on the gold standard during the last century and at the beginning of this century. Gold was a recognised store of value, and it still is for that matter. The pound was freely convertible into it. The pound represents no store of value on its own. Indeed, it has become increasingly exposed and isolated, requiring an ever-higher rate of interest to attract foreign support. There is nothing to be said for sovereignty if it means economic isolation and a gentle slide against all other currencies. Nor is there any point in being rude about the Germans. They will not become less powerful through our remaining alone and isolated, sniffing contemptuously at them. All that we do by standing alone is to hurt ourselves by having to maintain much higher interest rates than we otherwise would.

What has sovereignty meant all these years? It has meant the inalienable right to depreciate our currency and to pay ourselves more than we earn either at home or abroad. Not only is joining the ERM no short cut to easier times, but it imposes a discipline which has long been missing and has long been necessary. There is something else. Controlling inflation, or, even better, eradicating it, is the highest economic priority. It is often said that inflation is the thief of all savings, and so it is. Pensioners' savings are eroded, if not destroyed. But there is more to it than that. There are those whose earnings can generally be relied upon to rise faster than inflation, but there are many, especially among the lower paid, who can look for no such protection.

The huge increase in social security payments which inflation brings about is compensation. How much better would it have been to spend that money on health, education or other public expenditure programmes? If we can bring inflation under control, we can afford a much higher-quality public expenditure programme.

With regard to the next stage of ERM membership, I see that some time has been won. It is just as well. What are we to make of the German attitude to the common agricultural policy? The general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations are now under threat. New Zealand farmers are impoverished. It is at once the most selfish and self-defeating action possible, for it makes the European Community a combination in restraint of trade. That is just what we have always warned against.

It is in our interests and the interests of Europe to extend our frontiers to include all the countries of eastern Europe. If a single currency makes that more difficult, or impossible, to achieve, there is something wrong with the idea of a single currency. It seems that M. Delors has become so fascinated with the idea and the mechanics of a single currency that he ignores the practical effect of creating a powerful, exclusive trading block in western Europe, increasingly oblivious to the rest of the world and our own interests. There is much to be said, therefore, for the hard ecu, particularly if it is to be gained through an evolutionary approach. There is nothing to be said for a politically controlled European central bank, which is what the Labour party appears to want. I wish my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer every possible success.

5.46 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): I agree with hon. Members who have said that we are debating a momentous decision today, but beyond that I do not find

myself in agreement with the five hon. Members who have spoken so far about the basic proposition of membership of the ERM. I am not in favour of joining the ERM. Even if the ERM were simply a European version of the old International Monetary Fund, I would counsel against joining it now. Like some other hon. Members, I have had experience of restraints on economic policy, the stop-go, erratic growth of the 1960s and early 1970s and the exhausted reserves of currency, created by the effort to keep up the rate of exchange, and the inevitable requirement for prices and incomes policies.

Another reason why I am against joining the ERM is the actual experience of member countries who joined the mechanism in 1979. Over the 10 years or more which have passed since then, their experience has been anything but happy. With the exception of Germany, which does well under all the indices, those countries have experienced low growth—even lower than we have achieved in the United Kingdom—and higher unemployment than we have in Britain today.

The latest figures that I have for countries across the Community are for June 1990. In Britain our rate of unemployment was 6·1 per cent. France, which has a broadly similar working population, had an unemployment rate of 9·4 per cent. Italy had 11·3 per cent., the Netherlands had 8·7 per cent., Belgium had 8·7 per cent. and Spain—which joined the ERM only a year before—had a rate of over 15 per cent.

I belong to that group of Members of Parliament who attach importance to multiple objectives of economic policy. Of course, I am worried about inflation. But to me it is not the be-all and end-all of economic policy. We should seek to achieve certain other major objectives. One is growth of the production, output and wealth of our society. A second important one is to maintain a high level of employment for all our citizens, because their dignity and the welfare of our society depend on their having employment.

Today, before our very eyes, the Chancellor tore up the post-war White Paper agreement by which we should seek, jointly, to try to maintain full employment. I am not prepared to abandon that great agreement. The right hon. Gentleman said that in future no action taken by a British Government or as a result of the exercise of choice by the British electorate will determine employment in this country. It will depend entirely upon the market and the exchange rate. I reject that. It is the counsel of despair and I believe that we can do far better than that.

I have another objection to joining the ERM as it is far more stringent than the IMF, to which I referred earlier. If the nation needs to change its exchange rate it can do so only with the agreement of its partners——

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Its competitors.

Mr. Shore: Yes, competitors and partners. It is true that there were many changes in the exchange rate system in the early years of the mechanism after 1979, but since then there has been a decline in the number of such changes —only two since 1985 and none at all since 1 January 1987.

Furthermore, we now know that under the Delors plan the ERM is only the first stage of a plan that is destined to end in economic and monetary union. When that is achieved there will be permanently locked exchange rates, probably a common currency and a European central bank.

There are three major questions that we should ask ourselves today. First, have we gone in at the right rate? That is a crucial question. Is DM2·95 to the pound the rate that the Chancellor should have chosen? It is my strong view that the Government have entered the ERM at an unsustainable rate.

The Chancellor based his decision on three different analyses provided for him by respected merchant bankers and on figures released by the IMF. I have already commented on those figures and pointed out that the rate of DM2·95 stands 20 per cent. above the same rates published just three years ago—the last time that we were competitive in terms of our balance of payment current account position. In the past three years, the value of sterling has appreciated by 20 per cent. against the deutschmark, yet it is at that higher rate that the Chancellor has chosen to peg the pound.

I do not accept that the so-called purchasing power parity—the rate suggested by the other analysts who advised the Chancellor—is a helpful guide to what the present rate should be. It takes no account of such vital matters as the current trade deficit and the rate of inflation.

The Chancellor will know that there is grave concern in industry about the rate he has chosen. Independent studies, in particular one conducted by Professor Simon Wren Lewis when he was with the National Institute of Economic and Social Research a few months ago, suggested a rate of just over DM2·40 to the pound. That is based not on simple purchasing power parity, but on calculations of the rate required for Britain to maintain its balance on current account in the medium term. Many other independent forecasters have reached similar conclusions.

If the DM2·95 rate turns out to be the right one, how long can it be sustained? That depends on two crucial issues—average earnings and the growth of productivity, influenced most heavily by industrial investment. There is no argument about the figures so far. In the past decade, increased earnings in the German manufacturing industry have averaged just over 4 per cent. a year, but in Britian thay have averaged more than 10 per cent. a year. There is no convergence. The latest figure for Britain stood at 10·25 per cent. and in Germany at just on 4 per cent. I should like to know what the House thinks about the convergence of those two different rates. How will it be done? Has the Chancellor any proposals to spell this out to NEDC—the National Economic and Development Council—and to discuss it with trade union leaders? Have the trade union leaders any proposals to discuss this with their members? Are we to have any kind of consultation on the question of voluntary restraint or on the more difficult question of some form of genuine incomes and prices policy?

It came as no surprise to me when the Chancellor used the occasion of his first post-entry speech at Mansion house to seek cuts in pay rises and to warn that unless that is achieved it will

"lead to only one result: lost markets, redundancies, plant closures and ultimately company failures."

That is an accurate description. Then the Chancellor had the gall to ask the chairmen and leaders of British industry to set a good example. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) was right to say on radio the following morning that the Chancellor had left it rather late in the day to make such an appeal.

[Mr. Shore]

I regret to say, however, that on that occasion my right hon. and learned Friend did not address the central issue of pay restraint.

Pay restraint is implicit in a fixed rate system—British wage and salary rates will have to be cut. If our exchange rate is linked to the deutschmark, so are our wage rates. What prospects do any of us see of British wage rates being reduced from their present level of 10·5 per cent. to the German level of 4 per cent.? Are we to take the view that only the harsh discipline of rising unemployment will do the job? I know that that is the Chancellor's opinion, as that was behind the threat that he issued a short time ago. I should also like to know the view of my right hon. and learned Friend and our Front-Bench colleagues.

In an interview that my right hon. and learned Friend gave to the *Independent on Sunday* on 6 May, he was asked:

"Are you prepared to see unemployment rise?"

He answered:

"I don't want to see unemployment rise. I would like to take steps to deal with unemployment at the regional level . . . but if companies make mistakes and they are beaten in the competition of the Single Market, I can't do very much about it."

The interviewer went on:

"What you are telling the trades unions in the private sector is that if they push their pay bargaining too hard, they will cause unemployment."

My right hon. and learned Friend answered:

"They can cause unemployment. They might. They must judge that. They constantly do. If we can help to make the wage bargaining more sophisticated, fine, but I think they have to stand by the results of their own decisions."

Even when we had 3 million unemployed at the peak of the 1982 recession, brought about, above all, by an over-high exchange rate when the rest of the world thought we were a petro-currency, earnings in the United Kingdom were still rising at a level of 11 per cent. The discipline did not work then when we had that level of unemployment. What level of unemployment must we contemplate in the future to get down to German levels of inflation? Three million people, 4 million, or 5 million? Do we then wash our hands and say that it is between the companies and the workers —it is their affair? Will we say that we play no part in it all? Will we wash our hands of all responsibility? That is not the approach to politics that I expect from my party, and I am sure that it will not agree to accept such an approach in the end.

It is not just earnings which decide competitiveness, but productivity, which is greatly influenced by investment. We know how much the Germans have invested in recent decades compared with our level of investment—a great pity. Looking to the immediate future, what are the prospects and trends? The figures are available in the IMF. It is estimated that manufacturing investment in British industry in 1989 increased by just 2·9 per cent. over the figure achieved in 1988. It is estimated that that level of investment for 1990 will be minus 6·2 per cent. and back again to just 4 per cent. in 1991. The German figures for the same period are plus 13·1 per cent. in 1989 plus 5 per cent. in 1990 and plus 4·2 per cent. in 1991. The trend is clear.

The knowledge that we shall face the great pressures of a far more efficient, as I regret it is, German economy gives me difficulty with the Opposition amendment. During the Thatcher years we have lagged behind and my hon. Friends are right to maintain that the Conservatives have neglected education and the need to put money into research.

It is for those reasons that we are not able today to enter a fixed exchange rate figure with the deutschmark. If our criticism is correct, and it is, then all the stronger is the reason why we should not join and imprison ourselves with the German economy and the German exchange rate.

Presumably those very fears—of the consequences of unconditional membership of the ERM at the wrong rate —led my right hon. and hon. Friends to state firmly in the party policy document "Meet the Challenge—Make the Change" in October 1989:

"substantial changes would therefore be required before the next Labour Government could enter into the exchange rate mechanism."

They went on to specify the many conditions and changes that would be required. The document referred to

"entry at a competitive exchange rate."

Is it a competitive exchange rate? It specified

"the ability to make further changes in the rate so that we remain competitive."

Can that condition be secured? It referred to

"adequate central bank swap arrangements to control speculative movements."

There has been no change in the arrangements. It went on to speak of

"symmetrical obligations on creditors and debtors."

It all remains as asymmetrical as the IMF, and it always has been.

In addition to those conditions, the European Community countries, according to the Labour party's own policy statement, had to agree on eliminating the largest inter-Community deficits and surpluses and co-ordinate European Communitywide growth rate and trade policies. Finally, there had to be effective regional and industrial policies. None of those conditions has been broached or even thought of by the Government, who have joined without conditions. As the Chancellor said in a written reply to me yesterday:

"No conditions of entry were sought or agreed to".—[*Official Report*, 23 October 1990; Vol. 178, c. 9.]

other than the central rate and the 6 per cent. margins. To adapt a well-known phrase, I do not want Britain to go naked into the ERM.

Loss of control over our exchange rate and interest rates must be seen against the background of the other measures to which the Government have agreed in the Single European Act. Under the treaty, we shall have no control over the location of industry, over capital movements or over major mergers affecting British firms, and we shall have no ability to use public purchasing power to foster specifically United Kingdom industry. We also face the growing harmonisation of indirect taxes, including VAT, excise duties and corporation taxes.

The loss of those powers, which have been available to all post-war Labour Governments, will make economic management difficult enough. To abandon exchange rate policy and interest rate policy as well will render us impotent in the management of our economic affairs.

Can we change the exchange rate under the ERM now that we have entered it? I said that there had been no changes in exchange rates since 1 January 1987. I also pointed out that we should need the agreement of our fellow members and competitors in the ERM. If the ERM remains as it is, it will be difficult, though not impossible, to change the exchange rate. But if we move to economic and monetary union, it will become impossible.

I wish to hear not just qualifications about EMU. I want a categorical assertion tonight from both Front Benches that we will not accept permanently locked exchange rates. That is the heart of the matter. Joining the EMU under such conditions would be the worst decision we have ever made, dwarfing even the readmission of Britain's pound sterling to the gold standard in 1925.

Apart from being economically disastrous, the effect of joining the EMU would be to transfer effective powers of self-government from this Parliament to the European authorities and to put our future prosperity in the hands of a committee of central bankers dominated by the Bundesbank.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the House that Mr. Speaker has determined that speeches between 6 and 8 o'clock shall be limited to 10 minutes.

6.5 pm

Mr. John Biffen (Shropshire, North): My right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), whose impending departure from the House I much regret, commented on how significant an occasion this was. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) must have reflected on that time in December 1945 when he attended the great debate here on the American loan, Bretton Woods. He was one of the handful of Labour Members enticed into a Lobby that was manned by Christopher Hollis and Robert Boothby. He has rarely kept such excellent company thereafter.

That incident reminds us that on these great occasions the House does not divide neatly along party lines, and I doubt that it will this evening. Some of my hon. Friends and I have tabled a modest amendment—it is less than one tenth the length of the amendment tabled by the official Opposition, and a good deal more clear—which has as its central proposition the need to maintain a flexible approach to the European Community so that it can become a wider partnership of nation states. I was encouraged in that view by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), who on 15 October, speaking about monetary union, asked:

"Is not such flexibility over monetary union essential if we are to enlarge, as I think we must, to include Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland?"—[*Official Report*, 15 October 1990; Vol. 177, c. 936.]

The point that he made about monetary union is also valid in respect of our exchange rate system, for the great beauty of flexible, free-moving exchange rates is that they are able to relate and communicate in a variety of national economies in different stages of development with different social backgrounds.

As we are having—it is the most laudable objective—a wider Europe, including the countries of the east, that system is all the more valid because the alternative would be to bring about some uniformity by the movement of resources. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) observed, almost certainly that would mean German resources. To begin with, that might be flattering to the German role in the Community, but in the long run I believe that it would be undesirable. Those who are pleased to pin on our lapels faith in a wider Europe, this evening, are required to vote against the Government motion and therefore against the Government.

In considering domestic policy, I have sat in the House for sufficient years to become agnostic about the virtues of economic philosophy. In many ways I regard it as the incomprehensible in pursuit of the unattainable. If I had to identify the area where I place my affection, it would be the period in the early 1980s when the Government sought, on their own account, to control public spending, revenue and borrowing in such a way that they balanced to provide a monetary discipline that could then reduce inflation. A flexible exchange rate was inherent in that situation. The great virtue was that the Government took responsibility for the control of those three components and, whether subcontracted to banks, experts or foreigners, at the end of the day the matter was argued in the Chamber.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said, I am sure in good faith, that the control of inflation is at the heart of the new economic strategy that he has elaborated around the system of fixed exchange rates. Of course, I accept that, but in contrast to the policy pursued in the early years of this Government, the reintroduction of fixed exchange rates brings about an element of inflexibility in the economy. Everything else has to be so arranged that it can accommodate and make a reality of that inflexibility. Ever the Peter Pan in this world, the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) is already anxious to narrow even further the modest flexibility contained in the proposed arrangements. I am sure that he will be followed by politicians from all parties.

Whatever exchanges there may be between Front-Bench spokesmen, the truth is that we are providing a signpost to a planned economy in which first Government exhortation and ultimately and increasingly Government intervention will be used to bring about economic behaviour that accommodates the politically chosen exchange rate. I say to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, for whom I have a genuine affection, that I have already seen the first signs of the storm cloud. They were contained in his sentence about industry having to pay more attention to its cost increases. What the devil does my right hon. Friend imagine most industrialists do for most of the time? It is ridiculous for us to sit here in Westminster or Whitehall constantly berating the inability of business men to attend to their cost increases or the selfishness of trade unionists wanting to secure pay claims to match what they read about in the newspapers. We have trodden that path before. It is no surprise that some hon. Members have already begun to talk about reintroducing an incomes policy.

I have a great affection for the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who sits like the Duke of Devonshire's gamekeeper uttering the odd earthy comments about the likely future. I thought that he got it absolutely right when he talked about the inherent challenges of an incomes policy. The person who is most delighted about that development is the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). He may have broken the news to the Leader of the Opposition—I know not. I have watched the right hon. and learned Member, who is a man of great sophistication. He treads the City with a skill that is the envy of practically every Conservative. He is increasingly in the mould of those elitist Labour politicians who formed the Government in 1964 and 1966, cheerfully fashioned the prices and incomes legislation of 1964, 1965 and 1966, and who never wasted a moment without they were always planning or exhorting. Now, we are moving towards a Euro incomes policy. On

[Mr. John Biffen]

that basis, the right hon. and learned Gentleman may be able to sell it to the Leader of the Opposition, who may have uneasy twinges about the days when he was the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent. If it can be said that Jacques has approved and it is new-style socialism, it will be something to which the Labour party will respond.

As this debate proceeds, not just tonight but in the weeks, months and years ahead, the devotees of the planned economy and the incomes policy will resurface and be reinforced by the workings of the fixed exchange rate. I shall look back and be proud to have argued and voted as I intend to tonight.

6.15 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): I am following two hon. Members, the right hon. Members for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), with whom I find myself in general agreement whenever we talk about Europe and all its works.

On 15 October my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) said in a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer:

"As Parliament—both sides of the House of Commons—have rendered themselves impotent on these matters, is it not imperative that there should be no further erosion of Britain's position until the electorate have been consulted at a general election?"—[*Official Report*, 15 October 1990; Vol. 177, c. 932.]

In that brief question he set out the belief of the Ulster Unionist party that we must constantly be against any dilution of the powers of the House with regard to Europe or anywhere else.

I learned long ago, when I first entered this place, that whenever the occupants of both Front Benches are in agreement, it is time for honest men to take stock of where they stand. I am prepared to stand with my party against the Government this evening. When the spokesmen of both Front Benches agree, they usually agree to mislead the nation in one form or another. I am glad to see from the Order Paper that there are individuals in both parties who share my view and that of my party, that membership of the ERM has costs far beyond those that appear on the surface. It is clear from what appears on the Order Paper, what we read in the newspapers and have listened to this afternoon that divisions within the two major parties are both deep and wide. The real division in this country seems to be moving from that between the left and right to pro and anti the EC to an extent that has not been the case for many years.

The proponents of the decision to join the ERM seem to believe that they can peg the currency and buck the market, which at one time was almost anathema to Conservative Ministers. The proponents allege that they can create a stable exchange rate against other ERM currencies. Be that as it may, there are currencies in the world other than those of Europe. What about the rest of the world? What about the dollar-pound exchange rate and the pound-yen exchange rate? Do those not matter? Do not we also export to those countries and are not the pound sterling and the basket of EC currencies to be floating in some form or another against them?

In 1983, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer said:

"I am well aware that many in industry call not for devaluation but for exchange rate stability. And I fully understand why. But it's easier said than done. There is no magic way to influence the exchange rate."

There is more to his speech, but I am limited by the 10-minute rule and cannot read it all to the House. No doubt those who are interested will go to the Library and look it up. The truth is that the idea of a shelter from the economic storm is not new, but the trouble is that all such shelters develop leaky roofs and somebody pays a high price.

Discipline is the "in" word in this debate, not only in the House but outside. We have heard a lot about it recently and we have heard references to France and the benefits that the discipline of the ERM has had there. France and Ireland both got into trouble because they lived beyond their means, which is a far more accurate cause of our problems than anything else. Those countries used the discipline of the ERM to get back on the rails. I presume that the Government, and the Opposition if they were in office, would also hide behind the ERM, just as in days past they had IMF demands behind which to hide.

If France had taken the necessary steps to correct its problems, it would not have needed ERM. But it is nice to be able to blame someone else on occasions. Whenever one makes a mistake, it is terribly nice to be able to blame someone else. I have some sympathy with the previous Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), who referred to that problem when speaking to us about 1987 and was urged to expand the economy because of the position on that dark day in October of that year. He expanded to the acclaim of everyone, except the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North. Not only he, but everyone else got it wrong and as a result of his actions—perhaps not wholly, but to a large degree—we find ourselves once more faced with continuing and increasing inflation. I noted the right hon. Member for Blaby's comment that inflation was 5 per cent. and falling in 1985. Of course it was lower than that in subsequent years. But that is a tribute to the prudence of the Government in the earlier years of their rule. Frankly, if the Chancellor's job in 1985 was to get inflation down—that was then the first pillar of Government policy—it was up to him and to his colleagues in Cabinet to take the policy decisions, unpopular though they might have been, to achieve that, and not hide behind decisions imposed by outsiders.

According to press reports—quite frankly, own impressions confirm them—the Prime Minister believed that entry was an "admission of failure", and that it meant that Britain was incapable of conquering inflation alone. The Government believed that they could not carry out the policies necessary to reduce inflation at this stage.

The deutschmark is the pivotal point in the mechanism simply because it is the strongest currency. Human nature being what it is, one must expect the Germans to defend their currency and its pivotal position with all their strength, and they have the financial and economic strength to do so.

Of course, we are a petro-currency—albeit a minor one—and that is a factor that tends to be overlooked too often and is not given weight to the extent that it should be. In future, we shall have to abide by the disciplines of German bankers, despite the difficulties that the petro-currency effect may have on our economy. What a reflection it is on the ability of the Government and their Treasury team to admit by their actions that they are incapable of

controlling inflation within our economy. That is what it is—an admission of incapacity to do the job that they were elected to do. For that matter, it is an admission by the Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen, when they are setting themselves up for an election, because by supporting entry to the ERM they are saying that they do not have the ability to control inflation either. A plague on both their houses.

Joining the ERM is not the end of the matter, but simply a further disastrous step down the slippery road to the narrow band, stage 2, a full common currency and a united states of Europe. The former Chancellor said today that the common currency is a long way away, but that is not what troubles me or those hon. Members who oppose the motion; it is the fact that it is the end objective. Whether the House likes it or not, we shall be pummelled and shoved down that path to that conclusion.

In addition, the costs of German reunification could well make a dent in German prudence. Then, instead of the deutschmark supporting sterling, we may find that sterling is called upon to support the deutschmark. If that is so, we shall pay for German reunification, and we shall not derive any industrial benefit from it because those benefits will go to the German nation and to others closer to the centre of reunification than ourselves.

The developing situation in eastern Europe will also have consequences, which are as yet unknown, but vast. I believe that it was the wrong time for us to join—besides the fact that I do not think we should ever have joined anyway. We should accept responsibility for our own nation and currency. Any Government must number among their primary duties the defence of the nation and the provision of sound currency. No matter what we may think of the Government's success in regard to the first, we can only say that they have funked their responsibility and run for shelter in regard to the second. I believe that this decision will end in bitter tears for many years.

6.23 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): I think that it was Ernest Bevin who once asked, "Why read the crystal ball, when you can read the book?" Listening to the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), we might imagine that the final stages of economic and monetary union are a good deal further away than they are in reality. I say that for this reason: the conclusions of the presidency in June 1990 clearly stipulate that

> "In these circumstances the European Council decided that the Intergovernmental Conference will open on 13th December 1990 with a view to establishing the final stages of Economic and Monetary union in the perspective of the completion of the Internal Market".

Add that to the Christophersen papers discussed at Ashford Castle in April, the speeches of those who are most in the know on the subject and the remarks that are made about the single currency and the date set for it; all the indicators are that we should be anything but relaxed about the speed with which the whole process is being driven forward. It is for that reason that for years I have continuously warned about the dangers of creeping federalism, because I believe that the evidence shows that those matters are being driven hard and fast into the heart of Parliament. What does that involve? It can be summed up simply in two words, or one question, "Who governs?" The question is who governs Britain. The reality is that this whole movement, devised for perfectly understandable reasons in the 1950s to deal with wholly different circumstances, is now being applied as an ideology to get us to do something in the 1990s that is no longer appropriate.

I voted for the Single European Act. During its passage I tabled an amendment saying that nothing in the Act should derogate from the sovereignty of this Parliament, and I said that for a good reason. We have to maintain ultimate control over the economic and social priorities of people in this country by virtue of the democratic process by which we are elected as Members of Parliament. We simply cannot turn our backs on that.

If the time scale to which I am referring is as speedy as I suggest, and as I believe the Prime Minister knows it is, it would not be right for us to make any assumptions about where we shall be in the next two or three years, give or take an election.

Conservative Members believe in co-operating within Europe, but at present co-operation is not very good. It is not very communautaire of the French and Germans to get together as they did in April before the Dublin summit and again this week and to start issuing ultimatums on the date by which everything has to be done, according to a prescribed timetable. The reality is that if the Community is to work effectively, in the interest of all its members, it has to operate on a level playing field and on a basis whereby all those who are members work together.

What about the people of eastern Europe? Do we not face the prospect of a hard core federal Europe, devised by the 12 member states, which could create the very rivalries and tensions that we were supposed to have escaped from in the cold war? Is not it likely that if eastern Europe is regarded as a cheap labour market for a German investment programme, and is excluded from the benefits available to the other people of Europe, it will become resentful? Jealousies have already built up. About 60 per cent. of foreign investment in Hungary is either German of Austrian.

I do not say this with any disrespect to the German people, but we are faced with a dominant central economy, with a cluster of alliances around it, operating through the Single European Act and majority voting, and creating what could well turn out to be a black hole into which we are being sucked by our decisions. When I hear people say, "We shall not have this imposed upon us," I ask myself whether we are being asked to agree to it. I then ask upon what basis we should agree to this proposal. Is it to deny that this, the mother of Parliaments, should continue to make the major decisions about the economic and social priorities of our people? We are talking not about some romantic fantasy but about the reality of people's daily lives. This is about people in Stafford, Monklands, and north Shropshire. It is our responsibility to answer those questions.

I urge hon. Members to look at the papers such as the Christophersen papers, because those are the clues to the truth about what is happening. I give 100 per cent. support to the Prime Minister and to those members of the Cabinet who have sent strong signals to our people. Some Opposition Members are equally aware of that truth, and I mention in particular the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), who has constantly told our people the truth. Let us look at the proposed constitution for the central bank. We are told that it will be independent. Why on earth should we hand over what Herr Otto Pöhl has called the golden monopoly of money

[Mr. William Cash]

creation to a panel of central bankers? It would confer no material, defence, education or other benefit. Downing street would have nothing to say.

Mr. Budgen: Where does that lead my hon. Friend?

Mr. Cash: It leads me to say that we must not allow ourselves to move into the next phase of treaty amendments because they will take us into the black hole to which I referred.

This is not a matter of historical necessity because the historical necessity that faces the House is the necessity to maintain the reason for our being here. The European Parliament cannot fulfil the democratic requirements of our people. Those are fulfilled by virtue of our membership of the House and our election on a manifesto with a prescribed timetable and programme. We must maintain those at all costs.

I said the other day, "Thus far and no further." We must draw a thick blue line—or perhaps a thick red one—under the ERM. We ought not to rely upon the so-called German motor as an anchor. Only yesterday the five institutions in Germany predicted a sharp fall in the growth of the German GNP. Those institutions are worried. What is the point of hitching ourselves to a devil's bandwagon that could draw us into an economy that could be under severe strain in a short time? We do not know the outcome and it is not in the interests of the House to move to the next stages.

6.33 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): The hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) ranged rather widely and I shall not follow him. Instead, I shall concentrate on the Government's decision, which was political and nothing else, fully to join the European monetary system by joining the ERM. It has little to do with controlling inflation or the money supply or with eliminating our horrendous balance of payments deficit, certainly on manufactured goods, with our partners in the Community.

The Chancellor boasts that he is a political Chancellor, and when I say that I do not imply any criticism. When he was Chief Whip he operated from No. 12 Downing street but he has now moved to No. 11. However, the ethos and spirit are still those of No. 12. We are told that his eye is on No. 10 Downing street, but, in view of his blatant and cynical actions over the past few weeks, I fear that he will never fulful that ambition.

Things were all meant to be so different. Membership of the ERM was to produce what has been described as a golden scenario—for the Tory party, but not for the country. With the aid of continental and Japanese forces the pound was to be marched to the top of the hill and interest rates were to be gradually marched down the other side. The reduction in interest rates would benefit what the Tory party sees as its natural constituents—the owner-occupiers in the south of England who have borrowed up to the hilt against their houses in order to purchase consumer goods, most of which are imported. They are the people in the property sector and the financial sector, which has doubled over the past 10 years, and generally people in the whole of the service sector. That means that most consumers will benefit from this golden scenario of keeping the pound high and bringing down interest rates.

Over the past 10 years, the Tory party has become the party of the consumer and not the party of the producer. The producers, mainly in manufacturing, were to be thrown to the wolves. They would suffer from the pound being marched up the hill. Of course, they would benefit from the reduction in interest rates, but the higher level of the pound would negate that benefit. Nobody cared about them, because producers have very few votes. The votes are with the consumers who are not worried about the high value of the pound and who benefit from a reduction in interest rates.

Crime has not paid and will not pay. After initial hysteria the market spotted the confidence trick. The Prime Minister's conversion to the ERM on the tarmac outside No. 10 Downing street and the simultaneous reduction in interest rates two days before the Tory party conference enabled the gnomes of Frankfurt, Paris and Tokyo to spot the confidence trick and they did not put into the pound the money that the Chancellor had hoped they would. As a result, the pound is ignominiously bumping along at the bottom of the ERM currency league. It went up a little today, but tomorrow it will be down again. The Spaniards are at the top of the league. They have high inflation and high interest rates. We have the highest interest rates in Europe, but the pound is at the bottom of the league. The question is not whether the interest rate will come down but whether the next stage should be to put it up to lift the pound and stop it being relegated to the Vauxhall Conference league, or whatever it is called.

There is a case for the ERM. It can be argued that fixed exchange rates, provided that they are ultimately adjustable—as they are—are more beneficial than floating exchange rates. That argument has been going on for years. It can also be argued that a country which is a member of a regional economic bloc such as the EC and which has 60 per cent. of its trade with that bloc should have some kind of fixed exchange rate with that bloc. The Euro-fanatics, of whom I am not one, argue that the EMS is part of the long march towards European monetary and economic union. They are right. Chancellor Schmidt, President Giscard d'Estaing and Lord Jenkins of Hillhead invented the exchange rate mechanism in 1978-79 because it was part of the fight to secure a common western European currency and a common, federal, western European state. If we believe in that, we must believe in the exchange rate mechanism and the European monetary system.

Let us not make the ridiculous claim that the EMS is some kind of substitute for a monetary policy that the Government have not got and a fiscal policy that they have never had—and now, apparently, part of an incomes policy that they said for 10 years they did not like or want. It will be remembered that in 1979 they brought down the Labour Government by voting against the 17 per cent. pay rise for Ford workers.

I do not believe that French inflation and German inflation are running at 3 per cent. because of the EMS. The French and the Germans have kept their inflation rates low for all kinds of reasons, but the main reason is institutional: their institutions do not create their credit base, as British institutions tend to do.

We are now told—absurdly—that our inflation can be brought down because the ERM will produce an incomes policy for the manufacturing sector. The argument goes something like this: those involved in manufacturing trade with Europe will settle for wage increases on the basis of German rather than British inflation—they will settle for 3 per cent. rather than 10 per cent.—and, apparently, the same approach will permeate the rest of the economy.

I find that argument extraordinary. The fallacy lies not only in the fact that the workers will not settle for 3 per cent., but in the fact that only 22 per cent. of them are employed in the trading sector: all the others work in finance, property and shops and stores. They are involved in consumption rather than manufacturing, and are affected neither by the ERM nor by the exchange rate in general. Even if we accept the proposition that manufacturing industry will settle for 3 per cent.—and I dispute it—why on earth should anyone else do so? What has happened to the market? The market has failed, and now the Government are trying to adduce the ERM as some kind of incomes policy.

With our inflation rate almost three times as high as the rates in France and Germany, our balance of payments deficit in manufacturing goods far the worst in Europe and our service and manufacturing industries economically so out of kilter, ERM entry has been merely a financial wheeze. I think that the former Chancellor used that phrase, and we all know what it means: Governments who are in a desperate economic and political state always resort to such wheezes. Most of them do not work, as this one will not.

I suspect that the irony of ironies for the Prime Minister, following her conversion, will be the fact that this latest financial wheeze will constitute the final nail in the coffin of her fourth term.

6.43 pm

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): We have heard some very good speeches. I am sure that everyone enjoyed that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson). Like other Conservative Members, and, probably, Opposition Members, I am sorry that he is to leave politics at the end of the current Session.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) castigated his Front Benchers with great aplomb. His argument was very persuasive, but, as he has always made clear his opposition to the Common Market, the ERM was for him a purely incidental element. My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) entertained the House with an excellent fighting speech, although I am bound to say that I did not agree with any of it.

Some time ago the Government made a commitment to enter the ERM when the conditions were right. Three conditions were cited: exchange control, the value of sterling, and, of course, inflation. The other Common Market countries have effectively abolished exchange control; the value of sterling has been fixed at DM2·95. As for inflation, we must remember that, while our current inflation rate is 10·9 per cent., the underlying rate—according to the formula used by our Common Market partners—is 8·3 per cent. The latest average Common Market rate is between 5 per cent. and 5·5 per cent. Surely it is wrong for us to compare our 10·9 per cent. only with the German inflation rate.

Presumably all hon. Members accept that, as a result of the Government's economic strategy under both the present Chancellor and his predecessor—the imposition of tight monetary control—inflation has shown a downward trend. If we refer to the money aggregates, whether we take sterling M0 or sterling M4, we must recognise the fall that has taken place over the past seven months. I am convinced that the Governnment's policy is working. Although the inflation rate may rise next month because of the rise in oil prices caused by the Gulf crisis, I am certain that it will start to fall rapidly next year, and will soon reach the Common Market average. It should not be forgotten that the other Common Market countries are also suffering from the oil price rise, and that their retail price indices are also affected.

Having accepted the premise that our inflation policy is working, we should consider what our position will be now that we are members of the ERM. There is still a good deal of work to be done. There is a certain amount of flexibility in the 6 per cent. band, which I hope will come down to 2·5 per cent. in due course; but we shall continue to suffer from the lack of competitiveness from which we have been suffering for some time.

I did not entirely understand the attitude of the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney towards full employment. No one owes each and every other person a job; we must live in the real world. It was, I feel, rather churlish of the right hon. Gentleman not to mention that, although we still do not have full employment, more people are in work today than were in work 10 or 11 years ago.

Another thing that I find disconcerting is the tendency—particularly noticeable among Opposition Members and in some sections of the press—to talk down the British economy, as though it were bankrupt. Credit is not given for increased production, employment and investment both in this country and overseas. Of the 50 top-performing companies in Europe, 28 are British. That is not a bad record.

What we should worry about is the unit labour cost. Of course, everyone wants the largest possible wage increase, but for some time it has erroneously been thought that the retail prices index—which is, as we know, a false inflation rate when compared with other European rates—is the automatic starting point in wage negotiations. Workers are therefore asking for 10·9 per cent. pay increases.

Clearly the only way in which companies in manufacturing industry—and, indeed, service industry—can stay in business is by being competitive. We have been down that road before, and in many cases we have priced ourselves out of the market and, therefore, out of jobs.

There is much talk about Britain being isolated. I do not object to that; indeed, we have been isolated before. Hon. Members will remember that we were isolated in the war, but we soldiered on. We were isolated in our attitude to the common agricultural policy, but it came right in the end. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor should ignore the criticism about isolation and concentrate on the hard ecu. Graham Bishop, the financial adviser to Salomon Brothers, wrote a good article on 12 October, and I commend it to the House. He says about the hard ecu that, whether one is investing or selling abroad, in order to have stability the component parts of the ecu should be frozen for three, four or five years so that there is some sort of horizon or limit on which business men can depend.

[Sir William Clark]

I do not agree with stages 2 and 3; we must see how stage 1 turns out. We cannot blindly run into stages 2 and 3—that must depend on the evolution of the market over the years. I do not doubt that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) will refer to credit controls in his speech. We have already been down that road. I cannot understand how we could possibly impose credit controls on, for example, Chase Manhattan bank. How do we persuade a Swiss bank to make a deposit ratio change? If we impose that sort of exchange control, businesses will go to foreign banks. We will be cutting off our nose.

As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor said, ERM is not a soft option; it is another weapon in the Treasury's armoury. The prime objective of that economic strategy is to squeeze inflation out of the economy. Inflation is the bugbear of any society, whether third world, western world or any other. It erodes savings and hits hard on the saver. It is especially hard on those with small incomes. Joining the ERM is not a soft option for the Chancellor and we must soldier on. I am sure that I speak for most of my hon. Friends in wishing our right hon. Friend every good fortune in his December meetings.

6.53 pm

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): It would be churlish of Opposition Members not to congratulate the Prime Minister and the Chancellor on having taken the historic step that we are debating today, even though it was taken not from a position of strength, but in a spirit of retreat and solemn ignominy.

Economic issues are, inevitably, boring, which is perhaps why economics is called the dismal science. However, there was one moment of exquisite parody on the day that Britain entered the ERM. The Prime Minister rushed out of her house into the street that she has purloined and there, behind huge electronic gates, she set up a little dais. Speaking as though, for all the world, she were the leader of a country called Ruritania, she said—and I am not kidding—"Today, we have achieved economic Nirvana. That blessed state"—for that is what Nirvana means—"has been attained on the crest of a rising tide of bankruptcies and the fact that inflation in Britain is no less than 327 per cent. higher than inflation in Germany. Miracles like this are not easy to achieve, but we have done it, and so today I can announce to the world that we are going to join our dear, dear friends in Europe in the ERM." Almost overcome with emotion, she was about to add, "Nun sind wir alles Deutsch freundlich", which roughly translated means, "We all love the Germans now." Her words were drowned in her tears of joy.

Of course, it is easy to be snide. If I were honest, I would have to say that my right hon. and learned Friend the shadow Chancellor and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition were uncharacteristically cruel in criticising the Prime Minister on her volte face on the Madrid conditions. I am not a cruel person, so I shall simply content myself with the observation that, in turning herself inside out and upside down, the right hon. Lady has shown that she is a political figure, not firm and strong, but rather one that was perfectly characterised in Churchill's description of Baldwin as

"decided to be undecided, resolved, to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all powerful for impotence."

That devastating line of attack was taken up yesterday in a full-page article in the *Evening Standard* by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen), who is in the Chamber. In a sentence, the one-page article said that the Prime Minister had betrayed her country and could no longer be trusted. I think that that is unfair. Then, plunging the dagger into the right hon. Lady's heart, her hon. Friend asked the rhetorical question,

"if she is prepared to give in over the ERM, what else is she prepared to give in over?"

I do not intend to attack the Chancellor, but if I had any criticism of him, it would be that he had joined the ERM at the wrong rate. He did that because he took the concept of purchasing power parity rather than the concept of the fundamental equilibrium exchange rate. He should have used the concept of the fundamental equilibrium exchange rate, because of the fall in the warranted rate of growth in Britain during the past 10 years.

When I asked the right hon. Gentleman about that in this House some months ago, he did not appear to know what it was. If he was carefully to study trends in the warranted rate of growth and do the proper regression analyses, he would quickly understand that I am right and he is wrong. Indeed, he has it so wrong that it is only a matter of time before every currency speculator in the world makes him and us pay the price in devaluation.

Of course, it may be that the Chancellor is a closet Keynesian and that he is going for the record—double digit devaluation inside the ERM. Since the ERM was formed in 1979, there have been 38 changes in the central rates of currencies, 16 of which have been devaluations. Hitherto, the largest devaluation was 8·5 per cent. in the Belgian and Luxembourg franc in 1982, and then the 8 per cent. devaluation in the Irish pound in 1986. For the Chancellor, it may be starters for 10 or even 15 per cent. There will be a painful price to pay.

In that regard—and this shows that I am an even-handed person—I think that the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) was right to say

"In the ERM the market dominates; with a single currency the market is overridden."

Every hon. Member knows that, although there is strength in the pooling of central reserves, the market can force Governments to devalue, even inside the ERM. I am not a devaluationist, and I believe that the way to avoid devaluation is to move from the ERM to the creation of a single European currency. The market cannot dominate inside a single European currency because the market is wiped out.

Instead of a pricing mechanism for adjusting differences in economic performance in different countries, we would have to correct the imbalances that occur under a single currency regime through new European regional policies backed by enhanced new European regional funds. In effect, as the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury has realised, we would replace a market mechanism with a planning mechanism. When the Prime Minister describes that as socialism through the back door she exaggerates, but there is a germ of truth in what she says.

What I cannot understand is why Opposition Members want the market mechanism and despise the new planning mechanism. Perhaps some of them will address their minds to that. The critics of the creation of a single European

currency, from whom we have heard a lot today, say that they are worried that Britain may be dragged, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century by foreigners. Of course, they are too polite; they do not put it quite like that. They say that they are worried about problems of identity, sovereignty and political accountability.

We can dismiss immediately what they say about identity and sovereignty. Identity is what the Scots have retained inside an economic and political union with the English. Sovereignty is a 17th century concept, shrouded in romantic historicism, on the part of those who look to the past because they cannot see the future.

Political accountability is a relevant concept. That is important. But the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) got it right. Many of the arguments about the political accountability of a central European bank running a single European currency are misplaced. Like the right hon. Gentleman, I believe that all central banks, including the Bundesbank and the Federal Reserve bank in America, are ultimately politically accountable.

I have three reasons for saying that about the Bundesbank. First, a bank that is set up by a Government can be removed by a Government. Secondly, although the Bundesbank is committed to creating stable prices, it is also pledged under its charter to act in a fashion that is consistent with Government policy. In practical terms, that simply means that it must create a monetary policy that will allow for economic growth, and what is wrong with that?

Thirdly, there is one example of the triumph of political accountability in Germany and that is the ferocious row that broke out over German monetary union between the politician Chancellor Kohl and the banker Karl Otto Pöhl. The politician won and the banker lost, because, as the banker told us when we questioned him in Frankfurt, in such rows the politicians always win because they control the democratic process.

I end with one comment on what my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) said. I do not want to criticise him; we do not do that in public, although he did rather attack the Opposition Front Bench. His Churchillian rhetoric seemed to rest on two serious economic mistakes and one lapse of memory. First, he seemed to be arguing that exchange rates are driven by current account balance of payment surpluses and deficits, as they used to be in the old days. That simply is not true. Secondly, he argued that countries which devalue avoid unemployment. That is nonsense. Thirdly, he seems to have forgotten that the last statutory prices and incomes policy in Britain was introduced by a Government not inside the ERM but one of which he was a member outside the ERM.

I am pleased that my right hon. Friends on the Opposition Front Bench have a new, invigorating and fresh approach to those ideas. We cannot live in a time warp.

7.3 pm

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): I had intended to be in my place at the opening of the debate and I apologise to the House for the fact that a massive blockage on the motorway prevented me from being so.

This is a debate in which passions run high, but I should stress that I in no way blame that event on the exchange rate mechanism. No one's passions run higher on this issue than those of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), who has all the zeal of the newly converted.

The Chancellor was right to join the ERM. He was right to join it when he did, and I even go so far as to say that the rate at which he joined was not at all inappropriate, because the economic situation as it was developing, where we had undoubtedly had an increase in inflationary pressures as a result of the reaction to the 1987 stock exchange crash and so on, had clearly reached a point where the interest rate that my right hon. Friends had rightly applied would have had an impact and made the economy turn.

As the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee pointed out, official Government forecasts invariably underestimate the size of a turning point, and in every successive cycle they have done so even more. There was a real danger—there may still be one—of recession. The Chancellor was therefore faced with a clear dilemma. If he had reacted to that possibility by cutting interest rates, the exchange rate would have collapsed and the effect on inflation would have been disastrous. The combination that he developed—of reducing the interest rate while at the same time taking us into the ERM—has got us out of the dilemma that he was facing. That is an important point which needs to be stressed.

The decision was the right one and it has not only a tactical advantage but a considerable strategic advantage. I believe profoundly that it is right to join the ERM but that it would be a massive mistake to go along the Delors road towards a single currency, and I shall say why in a moment.

We have joined the ERM and that increases our credibility in Europe. Mr. Delors sought to say that we were joining in order to prevent the making of any further progress, but I do not believe that that is so. However, it increases our credibility, and that is important in the negotiations that are about to take place in the context of the further development of monetary union.

As I have said at Question Time, the Chancellor of the Exchequer described Mr. Delors' idea that we were joining to stop things as rather rum. That was an apposite description—or perhaps "mot juste" would be the expression to apply to Mr. Delors. None the less, it is not right. We are clearly far better Europeans in many respects than the other members of the EC. However, there are some considerable dangers in joining the ERM.

I believe that the downward trend in inflation will be perpetuated, as the Chancellor has said, but once we are using interest rates to keep within the ERM we must give up any idea that we will establish a clear downward trend on interest rates. All kinds of random events may affect the exchange rate and require us to alter interest rates. That is a necessary consequence of the fact that we have joined the ERM. From a political point of view, that is a real problem.

A further problem is that it is possible that those in international markets will not view the Opposition's rather uncosted programmes in as favourable a light as those of the Government. Therefore, if there seems to be any real possibility of a Labour Government—there was not at the time of the last election—that in itself will exert a downward pressure on the exchange rate and an upward pressure on interest rates, unless the threat of a Labour

[Mr. Terence L. Higgins]

Government is such that we are forced to change the parity within the ERM. That is a danger which should be brought out.

In addition, we have the problem of inflationary pressures from wage settlements. There are already substantial downward pressures of that kind. But we must remember, I am almost inclined to say, dear old Harold Wilson's remark about one man's wage increase being another man's job. Like many of his clichés, it was a relevant and important statement of fact which, without using those exact words, we need to get over.

My other main point arises from the Chancellor's Mansion house speech. In the context of the ERM, my right hon. Friend remarked:

"Some commentators have suggested that interest rates are, in some sense, allocated to maintaining the exchange rate and are therefore not available to help achieve other objectives. They argue therefore that in consequence membership will require more active fiscal policy."

That is profoundly true. If one uses interest rates to control the exchange rate, it is necessary to have an alternative means of operating domestic policy. On many occasions, the two operate in the same direction. One may need both high interest rates and a tight fiscal policy. But sometimes one might need to use the interest rate to affect the exchange rate when the domestic economy requires something rather different.

The Treasury and Civil Service Committee's report on last year's Budget remarked:

"The Chancellor pointed out that, if inflationary pressures were reflected by the position of sterling in the mechanism, interest rates will be used to sustain an attack on inflation. But this would only be possible at a time when the inflationary pressures had become sufficiently clear to be reflected in the exchange rate. There may be times, as happened in 1987, when interest rates were lowered to keep the level of sterling down when they might have been raised to prevent the development of inflationary pressure."

It is not always the case that the needs of the exchange rate are the same as those of the domestic economy.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor said also in his Mansion house speech:

"I have no doubt that it would be a huge mistake to return to frequent mini-budgets and fiscal fine-tuning. It is not necessary, its effects are not wholly predictable, and, in my limited experience, one Autumn Statement and one Budget a year are quite sufficient!"

I am sure that we would all say, "Hear, hear" to that. Nevertheless, if the interest rate is allocated to fixing the exchange rate, fiscal policy may be needed to manage the domestic economy.

It is not only a question of fine tuning. One cannot avoid fine tuning by having an annual Budget. If there were a need for fiscal measures in October of any year, for example, it would be foolish to wait until the next Budget before introducing them.

Some years ago the Procedure Committee suggested an annual tax management Bill and a separate Bill concerned with managing the economy. In that context, I have almost come to the reverse conclusion. Perhaps there should be an annual tax management Bill at the time of the Budget, and another Budget as may be necessary for economic management at whatever time of the year may be appropriate. However, I agree entirely with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor that there should not necessarily be more than one a year.

My final point arises from the speech of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch in relation to a single currency. We simply have not got over the fundamental argument against a single currency. Many members of the public think that it is an attractive idea, and would avoid having to switch from one currency to another as one travelled around Europe. However, if we go for a single currency ahead of a high degree of economic integration in Europe, we shall be giving up the most important means of adjusting for differential changes over its geographical area—whether they relate to labour, capital, fuel, or other costs. The effect on unemployment in various regions of the European economy could be very serious.

I do not believe, as the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch suggested, that a massive European fund would be the answer. Our own experience in this country, over a much smaller geographical area, does not suggest that such funds are effective. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the money would be transferred. We might enter into a single currency system and then find that, as a result of increased costs in Spain, there was a consequential effect on unemployment. There is no guarantee that everyone else in Europe would cough up to bail out the Spanish. Such a situation would give rise to enormous political pressures. For proof of that, we have only to remember what happened on a small but disastrous scale in relation to the CAP negotiations.

I believe that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is right to take Britain into the exchange rate mechanism, and I shall support him in the Lobby this evening.

7.13 pm

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): The right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) is right in saying that, under the exchange rate mechanism, fiscal policy will once again come into its own. The right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) called Britain's entry to the ERM a momentous decision, and of course it is. I am in favour of exchange rate stability where it can be obtained, and the attempts made by the right hon. Member for Blaby to shadow the deutschmark were not unworthy. What I had against him was that the rate that he chose was wrong. It should have been much lower.

My awareness of all such matters draws on my background knowledge that many of our problems were caused by an overvalued exchange rate, and that fundamental mistakes were made in trying to deal with them.

In the post-war years, there were two important decisions to devalue, in 1949 and 1967. In both cases, the rate was maintained largely in response to American pressure—in 1949 because of the American loan, and in 1967 because of a personal commitment by Harold Wilson to Lyndon Johnson.

The first devaluation, from $4 to $2·40, was very successful, and led to the benefits that we obtained through the 1950s—so that when the Community was born, we considered ourselves too successful to take part even in the Messina talks.

Our success ended with the level of spending that was reached in the "never had it so good" years of Harold Macmillan. By 1964, we again faced an acute balance of payments crisis. I entered Parliament that year convinced

of the need to devalue. I was impressed by de Gaulle's devaluation, which was accompanied by deflation—a combination that I always thought made a great deal of sense. Devaluation opened opportunities abroad and restricted imports, while deflation released goods for export. I looked for a similar course of action to be followed in Britain, but our parliamentary majority was small, and I realised that devaluation might have to be postponed until we had a working majority.

It was with something approaching horror that I realised in the spring of 1966 that there was to be no devaluation. In the following months, I and Joel Barnett, now Lord Barnett, with whom I shared the chairmanship of the parliamentary Labour party's economic and finance group, called on Cabinet Ministers, urging on them the case for devaluation. Unfortunately, the response was slow. By 1967, devaluation from $2·80 to $2·40 was forced on the Government. It was not enough in my view, but it did give industry some help, and by 1969 we achieved a balance of payments surplus.

It will be seen that fundamental adjustments were required before both devaluations. In the first instance, we had to adjust from dealing with the problems of the war years. In the second, it was a case of adjusting to the aftermath of the boom created by Harold Macmillian. As we all know, devaluation helps exports and reduces imports. It helps all industry, and manufacturing industry in particular. It can have inflationary consequences, but there is a time lag before they manifest themselves, and one can use it to limit their effects.

The City does not like devaluation. It wants a strong pound not for the reasons one might think, but because of the better investment opportunities that it offers. In deciding between manufacturing industry and the City, Governments are sometimes neutral. Occasionally they favour the City, as did the present Government initially, before realising that our balance of payments depends mainly on manufacturing industry providing tradeable goods—the largest part of our exports.

Other Governments favoured industry. Like all post-war Governments, they worried about inflation, and in the end always chose the easy way of reducing it, by operating a high exchange rate. But the price for that has to be paid in the form of lost exports and yet another decline in Britain's manufacturing processes. We are again left with exhortations to reduce pay demands and so maintain an overvalued exchange rate.

We have seen time and again a high level of optimism about our prospects, but we are entering the ERM against a background of economic failure. We have suffered nothing less than an economic failure despite the enormous advantages of North sea oil. We squandered our oil revenues, time has run out, so we have returned to the exchange rate mechanism.

In *The Sunday Times* of 25 February this year, the Prime Minister said that

"As the right policies"—

she was still very optimistic at that stage—

"were kept going"—

that is, throughout the whole period of this Government—

"economic growth and productivity would start to rise again."

The article continued:

"Then, watch out, France and West Germany. 'My ambition is that we catch up with France . . . And then we catch up with Germany.' That is the kind of nonsense that we hear from time to time, but rarely to quite such an extent."

The Government have gone through three phases. The first was the phase during which they said, "Pay demands don't matter; the money supply will be the master." When that nonsense subsided, after ruining 20 per cent. of our industry—in my constituency, I am sorry to say that it ruined 30 per cent. of well-run small businesses between 1979 and 1981—and when that policy failed, the Government resorted to the second standby, which was exhortation. I have nothing against exhortation, but it is not a policy in itself. Eventually, it is seen to be inadequate and other policies are looked for.

The third phase involved the ERM. There are two ways of looking at the ERM. One can look at it as a way of obtaining some stability in currency markets. I am not against that—I am in favour of it—but the Government want more than stability. They want to use the mechanism to discipline industry and to punish workers with threats of unemployment and factory closures. The right hon. Member for Blaby dealt with that. If ERM will not do that, European monetary union will be even less forgiving.

Some hope that enthusiasm for EMU will lead to a continuing strong role for the City of London. I fear that Frankfurt is likely to follow Tokyo in the fulfilment of the principle that markets follow money—and I believe that, eventually, markets do, indeed, follow money. The City was born on the back of the greatest industrial centre in the world. New York followed suit. If there is a case for EMU, it is not that it will help us to retain London as the European financial centre. We need to bear in mind Winston Churchill's comment that we should make finance less proud and industry more content. That is more needed than ever before. Of course, we must help the City of London as a revenue earner but not at the expense of our industry.

What are the prospects for a European central bank? I read with interest the article by my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice). He suggested that Britain would have a representative and that the bank might have to report to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Controlling a central bank in one country is difficult enough. I saw the day-to-day tussles here, where the central bank is nationalised. As we know, it is even more difficult in Germany. Our problems with regional policy and our problems in obtaining agreement because of language difficulties are underrated. To think in terms of other countries paying for our regional policy when we cannot even pay for a proper regional policy ourselves is to live in a dreamland.

Why did we nationalise the Bank of England? We nationalised it because it had too much economic power. We have forgotten all of that. Why did the move have the support of prominent Conservatives such as Bob Boothby? An international bank will have immense powers, although it will supposedly be controlled by different people from different countries with different views and different languages. How can one achieve such control? Since when have politicians—let alone the Labour party—been such friends of the bankers that they have wanted to hand over to them authority in the day-to-day running of monetary policy for the whole of

[Mr. Robert Sheldon]

Europe? We cannot be sure that our Prime Minister will be as powerful as the chairman of such a central bank. What an abrogation of power.

It is arguable that Montague Norman, formerly Governor of the Bank of England, did more to create a picture of Britain between the wars than Ramsay MacDonald or Baldwin. Can we really suggest that such a powerful figure could be controlled by the European Parliament? Such a figure will run rings around it and around the divisions in it. In day-to-day operations, even the Council of Ministers will find itself outranked.

When we look at the limited powers of the Bank of England and the Fed in Washington, we find powers far less extensive than those that some of us are prepared to accept. I used to consider that I had an obligation to explain the motives of bankers to my hon. Friends and say that they were not the cruel people so many thought them to be. I now find myself having to question my hon. Friends' admiration. Why have we come to love the bankers whom we used to criticise so harshly? The reason seems to be that we are looking for a panacea—a way out of difficulties of our own making. There is no panacea: we shall rise by our own efforts or not at all.

7.24 pm

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): The right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) has taken us on an intriguing historical tour. I am sure that he was as amazed as I was to hear an hon. Member on the left wing of the Labour party advocating a single European currency. I wonder why the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) did that. Is it because he knows that the reforms introduced by the Government—the entrenchment of the free market and the complete reform of the trade unions—cannot be overturned by an incoming Labour Government but could be overturned by centralisation through Europe? That is why the hon. Gentleman has done a complete about-turn. His speech provided us with a fascinating insight into the thinking of some on the left wing of the Labour party.

I support the Chancellor's policy of entry into the ERM. I feel that we should have entered the mechanism somewhat earlier, and we heard a fascinating speech from my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) in that regard. I have a feeling that much of my right hon. Friend's policy depended critically on earlier entry into the ERM. Perhaps if we had entered earlier inflation would not have taken off as it did and perhaps we should not have the very high interest rates that we have at the moment. That is all speculation. I welcome entry, with certain reservations.

The firms in my constituency also appear to welcome entry into the ERM. Many of them are light industrial businesses, some of them small—and many of them now export their products to Europe. They are very pleased that they can now have much more firm ideas about the position of our currency. In the past, far too much management time was taken up in playing the currency markets and in hedging the currency. Firms now know where they stand, and that will enable them to compete better with their European counterparts. They are feeling the pressure of high interest rates, and they certainly welcome the recent 1 per cent. cut in interest rates.

Some firms in haulage, construction and retailing are feeling the pinch especially badly. Haulage firms are extremely worried about rising fuel costs, although the position was ameliorated somewhat by the fall of a few days ago. The Treasury must be rubbing its hands with glee in view of the increase in revenues from taxation on fuel oil. Could not some of that extra money be forgone? Could not the Treasury ensure that the Government continued to take what they were taking before while reducing taxation on fuel oils? That would help many firms in Norfolk. I know that my hon. Friend the Paymaster General is listening carefully because he has similar firms in his constituency, and they are also concerned about the rise in fuel costs.

We are at an important crossroads and this debate brings into sharp focus the question of where we go from here. We could follow the Jacques Delors route towards an integrated federal states of Europe, but I believe that it is riddled with pitfalls and has serious disadvantages. For a start, there would undoubtedly be a major derogation of sovereignty. I am in favour of derogating sovereignty over certain matters. The environment is a case in point because pollution knows no frontiers or boundaries. But the derogation of political control and contol in foreign policy matters that would undoubtedly flow from economic integration would be a grave disadvantage. Moreover, it would emasculate the sovereignty of the Queen in Parliament. That matter has not been touched on today except by my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash).

If we follow the Delors route, we shall have a centralised bureaucratic power. We shall have a form of market socialist control. Of course Jacques Delors wants that; he is a market socialist. Of course he wants power at the centre. If we follow his route, we shall have a close-knit, inward-looking club that will not want new members coming in from outside. It will be far more difficult for countries such as Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia—the newly emerging democracies—to come into Europe.

Advocates of a federal European solution have already said that they do not want Europe to expand too quickly. Indeed, my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) spoke in those terms the other day. Furthermore, if we follow the Delors route, our relations with America and the advanced Commonwealth countries would also be jeopardised and any idea that we could form closer trade links with those countries would be imperilled.

Many people have no idea what all this means and there is a danger that we will sleepwalk into a federal states of Europe. Jacques Delors has already said that he wants a federal Europe by stealth, and that worries me. People should know what is happening and that this Government advocate an alternative route to the Delors route. They advocate entering ERM and drawing lines under it stating that there should be not one single step beyond it.

I could certainly go along with a hard ecu. I do not want to go any further than that because a loose grouping of sovereign states have control over their own destinies. Their traditions and characters can be seen at their best. That is the way forward. Today we have heard nothing about the single market. It is crazy to begin to talk about going further forward until we get the single market to work. The United Kingdom is at the forefront in implementing the 230-odd measures for the single market.

In fact, we are well ahead of many of our European counterparts in that regard. However, until we get that process moving, even to consider stage 2 is ludicrous.

We should advocate the alternative course. We would have control over our foreign policy and over so many other aspects of domestic policy which would disappear out the window if we were to opt for the federal solution. Consider the current mess in the CAP and the discussions intended to sort out farm prices. It is clear that there is a complete shambles there.

If we are considering seriously derogating our foreign policy to a group of countries whose response to the Gulf crisis was supine and pathetic, we should think again and consider the consequences of the policies advocated by the so-called federalists.

We are at a very important crossroads. There should be far more opportunities for the people of this country to decide their future. The House must decide where we go from here and there should perhaps be a referendum. In today's debate some political hatchets have been buried, and that is very comforting. ERM membership is a momentous step forward, but the steps that are likely to be taken after entry will be far more momentous. This is indeed a time to bury political and party-political hatchets. Anyone who, like me, believes passionately that we should not go a single step further should vote for the future generations of this country.

7.32 pm

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): There has been some criticism tonight of the Government about the timing of ERM entry. The real issue is not whether the timing was a week before or a week after the Conservative party conference. The Government are vulnerable on the question of timing because the decision was taken without any policy preparation for the consequences of entry. It was a bit rich for the Chancellor to go to the Mansion house and explain to the City and to prominent industrialists afterwards the implications of his policy. That should surely have been done beforehand and preparation made.

The Scottish National party supports the decision to enter ERM. We are extremely aware of the difficulties that entry will produce for the exchange rate mechanism, for our European partners, for sterling and for the United Kingdom. The euphoria generated by the initial decision to enter was unjustified. Indeed, many of today's speeches sounded very much like the morning after the night before.

There are two basic problems with sterling's entry into the ERM. The first is the problem that it creates for our European partners; it is significant that no one in this debate so far has considered entry from the point of view of the rest of the Community.

Basically, the ERM has worked because the deutschmark has been the dominant currency and the other currencies have revolved around it like planets revolving around the sun in the solar system. Taking sterling into the ERM introduces a major international investment currency, 90 per cent. of the value of which is dominated and determined not by trade flows, but by capital movements. It is not like introducing another planet into the solar system. Rather, it is like introducing an alternative sun. A great tension will develop in the polarity between the two major currencies within the ERM. There is at least as much chance of sterling's entry destabilising the ERM as there is of ERM stabilising sterling. The Chancellor actually claimed a virtue of the fact that he had not consulted our European partners before taking his decision on entry and thus did not display the kind of attitude that will be necessary if we are to make a success of entry into the ERM.

The second problem about ERM entry is traditional for the United Kingdom; it is the problem of having an overvalued currency and a weak economy, a strong pound and weak industry.

The "economic consequences of Mr. Churchill" have already been referred to. We should remember that on reflection in later years Churchill wrote:

> "I was called the worst Chancellor in British history and looking back I am inclined to agree".

He wrote that about the 1925 decision on the gold standard. I do not believe that such a consequence will befall the present Chancellor, if only because he faces strong competition for the title of the worst Chancellor in British history from his two immediate predecessors.

On consideration, I believe that the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) is somewhat protected from that title because he simply generated an unsustainable boom. However, the present Leader of the House stands accused of having generated an unnecessary slump in the early 1980s.

I can understand the chagrin with which the right hon. Member for Blaby described the present policies on the exchange rate mechanism. After all, it is only a year since he was forced to resign for pursuing exactly the same policy that is now pursued by the entire Cabinet. However, he can at least take some satisfaction from the fact that the consequences of the present policy will have to be faced up to by the present Chancellor and not everything that goes wrong with Government economic policy can be blamed for ever on the mistakes of the right hon. Member for Blaby.

When the consequences are confronted, it will be obvious that pious exhortations to the bosses in the City and elsewhere to pay their workers less to make the policy a success will simply not do. When sterling starts to bump along the bottom of its banding, some very hard choices will have to be faced. It will not be good enough to commit reserves, because sterling is such a major currency that even the reserves of the whole of Europe would be used up quickly in trying to defend an unsustainable position. The hard choice will be between interest rate rises and deep cuts in the Government's fiscal policy.

To borrow a phrase, the cost of "bucking the market" will be very high indeed. When the pressure is felt, the Government and the Opposition Front Bench will have to answer a question that they have dodged throughout this debate: when the pressure is on, will they move forward to further monetary integration or backwards and break the system of which they wanted to be a member?

To claim that the hard ecu is the solution to the dilemma is not good enough. If it is treated as anything more than a diversion by the other European countries, we must realise that a hard ecu, if not monetary union or a single currency by transition, is a single currency by stealth in much the same way as shadowing the deutschmark was entry into the exchange rate mechanism by stealth. For the political health of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, I only hope that the Prime Minister does not

[Mr. Alex Salmond]

rumble this device in the way that she eventually rumbled the right hon. Member for Blaby. If that happens, the present Chancellor will also become "unassailable".

Our difficulty, from a Scottish point of view, is the realisation that these hard choices are not really relevant to Scotland's economic position. Over the past year, we in Scotland have faced penal interest rates in an economy which is nowhere near overheated. I do not think that even the Chancellor would claim that the Scottish economy is in a state of overheating, so great are the underused resources in the economy. Yet we have had to suffer the interest rate regime designed to tackle economic overheating in the south-east of England.

The Secretary of State for Scotland says that we should be grateful because that measure is doing less damage to the Scottish economy than it is doing to the economy of the south-east of England. He is apparently oblivious to the fact that Scottish industry is probably more dependent on interest rates and the interest rate regime than industry elsewhere in the country. It is bad enough having to suffer high interest rates when one is suffering from the overheating disease, but it adds insult to injury to have to swallow the medicine without having the condition in the first place.

The exchange rate mechanism offers a sensible option for smaller currencies. Certainly, an independent Scottish currency would fit comfortably into the exchange rate mechanism in the same way in which other small currencies of Europe currently fit. We would not have the same hard choices which confront sterling and from which the two Front Benches are currently running away.

My last point is about attitudes, and it is a plea for a change of attitudes as we face monetary union. When I looked at the unfortunate and unpleasant article in *The Spectator* recently, it struck me that the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was not really talking about the Germans, the French, the Irish or other nations whom he disparaged; he was actually talking about England. *The Spectator* was absolutely right to head the article "Speaking for England". The underlying message was that, having lost an empire, England is now frightened of losing a currency and yet more self-determination over her own affairs. Albeit more elegantly, the right hon. Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) touched the same chord when he said that he was frightened of "foreigners"—I think that I have quoted him exactly—controlling the economic destiny of England.

There are real issues to be faced in monetary union—for example, productivity throughout the Community—to stop high productivity regions sucking in capital and labour from lower productivity regions. There is also the question whether it is compatible with the expansion of the Community to include eastern European nations. That is another real question which must be faced. If there is valid tension between broadening the Community and deepening the Community, it will have to be addressed. However, unless these questions are addressed in a genuinely positive fashion by people who are anxious to make a success of the EC our partners in the rest of Europe will understandably say, "These are not real arguments or real issues presented by the United Kingdom; it is merely more blocking and tackling from a country that is refusing to grow up and to drive forward."

7.42 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion) I should like at once to congratulate the Government on their decision to join the exchange rate mechanism. I do not think that it will do much to help our inflation, but it is of great importance in a broader sense. Unless we had joined, we could not really have had a seat at the table and discussed the future of the monetary evolution of the European Community. That matter is immensely important to us and will be before us next month. We could not really have gone to the December talks and made any sense unless we had been in the ERM, nor could we really talk seriously about the reconstruction of Germany and eastern Europe. That will require more than German effort; it will require European and, I dare say, American effort as well, bearing in mind all the difficulties that our American friends have and the extent to which they can afford to help.

We must not underrate the impact on the existing ERM of the burden that will have to be taken up in the reconstruction of Germany and eastern Europe. I do not think that even in Bonn people yet have the foggiest idea of how much it will cost them and, in turn, how much it will cost us.

We now belong to a deutschmark zone, as foreseen by my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) in a pregnant article in *The Spectator* quite a long time ago. That brings us to what we might call the German peril. My right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), in his famous interview in *The Spectator*, and my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) have drawn attention to their views on that matter. All hon. Members have been aware of the problem. The question is how we are to meet it. Do we meet it best from being inside the Community, where we may find allies if need be, or do we meet it better from being outside and alone, or almost alone? If the Americans have a penchant for any other special relationship, it is indeed with Germany. We must ask ourselves a simple question: would we prefer to have our financial affairs dictated by the Bundesbank or by some agency over which we have some influence, limited though it may be?

The German Chancellor, for whom I have the greatest regard, has been setting the pace, both in respect of the common agricultural policy and now the timetable for the agenda of the forthcoming meeting in Rome. He has said that the second stage of the approach to European monetary union should be in 1994. I ventured to interrupt my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask whether, instead of just saying that we did not like the idea or that we had good grounds for not liking it, we could say, "Okay, 1994, if you accept the hard ecu proposal." It is perhaps an opportunity.

May I now say a word about the problem of sovereignty? There is a widespread feeling in the House that, if we are not careful, we shall go down a road that will turn the House into something that is not much more than a glorified county council. What is sovereignty? It is total freedom to do whatever we wish. It existed, I suppose, in Britain in the days of Palmerston. General de Gaulle tried to achieve it for France, with his policy of defence against all horizons. But what does sovereignty mean today?

One or two distinguished speeches—for example, by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr.

Shore)—were about seeking the right to inflate or devalue. There is here a very respectable case—I am not joking about it. William Jennings Bryan said:

"you should not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

Keynes said that, in certain circumstances, it might be desirable to reflect the economy. That could happen again, but it does not seem likely at the moment.

I wish to relate all that to something. For several generations we were on the gold standard. The gold standard worked extremely well for a long time, but it produced industrial and social disadvantages that were so serious that, in 1931, we opted out. The moral that I am trying to draw is that the House of Commons does not surrender sovereignty. Nothing that we decide today can bind another Parliament, and nothing that we do can bind another Parliament. Another Parliament can make other decisions, just as happened in 1931 when Parliament decided to abandon the gold standard and we moved to the sterling area. That committed us to certain obligations, as well as conferring certain advantages. When in the 1970s the obligations became heavier than the advantages, we and some of our partners decided that we had had enough.

Nothing that we decide here is irrevocable. If we do not like what is put before us at the next stage of European monetary union, we need not sign it. If we do sign it and it does not work, we can pull out. We did that with the gold standard, with sterling and with the empire preferences. The French did it with NATO. No Parliament can bind another unless the latter is occupied by enemy troops. If anybody thinks that our present Secretary of State for Defence or our Home Secretary are shock troops for Delors, he or she had better think again.

When considering the next stage of European monetary union, the test that we must apply is whether there is a better road or an alternative policy that would suit us better. Is there a "better 'ole?" That is what we must examine in some detail. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) that we are a long way from any sort of federal arrangement in Europe. We need only look at the response of the different members of the Community to the crisis in the Gulf where there was no sign of federal co-operation.

Much has happened since the Paris-Bonn axis was first created in the days of de Gaulle and Adenauer when the French were convinced that they would be the jockey riding the German horse. There have been enormous changes: German union, the liberation of eastern Europe, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the recession in the United States, to say nothing of the middle eastern crisis. Today, everything is in flux and no blueprint that has been produced by Delors or anybody else is acceptable. I do not know whether there will be a single currency unit. Whose image or whose superscription will it bear? As to a single bank, we shall be lucky if we get a single reserve bank. However, with our experience of the sterling area and the world economy, we would do better if we were in on the act and able to contribute as much wisdom as we can and as we have both to our advantage and to the general advantage.

7.52 pm

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): I wish to make several points about a decision with which I disagree. I do not disagree with it in principle because I am not anti-European and I look forward to a united Europe.

I reject completely the arguments that have been made by many hon. Members—I know that they were made with complete conviction—concerning the sovereignty of Parliament. On any comparison of this Parliament with those of the other European nations, we can be seen to be lacking in virtually every measure, whether it be control of the Executive, the way in which we carry out our business, or the lack of a proper committee system—although we have the rudiments of that now. We cannot therefore hold up the sovereignty of Parliament as something that may be lost because nothing in our parliamentary structure is superior to anything in the structures of our major European partners in the Common Market.

My objection to entry is that the rate at which we have entered the ERM is profoundly wrong. It will add 750,000 people to the ranks of the unemployed as a permanent structural feature of our economy. It will lock us into years of massive industrial struggles over wages. It will be a disaster. Irrespective of which party sits on which Bench in the next Parliament, I predict that the next Government will devalue the pound within the exchange rate mechanism and the ERM will most probably lock us into a series of further devaluations in the years to come.

Many hon. Members of all parties have formed the impression that the strength of the more dynamic European economies in the past 20 or 30 years was created by the exchange rate mechanism. That is nonsense. The ERM came about because the major European countries within the Common Market had achieved roughly similar rates of growth and roughly similar increases in productivity and were thus much more able to link their currencies. To tie the British economy, with its much lower rate of productivity increases, into the economies of our major European competitors will be to lock us into something that can best be characterised by the relationship between the Scottish and English economies following the Union.

As I have said, I am not opposed to ERM entry in principle. If the Government had entered the ERM at DM2·40 and had created a series of other measures to shift our economy into major export-led growth, I believe that it would have worked, but this is a gimmick to get the Government through the next election. Irrespective of the outcome of that election, there will be massive pain for the British people at virtually every level of society as a result. Again, I must emphasise that I am not anti-European or anti-entry into the exchange rate mechanism in principle.

Many of my hon. Friends have been unduly influenced by the Prime Minister's reluctance. They have assumed that the Prime Minister's reluctance means that there was something to be said in favour of ERM entry now. However, it will be our constituents who will bear the burden of unemployment that will flow from this. Hon. Members who have a rabid enthusiasm for entry into the exchange rate mechanism at this level will have to explain it to their constituents as unemployment mounts relentlessly in the weeks and months to come.

After 11 years in office, the Government have created a major economic crisis. There is a lot of crowing about the most recent trade figures, but the underlying pattern is devastatingly bad for Britain. It is easy to construct any argument by picking out a particular year or the shift in exports from manufactures to services. However, when one looks at the proportion of our GDP given to imports as opposed to exports, and compares the beginning of the Government's period in office with now, one sees that the

[Mr. Ken Livingstone]

picture is stark. Compared with when the Government came into office 11 years ago, there has been only a slight increase in imports as a proportion of GDP. The figure is 0·1 per cent. However, we have lost exports amounting to 3·5 per cent. Anyone who thinks that those figures do not matter should remember that each percentage point of GDP represents £5 billion. That is devastatingly bad news. Whichever party governs Britain in the 1990s must turn that problem around if it is to make any sense of the economy.

This is the same old problem that we have seen before. That is why I was somewhat less than enthused when I heard the reaction of my own Front Bench to the decision to enter the exchange rate mechanism. In response to the questions, "Would you reduce the exchange rate under the system?" and "Are you happy at the rate at which we have gone in?", I heard my very good friend the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) say, "That is the rate that we shall have to defend as a point of honour." If my right hon. and learned Friend really believes that, he is setting himself up to be the Harold Wilson of the 1990s, defending a completely unrealistic exchange rate.

As my hon. Friends—on both the left and the right of my party—have said in this debate, our exchange rate is about 20 per cent. over-valued if we are serious about being a manufacturing and exporting nation. However, the Government are not interested in that. Their primary concern has been the defence of City interests. The Government faced a simple choice when deciding the level at which to set our entry into the exchange rate mechanism. They could set a level to benefit the City, which they did, or a level that could benefit British manufacturing. Once again, the City won and British manufacturing lost and it will be locked into further decline in the years to come.

It is not just a question of entering the exchange rate mechanism. The reality is that we have been locked into a relative economic decline for over a century. Government after Government—of all colours—have presided over a decline, each year being prepared to accept an increase in the rate of inflation of 1, 2 or even more percentage points worse than those of our major competitors. Each year, the Government were prepared to see 1, 2, 3 or 4 per cent. less investment in our economy than was made by our major competitors. The consequence has been a loss of productivity compared to our major competitors who have achieved greater increases in their productivity year by year. All that it has taken to turn the most powerful industrial economy in the world into the 29th or 30th-ranking economy was the attitude that we should decline gracefully. Nothing about the decision to enter the ERM will break us out of that continuing graceful decline.

We are locking ourselves into a position of weakness. We could have entered in a position of strength, prepared to defend our manufacturing sector by entering at a more realistic rate or even a rate that was under-valued. Let us remember that in their reconstruction after the war Japan and West Germany made damned certain that they started a pattern of growth by having an under-valued exchange rate. They set out to create a solid manufacturing base. Therefore, I should have been happy to support entry into the ERM at DM2·40 or DM2·50, but I am not happy with the level at which we have entered.

The Government ignore the other issues which arise out of our entry, irrespective of the level set. If we are to reverse the crippling decline in manufacturing in Britain, which has led to a crippling decline in exports as a proportion of our national wealth, various other measures must be taken. If we had entered at a more realistic rate, we should have seen a much more rapid and dramatic cut in interest rates. We could have seen a rapid reduction of perhaps 2 or 3 per cent. in the rate of interest if we had entered the ERM at a rate which was more realistic for manufacturing.

The Government would also have had to find ways to protect the poorest elements in society. A reduction in the exchange rate and a devaluation along the lines that I and many of my colleagues would want—my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) argued for it—would need to be balanced by measures to protect the poorest members of society from the impact of the inflation that would feed into the system. Devaluation would have to be tied into a reduction in the basic rate of value added tax. I recognise that it would be unrealistic, given the state of the economy, to allow a major increase in consumer spending, so I should have been happy to balance it by restoring the top rate of tax. To create a growing and dynamic export-led expansion, we should have been prepared to defend the weakest sections in the community, who have done so badly in the past decade at the expense of those who have done so well.

Every economist tells us that the more the Government pump money into the poorest sections of the community, the more those people are likely to spend it on domestically produced goods. A redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor helps the basic structure of our balance of payments and the construction of a solid manufacturing base.

I do not accept the arguments of my hon. Friends who say that we have declined because we entered the Common Market or that we are about to decline because we have entered the ERM. We are declining because we failed to take the firm measures required to shift the whole balance of the British economy. Entry into the ERM has not resolved that problem, and it will not resolve it for the next Labour Government. We must take other measures to solve our problems.

8.2 pm

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): The hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) may be surprised to know that I agreed with some of his points about devaluation. As I listened to the debate I realised that I could not contribute much that was distinctive to it other than by considering the subject from a practical point of view. Many people from outside observing the debate might remark that an employer in manufacturing industry, for example, was under-represented in the debate. They might remark on how much theoretical talk there was and how little the practical implications as they might affect someone with a manufacturing concern in Wolverhampton were discussed.

If I had had the privilege of catching your eye earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should have attempted to speak with the passion and eloquence of my right hon. Friend the

Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen). He is an earlier and more distinguished pupil of the Powell academy. He and I share most of the Powell prejudices. We are in favour of floating exchange rates. We are against foreign domination and on the whole we are in favour of some hypocrisy, but not too much.

A manufacturing employer from Wolverhampton might think as he listened to the debate that the arguments of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in favour of stability were attractive. "Stability," he would say "how much I want that." He would have been like the hypochondriac lady who would be much attracted to the doctor who could suggest to her the mystery of eternal life and no illness. He would have said, "Ah, stability, that is what the Chancellor is promising us." He would also have been much attracted by the argument that inflation is mainly caused by the working class. After all, that is what he would have preached to his foreman day in and day out. When he heard that disagreeable exchange between my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) and the Duke of Devonshire's gamekeeper, he would have hoped that there was no such impertinent person in his work force when he was lecturing his employees on the need to keep down inflationary wage claims.

The manufacturer would have been attracted by the argument about stability. He would have thought about the inconvenience of needing to insure and hedge against exchange rate changes. He would have thought with gratifying pleasure that that great man the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told him that there could in no circumstances be devaluation. How dangerous that illusion would be. How wickedly dangerous.

We were fortunate that the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) reminded us that there have already been many important devaluations within the ERM. For instance, let us look forward even to the next general election. For the sake of argument, let us assume that there is downward pressure on the exchange rate and that it drops towards DM2·88 or whatever the bottom figure is.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): DM2·95.

Mr. Budgen: DM2·95 is the centre figure. DM2·88 is the lower figure. Whatever the lower figure, it is a market figure and market figures are affected by wholly irrational factors. For the sake of argument, the market may want a Labour Government after the next election. It may want a left-wing Conservative Government or a right-wing Conservative Government. People may be punting on the pound because of their view about who will win the next football match. None of us knows about the work of the unknown hand of the market.

If it is necessary just before the next election to increase interest rates by 3 per cent. or, for the sake of argument, to raise the rate of taxation by 10p, are the Government likely to do so? Is it not likely that, however humiliating a conversation the Chancellor is forced to have with Herr Pöhl or whoever is our dominator in Europe, he would prefer to suffer that than risk being absolutely certain to lose the next general election? Yet this very day my right hon. Friend the Chancellor in effect said to the business man in Wolverhampton, "Do not worry about the possibility of a fluctuating exchange rate. Do not hedge against the risk that the pound may alter against the deutschmark. I tell you that there will be no devaluation." As I said, those of us who were brought up in the Powell school like a little hypocrisy. We do not believe in telling people too much of the unvarnished truth, but that is taking it a bit far. Is it not a little dangerous to start by saying in a macho way that there will certainly be no devaluation?

Let us consider the medium term. Can we be satisfied that we can keep going on the basis of some form of co-ordination between European banks, some intervention from time to time from European banks and perhaps from time to time the occasional devaluation? Can we have anything approaching stability without going towards irrevocably locked exchange rates? If that happens, it will, as the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) has already suggested, be a short step to a single currency.

Surely Sir Alan Walters was right when he said that there was a case for a floating exchange rate. If one was not worried about the sovereignty arguments there might be a case for a single currency of Europe. There is nothing to be said, however, for this half-baked system of the ERM.

Whatever else we do tonight we should reject the cruel illusion that ERM is a great magic system that can give people the stability they desire—in real life we can promise that to no one. If we pretend that that system will bring stability, and if people make commercial judgments in that belief, we will condemn them to bankruptcy, illusion and disappointment.

8.10 pm

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): The Government, having pushed the country into a dangerous recession, were under pressure to reduce interest rates. Once they did that, however, they were frightened of the effect on the pound and inflation and thus collapsed into the ERM. We may well have further interest rate cuts and things may look good for the country for about nine months or perhaps a year—presumably by that time the Government hope that there will have been an election. Whichever party is in power after that election, however, it will face pressure on the pound and a major economic crisis.

I believe that entry into the ERM is a grave error and is a major blunder that will cause great damage to our national interest. In preparation for this debate I refreshed my memory of the policy of the Labour party. I studied the policy review document "Meet the Challenge: Make the Change", which says:

> "We believe that the European monetary system, as present constituted, suffers from too great an emphasis on deflationary measures . . . we oppose moves towards European monetary union which would further impede progress in this area. Substantial changes would therefore be required before the next Labour Government could take sterling into the exchange rate mechanism."

The document spells out that four conditions would have to be met for such entry. It states that we would need a European Community-wide trade policy to contribute to balance of trade stability for individual members. Given that we have a deficit of £16 billion with the European Community, we certainly do not have that. The document also states that we need a co-ordinated Community-wide growth policy, but we certainly do not have that. It also states that the pound would have to enter at a rate and on conditions which would ensure that British goods became and remained competitive. Given that the exchange rate is

[Mr. Ron Leighton]

nearly DM3 to the pound, we are certainly far from achieving the necessary conditions. The House will note therefore that my remarks follow the main thrust of Labour party policy as decided by our conferences.

The ERM means that we shall peg the parity of the pound not to the dollar—the dollar is going down and it would be helpful if the pound came down with the dollar as many things are priced in dollars—or to the yen, but to the deutschmark because the ERM is a deutschmark zone. We are therefore going to peg the pound to the currency of the country with which we have an enormous deficit. That is crazy economics. If we are to prosper, we must reverse that deficit, and to imagine that we can do so by linking the pound to the deutschmark is stretching credulity too far. We are being locked to an exchange rate which will ensure that that trade deficit will continue in perpetuity.

Pegging the pound to the deutschmark is the new, fashionable, fanciful theory. It is the latest nostrum and magic to solve our problems, but in effect it subordinates reality to theory. It subordinates the real economy to abstract notions. It subordinates people—flesh and blood—to the so-called iron laws of mistaken economics. We are doing things the wrong way round. Money should fit the real economy rather than the economy fit the money. Money should be our servant, not our master.

The concept of pegging the pound to the deutschmark is an arid dogma similar to putting the pound on the gold standard, and we know what that led to. The last strange dogma we encountered was the monetarism of the 1980s. That dogma led to an overvalued pound, we lost a quarter of British industry and the unemployment rate was pushed up to more than 2 million people. I did not become a Labour Member to support a huge increase in unemployment, but entry to the ERM will cause just that.

The new fanciful theory says that we should aim at convergence, which means that we should have the same productivity level as West Germany. I cite West Germany as it is the key country and I make no criticism of it as I have great admiration for that country. That convergence means that we should have the same productivity, growth, rate of investment, inflation rate and interest rates as Germany. It is a lovely theory, but can it work? Can anyone guarantee that, as a result of entry to ERM, such convergence will be achieved this year? I should happily give way to anyone who could guarantee that.

What comes first—convergence or pegging the parity of the pound? Has anyone noticed what is happening in the real world? The level of German growth has been recorded at 4 per cent. for the past two years while ours has been less than 1 per cent. Compare the massive investment in the German economy with our negative investment. Compare their investment in training and education with that of our own. German interest rates stand at 8 per cent. while our own, even after the latest cut, stand at 14 per cent. The German inflation rate is recorded at less than 3 per cent., but our own is three times higher at more than 10 per cent.

Can anyone guarantee that our inflation rate will soon be the same as that of Germany? Experience suggests otherwise. One of the simple facts of economic life is that if the economic performance and inflation rates of countries vary, the value or price of the respective currencies—in other words, the exchange rates—will vary. That is an economic fact, not an opinion.

If British inflation is higher than that of Germany and we have fixed parities, we shall witness a continuous overvaluation of the pound and an undervaluation of the deutschmark. British exports will become dearer, foreign imports will become cheaper, the trade deficit will be huge and unemployment will increase. If we buy goods from foreign factories as opposed to British factories, it means unemployment. It will become too expensive to manufacture in this country and unemployment will rise. If we have fixed parities, all it means is that we shall pretend that the pound is worth DM3.

German monetary union is a good example of what happens when one pretends that one's currency is worth more than its true rate. The West Germans pretended that the ostmark was worth the same as the deutschmark—that was good politics. Chancellor Kohl went to East Germany and said, "Vote for me and I'll change your money one for one". They all voted for that, but as a result East Germany's industry has collapsed completely and it is facing massive unemployment. The same will happen here if we continue with such pretence.

Fixed exchange rates help the strong and reinforce their dominance. They make the rich richer and the poor poorer. If we maintain the pound at an artificially high level, it is another way of saying that we shall keep the value of the mark down—we shall keep it super competitive.

If we cannot adjust our economies by changing the exchange rate, how are we expected to make the desired adjustments? The Delors committee is quite clear on that: it advocates wage flexibility and labour mobility. That means that the wages of all workers must come down, as we heard from the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson). The Secretary of State for Employment does not pause for breath as he talks ceaselessly about the need for workers to have wage increases less than the rate of inflation. We are told that if that does not happen quick enough there will be mass unemployment. It is obvious that we shall end up with lower wages as well as mass unemployment.

Not only wages but profit, investment, research and development and training will be squeezed. The entire economy will be put through the wringer. That will mean lower wages, more unemployment, slower growth and less wealth. In other words, the real economy will be sacrificed to a theory. Employment, growth, wealth and everything else will be subordinated to the idea of pegging the exchange rate.

If we take that step, we shall be making the mistake that we made in 1964. The Harold Wilson Government, having come to power, wasted three years shackling the Government to maintaining the rate of the pound. I recently replayed a video of Harold Wilson being interviewed by a professor of politics. He was asked why he had made the terrible mistake, which ruined that Government, of trying to peg the pound. He replied, regarding the parity of the pound:

"There was an air of sanctity about it."

He went on:

"It was considered a sin against the Holy Ghost."

He now says that it is no longer a problem, but my fear is that we shall make it a problem again. We are not learning

from what happened over the gold standard or from what happened on that occasion to the Government of Harold Wilson. We shall be repeating the mistake all over again.

Some of my hon. Friends say that we shall have an industrial policy, and that is important. Indeed, the main difference between the two sides of the House is that my hon. Friends and I want an industrial policy whereas most Conservative Members simply want market forces to operate.

Exchange rate policy is an important part of industrial policy. We used to have what was known as the alternative economic strategy, and that was our industrial policy. We do not hear much about the alternative economic strategy these days, simply because it is unlawful under the treaty of Rome. The European Commission would not allow us to have the alternative economic strategy. So if we give up exchange rate policy, what will be left for the next Labour Government when we take office?

It is argued that we shall have the strength of the central banks wrapped around us. I have never heard anything so naive. The amount of money under that type of arrangement is limited and, in any event, the money one gets is by way of loans and must be repaid. That money will not be in any way different from money from the IMF. It will not accrue without conditions. Those concerned will be able to tell us to change our policy from whatever got us into the position of having to ask for a loan. President Mitterrand found that in 1983.

Alternatively, it is suggested that we might have a regional policy. It would take a regional policy on an heroic scale to make up for the damage that would have been caused. Indeed, we have at present a reverse regional policy because, as a poorer member country of the Community, we are paying in £2·3 billion to subsidise the richer countries. Each family of four in Britain is paying £16 a week more for its food than it need to pay. The regional policy is Britain subsidising the rest, so what nonsense it all is.

The exchange rate should not be elevated into a sort of sacred totem to be worshipped at the cost of production, trade and employment. We need a vigorous industrial policy which will combine full employment, a sustainable rate of growth and balance of payments equilibrium, and to achieve that we need a Government who can determine their own policy. We want democratic self government in this House. If our policies are to be determined not here but by people at some continental central bank, it will not matter for whom the British people vote because they will have the same policies whoever they elect. In other words, their votes will be devalued, and that cannot be advantageous.

It is always dangerous to prophesy, but I guarantee that the policy will fail. It will not be possible to sustain the exchange rate of the pound at DM2·95.

8.24 pm

Mr. Ian Stewart: (Hertfordshire, North): Not surprisingly, much of the debate has focused on potential future steps towards monetary convergence and monetary union, rather than on the decision that the Chancellor took a fortnight ago. That is understandable because the debate takes place against the background of proposals from the European Commission to the effect that stage 1 of the so-called Delors plan is only a staging post on a road that leads to monetary union, a subject to which I shall return.

The Chancellor has been much maligned from a number of quarters, not only from Labour Members, who have a political axe to grind, but from others who are perhaps less to be excused in suggesting that to reduce interest rates by 1 per cent. two weeks ago was somehow irresponsible. I should have thought that there was at least sufficient evidence that the economy was slowing down, that the monetary aggregates were coming down, that there were conditions in the motor and building industries and in other areas of industry to suggest that the economic pace was slowing, and that it would be wrong to maintain exceptionally high interest rates under those circumstances.

Not only was the Chancellor justified in taking the decision that that was the time for interest rates to start coming down, but, having taken it, it was natural for him to link it with the decision to enter the exchange rate mechanism. I feel sure that the cause and effect was that way round rather than the way round that some have tried to suggest.

I have never been a tremendous enthusiast for European institutions. Equally, I have never been a great opponent of them. Anyone who has had the responsibility of attending the Budget Council of the European Community on behalf of this country and its Government would inevitably be aware not only of the advantages of Britain being a member of the EC, but of the difficulties that are encountered by the activities of European institutions.

It is against that background that I have gradually come to the conclusion—more by a process of elimination than by enthusiasm for the EMS—that it is a sensible framework in which to conduct our economic and monetary policy. The Chancellor's handling of our entry was skilful. But the real question that will next face him and the nation will be about the further steps towards economic and monetary convergence, and the first of those will be the move from a 6 per cent. to a 2 per cent. band. That step will be more significant in its effect on economic and monetary management than entry itself in the wider 6 per cent. band, which allows considerable flexibility around the central rate that has been chosen.

When the Chancellor comes to consider that next step, I hope that he will ponder long and carefully on the potential difficulties of having an exchange rate mechanism that includes two major international currencies, the deutschmark and sterling. So far, the history of the EMS has involved a group of countries revolving around the deutschmark. As soon as sterling comes into the narrow band, we shall have something that goes by the technical name of bipolarity, which means having two separate potential focuses of attention in the exchange market, not necessarily pulling in the same direction at the same time.

I shall not speak at length about that because time is short, but for those interested in the debates on the subject, I made a remarkably boring speech four or five years ago, particularly boring even by my standards, because I was specifically asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) to make it as dull as possible. At that time, as now, the exchange rate mechanism was an extraordinarily sensitive economic and political subject and it was thought inadvisable that I should try to arouse

[Mr. Ian Stewart]

any expectations in one direction or another. The speech that I made from the Dispatch Box in that debate was so exceptionally boring that no one was able to pick up any significant comment that I had made in all of it. I was proud of that achievement because it is not easy to talk about the subject without rapidly getting into contentious areas.

The first contentious subject that I want to mention is that of the narrower band. It does not go without question that it would be right for sterling to get into the narrower band in the near future, because we have not yet resolved a problem that has been with us in this country for many years, that over the years we have needed, relatively speaking, higher interest rates in sterling to achieve the same tightness of monetary conditions to counter inflation than other European countries. That is partly because our financial institutions and markets are much more highly developed. They are not quite as developed as those of the United States but we generally have more flexible financial markets. For one reason or another, that has tended to mean that we need a higher interest rate in this country to deliver the same counter inflationary pressure.

Before entering the narrower bracket we should have to be satisfied that we could, over a considerable period, retain the same counter inflationary pressure, with interest rates that were, if not exactly the same as those of Germany and other ERM countries, at least much closer than they have been historically. If we did not do that, all we should have would be a switch of borrowing and lending; people would lend in sterling and borrow in other currencies at a cheaper rate of interest. That would frustrate the whole of our monetary policy and we should be unable to maintain the ERM for any length of time once those currency movements had been generated on any substantial scale.

The second stage of the exercise—joining the narrower band—will be challenging, and I ask my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and the Government to think carefully before they take that step. It is only a lesser version of the major step that would be taken if we were eventually to move towards monetary union.

It has been explained in the House this afternoon many times by hon. Members on both sides that monetary union inevitably carries with it either economic or political union, or both. The dangers of that are self-evident. Such union has been achieved in Europe twice in the past 2,000 years—first by Diocletian and Constantine, who had the might of the Roman army to enforce their policies, and latterly by Charlemagne, who did not manage to extend the policy to the United Kingdom, but managed to do so quite effectively through most of western Europe, again with a vigorous army at his back. The only more recent experiment was one in the post-Napoleonic period in the 19th century, which did not last long.

I hope that I shall be excused for claiming that I have been thinking about this subject for longer than other hon. Members. Nearly 40 years ago I was writing a book about Scottish coinage and towards the end of it I came across a remarkable fact, which was that after the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, King James of Scotland became the first King James of England and the United Kingdom, and immediately implemented monetary union between the two. The rest of the 17th century was spent grappling with the problems that that created. There were endless changes of valuation of Scottish coins at that time because a parity with the English currency could not be sustained in those circumstances. The problem was resolved only in 1707 by political union. Economic convergence had not been achieved by that time, but political union had, which enabled monetary union and, in due course, a degree of convergence of economic affairs to be carried through.

Although that is an arcane historical parallel, it contains important lessons for us. If we were to try to move to monetary union in Europe, where different countries and parts of different countries diverge so greatly in their economic performance, we should not, by means of monetary union, achieve greater cohesion in the European Community, but probably blow it apart.

During the recess I read a most interesting book by Professor Hawking, called "A Brief History of Time". As far as I could work it out—my physics is not very good—he was trying to say that if one starts with a big bang, one ends up in a black hole. If we tried to implement monetary union by a sort of monetary big bang and forcing that on many divergent economies and markets in a sudden move, we would be likely to blow the whole thing asunder and would have nothing left at the end.

I should have thought that the accession, in recent years, of Portugal, Spain and Greece, not to mention the addition by a side wind of East Germany, has put off the day when the countries of the European Community are likely to reach the degree of convergence where monetary union is even conceivable.

The arguments generally raised about monetary union—certainly many of those deployed in the House today—have tended to concentrate on the issue of sovereignty, which quite naturally appeals to politicians and is our stock in trade. But it is not the only part of the argument. There is an important part of the argument that should be deployed more thoroughly, and I hope that the Government, through my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Chancellor at their international gatherings, will not hesitate to make plain to our fellow member states in Europe the potential implications of trying to achieve monetary convergence without economic convergence or centralised political control. That argument will demonstrate to other countries' Parliaments the dangers inherent in such a step.

The evidence that we already have of European institutions is not entirely encouraging. When I was at the Treasury I spent much time trying to negotiate our way out of the financial consequences of the original structure of the common agricultural policy, and it was a painful process. A great European system had been put in place and its problems were allowed to work themselves out with painful consequences for this and other countries at various times throughout the following years. We ran straight into the financial problems because of our substantial contribution. Latterly, there have been production problems. The French liked the CAP while they were getting a decent subsidy from other countries for their farmers, but did not like it at all once they found that it was producing severe competition for their domestic output.

I fear that the European enthusiasm for notions such as monetary union will run far ahead of the practical considerations that must be taken into account before such measures can be seriously contemplated. It is unlikely that conditions suitable for monetary union will come about

within the next 10 or 20 years. If they did, I should reconsider the issue from the standpoint of that time, but until we are much closer to economic convergence, it would be playing with fire to put monetary union firmly on the agenda, particularly if that meant that other steps would be taken in the interim designed to achieve monetary union when that was still a distant and impractical dream.

While I welcome the step of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor in taking sterling into the ERM, I believe that we must be aware not only of the long-term problems, but that the second stage of going to the narrower band is a significant step that requires a great deal of thought before being undertaken.

8.38 pm

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): Today's debate has been widely drawn, although the motion and amendments clearly focus on the exchange rate mechanism. We see that the Government are expecting the House to congratulate them on going into the exchange rate mechanism when they did and at the rate they did. It seems that the Government are using what might now be described as the Baker gambit—when they have to say something that is ludicrous, they make their claim as preposterous as possible in the hope that everybody will be diverted from what is really happening.

Entry into the exchange rate mechanism had nothing whatsoever to do with the long-term economic future of this country, with the prosperity of most of the population and with the ability of most of the adult population who want work to get that work. Entry had everything to do with the Government's desire to create economic conditions for between six and nine months which would enable them to go to the country with a faint prospect of winning an election.

There is no doubt that the Madrid conditions were well and truly ditched by the Cabinet. I do not know about the Prime Minister herself. From her inability to speak today, it seems that she was probably dragged, kicking and screaming, into this agreement, and only acceded to it with the promise of a 1 per cent. cut in interest rates to dangle before the Conservative party conference. Perhaps the Government were and are hoping that, as a result of entry into the exchange rate mechanism, they will be able to cut interest rates further and that inflation will take a dramatic downward turn.

The whole basis of entry into the mechanism at this time was Treasury forecasts. I do not know how many forecasts the Treasury have made, but the one chosen by the Chancellor predicts a significant decline in interest rates, to a point where they will be roughly in line with the Community average of 4 or 5 per cent., at some time next year I assume, although that is not entirely clear.

If we study the Chancellor's forecasting record in the past few years at Budget time and compare his forecasts with the rate of inflation at the end of the year, we find that it overran the estimate by 65 per cent. in 1988, by 36 per cent. in 1989 and this year it will probably be about 40 per cent. above the forecast rate. What confidence can we have about such a momentous decision as entry into the exchange rate mechanism if it is based on a predicted rate of inflation which, judging by the record of the past few years, will still leave us about 45 or 50 per cent. above the Community average, which is considered desirable?

The truth is that the teasing had to stop in October. Throughout 1990 the Government relied on dangling the possibility of entry into the exchange rate mechanism before the financial markets to keep the pound high without having further to increase interest rates which were already at a record high. This decision was the last desperate throw of the gambler's dice by the Government to try to win the next election—not to try to strengthen the economy.

What is the state of the economy? It is such that a balance of trade deficit of £845 million can be heralded as a triumph by the Government.

Today the British chambers of commerce quarterly survey reveals that, apart from a minor but welcome exception in the north-east, manufacturing industry throughout the country is forecasting a decline in orders. More companies are forecasting a decline than an increase, and the decline averages 11 per cent. in the country as a whole.

Even more important is the fact that companies employing more than 500 people are forecasting that employment prospects next year are likely to go down by 20 per cent. The service sector is forecasting an increase of only 3 per cent. whereas last winter it was forecasting a 14 per cent. increase.

The economy is undoubtedly in deep difficulties. Our high interest rates are a commentary on the weakness of the British economy when compared with that of most other countries. Now we have been reduced to saying that the main purpose behind joining the exchange rate mechanism was to try to bear down on wage costs in the economy to make our industry more competitive. Those fair words from the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Employment must be seen against the background of company directors getting salary increases 3 and 4 per cent. above the average that most workers are receiving. Almost without exception, salary increases for the highest paid directors are in the stratosphere compared with what their workers are getting. For example, the top directors of Barclays bank got more than a 47 per cent. increase in their pay, but the lowest paid staff got a 10 per cent. increase —these figures are from the September 1990 bargaining report.

Blue Circle's directors got a 17·3 per cent. increase, whereas their lowest paid workers got 8·5 per cent. There are one or two honourable exceptions, including two companies that operate successfully in my constituency. The directors of Sony, the television manufacturer, took a 6·8 per cent. increase in pay—if only the rest of British industry had followed that lead—and their lowest paid workers got a 9 per cent. increase. The same can be said about Ford, where the top directors got 8·2 per cent., and the lowest-paid workers got 10·2 per cent. However, the general picture is that highly paid directors get large increases, but the rest of the work force generally gets an increase below the rate of inflation.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) rightly expressed his anxiety about employment prospects in Britain as a result of entry into the ERM at such an exchange rate. In a perfect world we would not like to start from this position. Given Government policies, there can be no comfort for unemployed people now, because they are not likely to get jobs, and, under these conditions for entry, many people who are employed are likely to become unemployed.

[Mr. Win Griffiths]

It was most unkind and unfair of my right hon. Friend to undermine the argument put forward by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), which formed the basis of our amendment to the motion. Yes, we want to be in the exchange rate mechanism, but it is essential that other policies are tied in to help Britain become more competitive. We need more investment in research and in skill training. We need a better educated work force and an improved infrastructure because, without improved infrastructure and better regional policy, peripheral regions will suffer. That is why it is desirable to follow our policies now that we are in the ERM.

Some hon. Members spoke about dangers of the sovereignty of Parliament. For the last decade and at any time when there is a large Government majority, the concept of the sovereignty of Parliament is meaningless. We can talk about the sovereignty of the Government but certainly not about the sovereignty of Parliament. Hon. Members were also worried about getting tied into a single currency, independent central banks and economic and monetary union. Sovereignty is not totally independent and free standing. It is indivisible across the European Community and even there it cannot stand on its own because world events, such as the Gulf crisis, can undermine the sovereignty of nations to do as they will. They must respond to new situations.

The problem can also be solved by making the institutions of the Community more democratic. That can be done by giving up the practice of the only law-making institution in the democratic world being allowed to hold its meetings in secret. I am talking about the Council of Ministers becoming open to the public. We can take steps to ensure that the European Parliament has more of a role in the Community's legislative process. We can also ensure that the House has more of a role. In this case, as in many others, the House was not consulted and not allowed to vote. Britain joined the ERM during the recess and immediately before the Conservative party conference, and the Government joined it in order to allow embarrassed Cabinet Ministers off the hook.

Doubts were expressed about the concept of an independent central bank for Europe. Those are misplaced doubts because, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) said, in the last resort the bank is not independent. He cited the example of the one-for-one rate between the deutschmark and the ostmark on the unification of Germany. Herr Pöhl did not want that to happen, but Herr Kohl told him about the urgent political necessity for it. The Bundesbank may now have to reshape some of its policies, but it will still attempt to make sure that inflation in Germany does not run away.

Some hon. Members have looked into a future of economic and monetary union but that is not the purpose of the debate. There is no point in wringing our hands and saying that we do not want to be a part of this process when we are members of the club in which the process is evolving. We have to play a positive role by setting out what we believe are the necessary conditions as the process gets under way and is undoubtedly achieved.

We enter the ERM when the exchange rate was DM2·95. I shall not speculate about what might have been a better rate, but I shall deal with the relationship between the exchange rate and inflation and our export performance. At this time last year I asked the House of Commons research department to look into the relationship between the exchange rate and inflation. It looked at the period from 1975 to 1989. In a letter I was told:

> "I found no significant evidence of the expected relationship between a change in the exchange rate and the retail price index in any of the following five months."

That is, the five months during which there was a change in the value of the pound on the foreign exchange markets. The letter goes on:

> "Within this five month period less than 6 per cent. of the variation in the inflation rate was attributable to the change in the exchange rate index."

The evidence seems to show that, on the whole, manufacturers and the economy absorb much of the impact of a change in the exchange rate. I also asked about competitiveness and changes in the exchange rate and was told:

> "However, for the small exchange rate falls that have taken place there is evidence of a gain to competitives for a year or two. Certainly there is overwhelming evidence of a considerable loss to competitiveness after the pound rose so high for 1979-82."

The message is that we should have gone in at a slightly lower rate. That would not have had a great impact on inflation and would have helped our competitiveness. If the Government were to follow the policies in our amendment, we would have a much healthier and a more prosperous economy rather than the disaster for which we are heading.

8.56 pm

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): I am grateful for four minutes in which to save the world.

One of the interesting by-products of the debate has been the fissures revealed in the Opposition between those who still crave for the fully centrally controlled economy and those who do not. Industrial policies were warmly welcomed and many of the policies that were seen to fail in the 1960s and 1970s were eagerly sought after. However, Opposition Front-Bench speakers clearly would wish to introduce the discipline of the ERM if they were ever to get into power. However, they do not like the current central rate because they feel that they could not resist the sort of inflationary wage pressures that have always bedevilled Labour Governments. Therefore, they would not find the ERM providing the anti-inflationary pressure which those of us who have been advocating it for some time have always thought to be the case.

There is no doubt that the Treasury has consistently urged that there should be three golf clubs in the bag, even if that is an over-used analogy. That has been the case under the present Chancellor and the former Chancellor. Those clubs are fiscal and monetary policy, both of which are reinforced by exchange rate policy. The three reinforce each other. That is why it is so essential, if we are determined to squeeze inflation out of the economy, to use all three methods. They will work together to bear down on inflation.

The Chancellor was absolutely right to enter the ERM at this time. Regardless of the arguments for entry that I and others have been urging on the Government since 1985, the conjunction of events on this occasion not only meant that the Madrid conditions on the wider basis of

what was going on in the Community in competition policy and liberalisation of capital movements had been met, but that the United Kingdom monetary aggregates were giving the right signals about a declining trend in inflation. Both sterling M0 and sterling M4 were giving those signals, which induced a feeling of confidence that we would be moving in at the right time and that the discipline imposed by the exchange rate would reinforce the downward inflationary curve. That strikes me as right and proper, and, in my view, disposes of the Opposition's attempt to launch a bogus dispute about whether the Madrid conditions had been fulfilled.

For those who do not support ERM entry, the real question is, what would have happened if we had not joined? In fact, most of the horrors with which they have taxed us now that we are in the system would have existed in considerably greater magnitude had we stayed outside. Strangely enough, the loss of sovereignty that is generally considered to be a consequence of ERM membership is far greater if rates are allowed to float freely: in those circumstances, the Government's domestic fiscal and monetary policies would be constantly undermined. We should do better to accept that a firm discipline provides better guidelines.

What are the next steps? Without question, we must continue to urge on our European partners the Government's plan for a hard ecu. There is far too much divergence within the Community for any single currency system to be imposed. The hard ecu, reinforced by the European monetary fund, will provide member Governments with a benchmark discipline; economies may then converge and we shall have a chance to establish whether the ultimate use of the ecu will provide a common currency—one day, perhaps, a single currency.

We must not allow the Delors option to be imposed on us; we must allow the market to impose its own solution, with the widest possible use of a new, hard ecu. I urge the Government to continue to press that argument in all quarters within the Community.

9 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): We have had a most interesting debate. At times, I reflected that we had heard some of the arguments on other occasions over the past 20 years when we have debated European Community matters: some Conservative Members saw the Community as a model of newfangled socialism come to torment them in the future, while some of my right hon. and hon. Friends detected the brutalities of the market place at their worst, to be reinforced by our own participation.

We have heard a series of interesting speeches about the effect on our industrial economy of ERM membership, and about what is likely to happen in the difficult circumstances in which we find ourselves after 11 years of Conservative Government. Perhaps the most notable feature of the debate, however, was not to be observed in any of the speeches—some of them excellent—that we heard from hon. Members on both sides of the House. What was most notable, surely, was the absence of a speech from one right hon. Member who has signally declined every suggestion, invitation and exhortation to address the House; it was the absence of a speech from a head of Government who was unwilling to account to Parliament, in this important debate, for policies in which she had been involved more intimately and more directly than any other member of her Administration.

The right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) is more obviously aware of that than anyone else. The right hon. Gentleman chose not to accept an intervention from me —I do not think that he has ever done that before—but that, perhaps, was just as well, because he must have known what I was going to ask him: I was going to ask who stood in the way of the policies that he advocated for so many years, thinking that they would be advantageous to the country. He knows the answer; the answer is the missing Prime Minister, who will not come to the House to give us her explanation.

My point is not merely that we are discussing what many hon. Members have agreed is a momentous decision, and that it would be appropriate for the head of Government to come and tell us about it. The Prime Minister was so closely involved that she lost not only a Chancellor but a Foreign Secretary, as well as a family friend, as a result of the issue. No doubt the right hon. Member for Blaby is scribbling his account of five years of her Government in his memoirs day by day. I understand that he will not publish them before the next general election, and I expect that that will come as a great relief. It is not my task to act as an advertising agent for the right hon. Gentleman—who seems to be quite good at acquiring jobs for himself without any assistance from my good self —but he must be able to hear the sounds of enthusiasm emanating from the Benches behind me. My hon. Friends are keen for him to advance the date of publication. Indeed, may I suggest—using a word with which the Chancellor is very familiar—that he publish them in "prospective" serial form, to titillate the nation and, perhaps, inform us a little before the time comes for the next election?

I was very sad when the right hon. Gentleman announced that soon he would no longer be with us. Having been locked in combat with him for so many years, I have almost a feeling of affection for him. Now and again, one must allow one's better instincts to come to the surface. I assure my right hon. and hon. Friends that I do not intend to make that a habit, but I was genuinely sad when I heard that the right hon. Gentleman had decided to leave us. We shall miss him in our deliberations.

Having listened to what the right hon. Gentleman said today—and he has made explosive speeches undermining the Government, from whom he has departed, on more than one occasion—perhaps some of his right hon. and hon. Friends wished that he had applied for the Chiltern Hundreds rather than taken the City thousands— *[Interruption.]* One hon. Member suggests the right hon. Gentleman should call his new house "Unassailable".

The right hon. Gentleman's main purpose in this debate was to tell the Government something that the markets already knew—that there is cynicism about the reasons behind the Government's actions. In view of the importance of that, would not it have been all the more appropriate for the Prime Minister to come to the debate and settle the question of credibility and, by a stout and resolute performance, settle the worries and the fears about the motives behind Britain's entry into the ERM?

It is felt—and this is not unique to the Opposition as it is felt in all quarters—that the final decision to join the ERM was taken for blatantly political reasons. That was in character with the history of previous Government

[Mr. John Smith]

actions. The Prime Minister wanted to reduce the burden on industry before the Conservative party conference. She discovered that that could not be done without joining the ERM because otherwise there would be pressure on Britain's currency, so the deed was done. That is wholly in keeping with the right hon. Lady's confused, irresolute, highly partisan and politically opportunist technique of dealing with affairs of state. Few people have found her explanations convincing. The right hon. Member for Blaby gave it away, and if he is convinced that the operation was cynical, it must have been so. I think that he knows quite a bit about that sort of operation.

At the beginning of his speech the Chancellor sought to throw away the Madrid conditions as though they had never been uttered. Indeed, one Conservative Member suggested that it was almost in bad taste to reiterate them. Let me remind the House of them. They were not forced on the Prime Minister by the other members of the European Community in some late-night haggle in Luxembourg, Strasbourg or somewhere else in Europe. They were not even the subject of negotiation between the Prime Minister and other member states. They were negotiated between the Prime Minister and the members of her Cabinet. The Madrid conditions were, first, that Britain would not enter the ERM until inflation had come down. It was not whether it might come down, whether it would come down or whether it was likely to come down; it was whether it had come down. Right hon. and hon. Members have reminded us of the detail of that and other conditions.

The Prime Minister prescribed other conditions that required action by others. I seem to remember that during the famous Walden interview she invented a new condition as each minute passed, until the programme was littered with new conditions. However, as she said rather disarmingly during Prime Minster's Question Time recently, "We had all these conditions, and they have all been fulfilled except one." The interesting point is that all those other conditions had to be fulfilled by other people, and they were. Only one had to be fulfilled by the right hon. Lady, but it was not. The right hon. Lady thought it to be some sort of victory—a triumph over the conditions that had been set, as a result of which she could boldly go forward into the ERM.

Underlying all that, and at the heart of the credibility question, is the right hon. Lady's well-known aversion to joining the ERM. Why else, during the revealing Walden interview, would she have described it as the "higgledy-piggledy set of rules."?

I do not profess to know quite what she meant by that, but generally such an expression is not meant to be favourable. It has what might be called a marginally pejorative tone about it. We certainly did not feel that she was straining at the leash to join the ERM. But there we are, strange things happen. Opportunities and pressures are such that the Prime Minister will do almost anything to keep power and to oblige the narrow party political interests of her party. Inflation was to be the major condition.

The Chancellor was not quite as brass-necked as that. He tried to find a way out. I shall be drawing the attention of the House to the way in which the Chancellor uses words. Before the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee in April, he said that the Government were looking for a proximate rate of inflation between ourselves and the Community. I think that he went on to define what he meant by a proximate, saying that Dr. Johnson had described it as meaning "near to".

I do not know whether the members of the Committee needed such education. They seemed pretty educated to me. My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), who made an extremely skilful speech, did not need such education.

By September the same year, in his speech to the IMF, the Chancellor had further refined his choice of words. He realised that not only would the Government not get anywhere near the rate of inflation; they would not even get proximately near it, so they had to change the time scale. Therefore, he said that what mattered was the prospective movement. The Chancellor, not quite so brazen as the Prime Minister, gradually sought to wriggle out from his commitments; she just threw them aside.

Whatever the Prime Minister did, this was a humiliating u-turn for a Prime Minister who had set her face in another direction. She abandoned commitments and, in the process, displayed an underlying lack of conviction, which has worked its way through into the market place.

The decision having been taken, we are now in the difficulty that the Prime Minister's economic policies have left Britain in a weaker position than other member countries, less well able to face the opportunities and challenges that the single market offers, especially now that it is to be operated within the confines of membership of the ERM.

In this debate, and in debates that we shall have in the months to come, we must consider what has to be done now; what policies should be adopted. The Opposition never believed for one moment that it would be enough to enter the ERM. That has to be accompanied by a strong supply side policy directed to building a strong economy.

Before I consider the matters at the heart of the debate, we need, as the Chancellor did, to look at what is proposed for the next steps in the consideration of European economic and monetary affairs.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has been dealing with the conditions set out by the Prime Minister at Madrid some time ago, but he will recollect that this afternoon the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) asked how many of the conditions set out by the right hon. and learned Gentleman in his Labour party policy document 12 months ago had been satisfied. Does not he think that he should reply to his right hon. Friend?

Mr. Smith: If the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall make my speech in my own way. But he must understand one thing. We advocated entry into the ERM and we said that it should be accompanied by Government negotiation on certain conditions. I did not conduct the negotiations; they were conducted by the Government. That point must be evident. It is evident to me, to the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and, I am sure, to my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore)—I made the point last Monday in the House, but I do not know whether the right hon. Member for Chingford was present; he has been here only intermittently today—that the regional policy conditions have not been fulfilled. The Government made no attempt

to strengthen our European regional policy. I shall go on because what I have to say might interest the right hon. Gentleman and he should pay particular attention to it.

We have not heard much from the Chancellor about the central banking system. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition argued clearly the need for political accountability. Nor did the Chancellor say much about the single currency and the arguments that there will be about that. No doubt the Chief Secretary will deal with that in his reply. All those matters are brought together conveniently by the Government under the so-called hard ecu proposal. That is the Government's new response. It may help the House to know what the Government have been saying about the hard ecu, how they have moved in respect of the ERM, and the techniques that they have used in the manipulation of language.

Before I do so, I am bound to be asked what the Opposition's view is on a central bank and a single currency. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition made clear our belief that a system of central banks must be politically accountable. At this time, when the gap between Britain's performance and that of other members of the Community is so wide, it would not be prudent to commit ourselves to an irrevocable exchange rate or to a single currency. We want to play an active, participative role in the European Community. We are already in the single market and have advocated membership of the ERM. We shall now work for a stronger regional policy.

Conservative Members are as foolish about regional policy at home as they are about it within the Community, but such a policy is vital in building a strong Community that operates fairly in respect of all its member states. We shall work to support the social action programme, which is vital to the balance between economic success and social cohesion. The need for that is understood by many countries in the Community, but not by Conservative Members—*[Interruption.]* Government Members keep asking about Labour party policy, but they will not listen when I explain what it is.

We shall all the while seek to close the gap between our economic performance and that of the rest of the Community, and between our social standards and those of the rest of the Community.

Mr. Cash: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has not said a thing.

Mr. Smith: The hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) should listen to what I have to say.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the hard ecu is based on market choice and will evolve into a parallel currency. He said that it was the choice of Governments and of people. However, the "Treasury Bulletin" published yesterday set out the argument in more detail. I remind the House that it is proposed that a European monetary fund be established to act as the monetary authority for a new currency—the hard ecu. The distinguishing characteristic of that new currency is that it will never be allowed to devalue against any other Community currency. The "Treasury Bulletin" explains that

"the hard ecu would always be at least as strong as the strongest currency"—

and we can guess which one that will be, although the bulletin adds disarmingly,

"whatever that happened to be."

It adds:

"It would be the responsibility of the EMF—a fundamental one enshrined in Community law"—

members of the Bruges group please note—

"to ensure that hard ecu devaluation never occurred."

The hard ecu was first presented by the Chancellor as a form of common or parallel currency that would be useful to exporters and people engaged in foreign trade, but nothing terribly exciting for the rest of us. It was just viewed as a useful device. I understand—and the Chief Secretary can tell me whether this is true—that the concept was sold to the Prime Minister by Sir Michael Butler, a former ambassador and a permanent United Kingdom representative to the Community. He is also chairman of the British Invisible Exports Council. Sir Michael's technique was to argue that the hard ecu was a market-led resolution of the problem. If one says the magic words to the Prime Minister, she just rolls over. The process of ratiocination may have stopped, but the magic words were said, and the right hon. Lady thought that since it was a market solution, it must be all right. The Prime Minister should take a little more care.

The difficulty of judging the hard ecu proposal is knowing whether it is designed to fail or to succeed. At a cynical level, one could understand the proposal if it were designed to fail. That would take time, which would allow the Government to say something at meetings of the intergovernmental council. However, if we take the proposal at face value and accept that it is meant to succeed, the House should examine it carefully. It was surprising that the Chancellor did not tell us more than he did. The first impression gained was that the hard ecu is an alternative vehicle for exporters, but the way that it has been described by different Ministers puts me on my guard.

There is the belief in the House, and probably in the country, that the Prime Minister is against all this stuff —that she is a resolute defender of sovereignty and an even more resolute defender of parliamentary accountability. *[Laughter.]* That is her stock in trade. One might think it odd that, at this stage in this debate, one should be reflecting on her habit of constantly mentioning parliamentary accountability. The fact remains that she has said it.

The question that I want to ask the Chief Secretary to the Treasury is this: is the hard ecu an alternative to a single currency which would avoid our having to face questions of sovereignty and accountability? Or is it another route to a single currency—perhaps even a convenient transitionary mechanism through stage 2 of Delors, which unavoidably raises questions of sovereignty and accountability but seeks to keep them suppressed and to move them away from our consideration?

Listeners must have been alerted by the Chancellor's use of words at the Conservative party conference—in the euphoria of those heady days. What a long time ago it seems since the Chancellor was in Bournemouth. He must be reflecting on how one should enjoy the plaudits of the Conservative party while one may. Certainly, the financial markets seem to be a corrective to some of the political feelings that were expressed there. The Chancellor said to the conference:

"Joining the exchange rate mechanism does not mean that we are now on a road leading inexorably to a single currency."

That word "inexorably" flashed up in lights for the benefit of anyone who was paying attention. Why use that word?

[Mr. Smith]

Was it accidental? Did the right hon. Gentleman simply think, "This is the day for being inexorable"? I think that he chose it with some care.

I used to think that the Foreign Office was the Department of weasel words, but the Treasury is getting pretty smart at them too. It has certainly never before had such a willing user of them as the present Chancellor. The right hon. Member for Blaby would scorn that kind of thing. We got it pretty straight from him. It was not very nice when we got it, but we got it fairly straight. One can either do what the right hon. Gentleman did or one can wriggle one's way round the issues with weasel words.

Only a few days ago, in his Mansion house speech, the Chancellor said:

"Joining the exchange rate mechanism did not commit us to adopting, and cannot oblige us to accept, the imposition of a single currency in Europe."

I do not know how one adopts an imposition. The Treasury might care to have a look at that infelicity before it sets out to equip the Chancellor with his next set of words for avoiding answering questions on these matters. But perhaps I fuss too much. That apart, what on earth does it mean that we are not to have a common single currency forced upon us? In what conceivable circumstances would we have it imposed upon us? If we were going to have a single currency, we should have to agree to it. We should have to go along with it. I have no doubt that, if it came to making a decision in the House, there would be fierce arguments about it. No one would be imposing it on anyone, so I do not know quite what the Chancellor meant in that speech.

The right hon. Gentleman went on to say:

"the hard ecu could ultimately evolve towards a single currency if it were the wish of Governments and peoples that it should be used in preference to their own currencies."

That leaves the door open, but the use of the word "ultimately" suggests that there is still some time to go, so the Bruges group should not get too worried just yet.

One is led to wonder what the Prime Minister was thinking about the question when she came back from the Dublin summit, at which the question was aired, and reported to the House on 28 June this year. When asked about the hard ecu, she said:

"I do not believe that that formula could develop into a single currency."—[*Official Report*, 28 June 1990; Vol. 175, c. 493.]

The Prime Minister tells us that she does not think that the hard ecu could develop into a single currency while the Chancellor tells us that it will, or would, if people decided to follow that route.

What is the latest position? Alerted to the question, I have been examining matters with some care over the past few days. The new addition to the Treasury team, the Financial Secretary, who, I am sorry to say, is not with us tonight, was speaking at the EMU seminar of the British Invisible Exports Council on the 10th of this month. Describing the hard ecu, he said:

"It would be a genuine common currency and one which could easily develop into a single currency as Governments and peoples decided."

Even more interesting is the report in today's *Financial Times* to which my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has already referred. I shall quote from the *Financial Times* report of the evidence that the Minister gave to the House of Lords Committee on economic and monetary union:

"Mr. Frances Maude, the minister responsible for European Affairs, put the Treasury's case succinctly in evidence earlier this month to a House of Lords committee. The hard Ecu, he said, offered a direct route to a single European currency."

He added:

"I would argue personally that the next stage of having a single currency could actually happen more quickly going down this path."

We have moved from that potential, useful device for exporters and other curious people to another route by which we could achieve a single currency not only feasibly, but easily and quickly. Things have moved quite a bit.

The Chancellor said that we should consider the next steps and he wanted a careful definition of the Opposition's position. However, in the light of all the contradictory advice to which I have just referred, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury should explain what is happening.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

Mr. Smith: No. The hon. Gentleman is doing well enough listening to me. I am sure that he will find my comments illuminating.

The "Treasury Bulletin" states that if the hard ecu catches on, the circulation of weaker currencies will fall and national monetary authorities will have to take action by pursuing tighter monetary policies. They will be forced to keep up. There is also a requirement to reimburse the EMF against exchange losses on devaluation. That is a strong disincentive to depreciate, as the "Treasury Bulletin" makes clear.

We need to be more clear about the constitution of the European monetary fund. Who is accountable for it? How does it work? To whom does it report? All those issues raise sovereignty and accountability questions. If the Government believe that I am making too much of a fuss about that, I shall quote Mr. Gavyn Davies of Goldman Sachs who examined the hard ecu and concluded:

"All of the problems associated with accountability and independence of the Eurofed, which have so exercised Mr Major, would apply in equal measure to his alternative European Monetary Fund."

I was put even more on the alert by a statement made by Sir Michael Butler, to whom I referred at an earlier stage in this saga. He has been thinking about the issue and how to incorporate the proposal into the treaty. He realises that there must be treaty amendments if the EMF and hard ecu are to be adopted. I know that this is not Government policy yet, but it is an interesting proposal. At a seminar at Hambros bank on 11 October, Sir Michael Butler proposed a treaty amendment that would

"create a European System of Central Banks consisting of the twelve national Central Banks and a European Monetary Fund owned and run by the Central Banks, to be operational from day one of Stage 2".

Clearly the EMF is linked with a system of central banking.

Sir Michael then states that a treaty amendment should

"lay down the aim of price stability for the whole EMU process and of permanently fixed parities leading to a single currency in Stage 3".

Is that Government policy? If the Prime Minister was here, she could clear all this up. If I could get the Prime Minister

to answer my questions, I should not be quoting Ministers. She could speak on behalf of the whole Government—at least one would hope that she might.

These are important sovereignty and accountability issues and I hope that the Chief Secretary will consider them. The House will not let the matter drop. We have seen how the Government twist and turn, how they say one thing and do another and how they profess principles and then so easily abandon them.

The crucial point about the debate, to which all hon. Members have referred, is what we do from here. After having entered the exchange rate mechanism, we have been left with the weakest economy of the member states. The right hon. Member for Blaby may disagree, but we hear no more from him about the so-called economic miracle under which we were to have overtaken Germany and be pressing hard on Japan. Germany is now well ahead; France is significantly ahead; Italy is overtaking us; and Spain is coming up fast behind—and all of that after this Government have been in power for 11 years with large majorities and huge oil resources.

We have an ailing economy that has been damaged by the Government's policies over the past 11 years. As our amendment states, what we need now is what we have argued for in debate after debate, day after day—we shall do so in the House and in the country. To build a strong economy and a fair society, we need a vigorous regional policy, a new drive to provide British industry with the best of modern technology, a proper infrastructure, good social services, a good transport system, and, above all, an education and training system that gives our people the chance to compete. In the new Europe we have the opportunity to compete. We shall have to compete.

An hon. Member asked whether the other member states were partners or competitors. They are both—they are partners and competitors. We have opportunities and great challenges. We shall be able to realise them only if one thing above all is comprehended—that is that the crucial determinant of success in a modern economy is the way in which we utilise the skills of our people. That is what the next Labour Government will be committed to do. We shall make a success of our economy and our society, even with the difficult inheritance that will be our unfortunate and unhappy lot.

9.30 pm

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): I agree with the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) at least on one thing, and that is that this has been a remarkable debate. We have heard some strong and powerful speeches, many of which have certainly cut across party lines.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) made a remarkable and passionate speech in which he declared his strong opposition to fixed exchange rates. He said that, when he was a Minister, he had experienced the constraints of fixed exchange rates, which —I hope that I do not sound impertinent by saying this —is one reason why some of us have come round to being in favour of them.

Hon. Members also heard a powerful speech by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson). I express my sadness that my right hon. Friend announced his decision yesterday to retire at the next election. His departure will represent a great loss both to the House and to my party. The debate is a bitter-sweet moment for my right hon. Friend as a long-standing advocate of the ERM. He made his views very clear today. Also, the House was interested to hear his comments about EMU. Although he is a strong opponent of EMU, my right hon. Friend urged the Conservative party not to fear too much stage 3 of EMU on which he had doubts, for example, whether it was a real threat and would happen.

Hon. Members also heard an eloquent speech by my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen). He joined the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney in opposition to fixed exchange rates. There was one point on which I sharply disagreed with my right hon. Friend. He referred to entry into the ERM as a sort of European incomes policy. I do not think that that is the effect of the ERM. If it were, I certainly would not be in favour of it. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby explained, it is a monetary framework. Just as the control of monetary aggregates is a framework of which wage bargainers must take account, so will wage bargainers have to take account of the new regime of fixed exchange rates.

My right hon. Friend referred to what the Chancellor said about wage claims. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor was not urging an incomes policy; he was just drawing the attention of wage bargainers to the consequences for employment and for themselves if wage claims were excessive. That is certainly very different from an incomes policy which in the past has been designed to control inflation, but, of course, never has controlled inflation.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North made most of his remarks, however, about his clear preference for floating exchange rates. I remember, as he will remember, the occasion when a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Barber, came to the House and announced that the pound was to float free. I take a different view from my right hon. Friend. The consequences of that decision have not been as beneficial and as benign as they then appeared to be. The period of floating exchange rates worldwide has been one of higher inflation. Looking back, the period under Bretton Woods and the fixed exchange rate was a period of greater stability and lower inflation.

The temptation to let exchange rates depreciate has always been powerful for Governments. However, that temptation has not brought any benefits because the effects of depreciating the currency have been short lived in terms of promoting output and competitiveness, but have been lasting in terms of inflation. That is one of the reasons why the Government concluded that it would be right to join the ERM.

Another part of the debate has dealt with whether joining the ERM should lead automatically to European monetary union. My hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby referred to that. It is very much the Government's view that joining the exchange rate mechanism does not mean that we have to go down the road of the Delors plan towards European monetary union. The House was interested to hear the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby who has always been strongly in favour of the ERM, but who, as everybody knows, has always been passionately opposed to EMU. It was interesting that my right hon. Friend quoted Mr. Volcker, saying that he did not think that we could have a single currency without

[Mr. Norman Lamont]

also having the full institution of a common Government. That is why we unequivocally and unambiguously are not in favour of the Delors plan.

The Leader of the Opposition made an interesting and important speech in which he seemed to carry forward his party's policies. However, neither after his speech nor after that of his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East is it clear that the Labour party is opposed to the Delors plan. That was not clear from the speeches that we heard today.

Mr. Tebbit: My right hon. Friend knows that, like a number of my right hon. and hon. Friends, I am rather an agnostic about the ERM itself. On balance, I believe that, at the moment, our entry is probably more likely to be helpful than unhelpful——

Mr. Teddy Taylor: In the short term.

Mr. Tebbit: Yes, in the short term. However, what worries me, like many other hon. Members, including the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), is whether it will lead to a single currency and, therefore, to a single Government. Will my right hon. Friend be a little more robust in what he says? He has said that the Government are unequivocally opposed to the Delors plan, but will he say that the Government will refuse absolutely, clearly and flatly to go along with any pretence of a single currency?

Mr. Lamont: I have made it clear that the Government are wholly opposed to the Delors plan for a single currency. If my right hon. Friend is asking me whether it is conceivable that the hard ecu could become a single currency, the answer is that a hard ecu could not become a single currency unless Government and Parliament decided on that. We do not believe that that is something which has the support of the House or the people of this country at this time. It may be a decision that future generations or future Governments may wish to make, but it is not the policy of this Government.

Mr. Tebbit: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend because he has come a long way along the road to making this matter clear—*[Interruption.]* Of course, it is correct that entry into the ERM, the hard ecu or even the fact that today's date is 23 October could lead at some time—if people wanted it to—to a common currency. I am asking my right hon. Friend to confirm that the Government are irrevocably opposed to a common currency, whether it is Mr. Delors' common currency or anybody else's. [HON. MEMBERS: "Single currency."] I beg the House's pardon—I mean a single currency. I want to know whether the Government are irrevocably opposed to a single currency, whether it is Mr. Delors' single currency or anybody else's.

Mr. Lamont: The Government are opposed to a single currency. The hard ecu has tremendous attractions for developing co-operation on an evolutionary basis and on the basis of a parallel which recognises the reality of commerce becoming more integrated in Europe. But that would not become a single currency unless a future Government so desired

Mr. Spearing *rose*——

Mr. Leighton *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): The Chief Secretary is not giving way.

Mr. Lamont: I gave a clear answer to my right hon. Friend's question.

The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney attacked the Government's decision on the ground that we had entered the ERM at too low an exchange rate. I have no doubt that the central rate of DM2·95 strikes the right balance between the need to maintain a firm anchor against inflation and the importance of preserving the competitiveness of British goods on world markets.

The right hon. Gentleman chose to quote some figures. He compared the level of the deutschmark today with the level of 1927—*[Interruption.]* I should say 1987. The right hon. Gentleman made a selective point but it was not so selective as that. He selected a period when sterling's real rate aginst the deutschmark was at its lowest for the whole of the past 10 years. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the real rate of exchange at which we have chosen to join the ERM is close to the rate of the recent past and of the past decade.

We have heard some wild speeches about the decision to enter the ERM and about the parity. It was said that our decision was akin to the decision to join the gold standard in 1925 at the pre-war parity. Those speeches were wildly off the mark. When sterling returned to the gold standard in 1925 the rate chosen was not that which prevailed in the markets at the time but that which had prevailed before the war. It is fanciful to compare my right hon. Friend's decision with that decision. To have chosen that sort of parity, he would have had to choose a level of sterling to the deutschmark from many years ago.

Mr. Morgan: Does the Chief Secretary accept that the rate of DM2·95 to the pound may be right for today, but that the British rate of inflation will not fall from 11 per cent. to 3 per cent. overnight? It will fall from 11 per cent. this year to 7 per cent. next year, to 4 per cent. the year after that at best. Yet German inflation will fall from 4 per cent. this year to 3 per cent. and then to 2 per cent. So over two and a half years our competitiveness will decline in relation to the deutschmark by 15 percentage points. That will mean that DM2·95 today will be DM3·40 in two years. How many British industries will be competitive at DM3·40 to the pound? That is where we shall be in two and a half years' time.

Mr. Lamont: The hon. Gentleman illustrates precisely the reason why we have joined the ERM. He puts forward the theory of constant competitiveness and devaluation. It is precisely because other countries' economies inflate at slower rates than ours that we want the discipline of the ERM influenced by the Bundesbank so that we can compete and our costs and productivity can gradually attain the same levels as in Germany. That is precisely the reason why the Government have joined the ERM.

Much of the speech of the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney was about the conditions under which the Government have joined the ERM and whether the Government satisfied the conditions that they laid down for themselves. For some time the only issue has been the rate of United Kingdom inflation, but, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, it is clear from both the monetary indicators and the real indicators that the economy is slowing down. Both the narrow definition of money and the broad definition of

money have slowed sharply. We have good reason for feeling confident that we are about to see an early fall in inflation. Given the relationship that existed in the past between monetary aggregates and inflation, we feel confident that, next year, we shall see a fall in inflation.

Given that the evidence was so clear and the economy was slowing down, was there any point in waiting any longer to join the ERM? I believe that it would have been sheer masochism to delay that decision any longer, especially given the uncertainty in the financial markets. They wanted a decision and that decision will reinforce the Government's anti-inflation policies.

Some people, including the Leader of the Opposition, have criticised the 1 per cent. cut in interest rates. That is a bit rich coming from him, considering that all that he has done in the past year has been to call for interest rate cut after interest rate cut. The moment we made that cut, however, he accused us of having done so for political reasons. There were three good reasons for doing so: first, the state of the economy justified it; secondly, at 14 per cent., interest rates remain high; and, thirdly, those high levels of interest rate are reinforced by our membership of the ERM. Nobody could judge the combination of a 1 per cent. cut in interest rates and joining the ERM as a loosening of policy.

It was noticeable that the Leader of the Opposition and the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East said little about their own policies except in one respect: we were told that the Labour party wants to introduce credit controls. Now that we have joined the ERM that is the Labour party's one remaining distinctive policy. On the whole, I think that the Opposition would have been better advised not to mention credit controls, as they are widely regarded as outdated, ineffective and irrelevant. Even the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East is rather half-hearted in his defence of them.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman spoke about a Walden interview with the Prime Minister, but I enjoyed another Walden interview in which the right hon. and learned Gentleman was taken apart by Mr. Walden on the subject of credit controls. Again and again Mr. Walden pointed out that there is not much point to credit controls if they do not apply to building societies. Mr. Walden pointed out that the main beneficiaries of credit control are likely to be the offshore foreign competitors of the British banking system. Mr. Walden's most telling argument was that if one restricts the supply of credit through controls the likely consequence is to drive the price—interest rates—up. To deny that is to deny the laws of economics and of supply and demand.

If there are unsatisfied borrowers unable to borrow and lenders willing to lend but prevented from doing so by the Government, how can the result be anything other than an increase in interest rates? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman really believe that lenders will just shrug their shoulders and take a fall in profits? The right hon. and learned Gentleman should know that life just ain't like that. That is why some countries use the mechanism that the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition confuse with credit controls. They use that mechanism as a method of regulating interest rates. Mr. Walden tried to make that point clear to the right hon. and learned Gentleman, who was curiously obtuse on that occasion.

Mr. Walden even pointed out to the right hon. and learned Gentleman that, even if he did not intend that credit controls should drive up interest rates, that might still be the consequence. Mr. Walden pointed out that the right hon. and learned Gentleman could not do anything about that unless he passed a law to stop it happening, but the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that he had no intention of passing such a law.

During the interview the right hon. and learned Gentleman muttered and mumbled and spoke about a control in the 1970s known as the "corset" which was a form of credit control that did not drive interest rates up. The right hon. and learned Gentleman's memory is not very good and I believe that it is arguable whether the "corset" put up interest rates. One thing is certain, however: the credit controls that existed under the Labour Government of the 1970s may or may not have kept interest rates down, but they certainly kept inflation up. When we had credit controls in the early 1970s of the kind about which the right hon. and learned Gentleman was talking, we had inflation in excess of 25 per cent. That was the effect of credit controls.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman then gave the game away completely. He threw in the towel and said:

"Having credit controls, there to be used if they are necessary, and that depends on whether demand has already dropped."

Note the words:

"that depends on whether demand has already dropped."

A little later the right hon. and learned Gentleman went on to disagree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He thought that the economy was in a recession and added:

"My judgment is that demand is falling very fast in the economy at the moment."

In other words, strip away the rhetoric and the right hon. and learned Gentleman conceded that, if there ever was a case for credit controls, the time had long since passed. Despite that, Labour Members retain credit controls in their amendment and in their policy, although everybody knows that such a policy cannot, and will not, work and is utterly irrelevant.

I find the attitude of Labour Members in the debate utterly astonishing. What are they criticising? About what are they complaining? We have had many petulant tears, as though a child had seen its rounders bat stolen. We have heard cries of, "They have not done it for the right reason" and, "They do not believe it." It all smacks of sour grapes.

For some time, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East has been telling us that we must join the ERM. Indeed, it has been his only policy, other than credit controls. It has been his answer to every question and problem. When asked how he would control inflation, he answered, "We shall join the ERM." When asked how Labour would run the economy without interest rates, he replied, "We shall join the ERM." Asked how he would achieve growth, he replied, "We shall join the ERM." Many of his answers have been contradictory and many have been wrong. They have been the cloak behind which Labour Members have concealed their complete absence of policies. It is a clear case of the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his party suffering——

Mr. Leighton *rose*——

Mr. Lamont: I will give way later.

Labour Members are suffering from what Christopher Fildes has called bovine spongiform Euromania, or mad bull disease. It is a disease that lodges in holes in the cerebellum and causes erosion of the powers of reasoning. Sufferers come to believe that membership of the ERM has

[Mr. Lamont]

magical powers and will solve all problems. They also suffer from irrational fear and outbreaks of terror about something called the golden scenario. It is a golden scenario in which the Tories engineer a short boom, falling interest rates, a quick election—and my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) is returned in time to go back to Ascot. Rational people know that the ERM has more limited powers, that it is a discipline, but that it is a powerful one which involves hard and difficult choices having to be made.

Labour Members are sore because they believed that the Government never would join the ERM. They were content to go on urging us to join, even though they did not know what the ERM was and what its implications were. They thought that it did not matter when they did not bother to explain it to the public. They were content to urge the Government to join, so long as it was their distinctive policy.

Seventy-two hours before the Chancellor announced his decision to join the ERM, the Leader of the Opposition was telling his party in Blackpool that if he were ever in a position to take decisions, one of the first would be to take sterling into the ERM. When it happened, what did we find? Did the right hon. Gentleman lead the cheers? Did he join the welcome? Did we hear the faintest echo, even a whisper of support, from him? No. It was left to one of the luckless Labour media advisers to provide the definitive reaction, preserved for posterity in the pink pages of the *Financial Times*. I shall give the quote in full because it bears repeating. The spokesman said:

> "This has really screwed up our coverage in the media tomorrow. The conference organisers had laid on a particularly spectacular finale with the Red Flag, Jerusalem and auld lang syne to follow a rousing, rallying cry by Dr. Jack Cunningham, the campaign co-ordinator. All that now goes by the board. They have outsmarted us."

How can we explain the modest reception for the sudden implementation of what we were told was the central plank of the economic strategy of the Labour party? The answer is all too simple: for the Labour party, ERM was not a policy but an excuse. For it, joining the ERM was not a policy for reinforcing the anti-inflation process, but a fig leaf to conceal the absence of its policies. For it, the ERM was not the exchange rate mechanism but a slogan designed to cover up the bankruptcy of its own ideas. Read their lips—for members of the Labour party, ERM spells "everything's a real muddle."

Mr. Leighton: In an answer the Chief Secretary said that the hard ecu was evolutionary—evolutionary towards what?

Mr. Lamont: I have dealt with that question and I see that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) is well satisfied with my answer.

Mr. John Smith: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us about the arrangements for accountability for the European monetary fund? Does Sir Michael Butler—*[Interruption.]* I hear the right hon. Gentleman asking the Chancellor for the answer, and I ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us his own answer. How will the European monetary fund operate and how will it account to the House?

Mr. Lamont: We have made it clear on several occasions that we do not believe in an independent central bank at a European or a national level. The monetary authority would be subject to political control, which would have to be negotiated, but it would not be, in the sense that the right hon. and learned Gentleman describes it, an independent central bank.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman asks me a lot of questions, but he did not give away one detail about his policy on the matter. I should like to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman why on earth, if he is not in favour of a single currency, he is in favour of a central bank in the first place, which is what he was putting forward.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East, of all people, has least cause to complain or criticise the Government in their attitude to the ERM. In his famous Walden interview, when he was asked about his economic policy in the current climate, he replied that he would do two things: join the ERM and cut interest rates by 1 per cent. However, his reception and reaction have been strangely muted and his rapture strictly modified, yet he has a profound and lasting influence on my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East and all Labour Members who have spoken in the debate have shown that they do not understand what the ERM is about. They do not understand that it is a discipline to lower inflationary expectations, and to give us the benefits of the policies of low inflation countries and that the whole point of the ERM is for inflation to converge towards the level of low inflation countries.

The terms referred to by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford add up to the following: first, devalue the currency, then lock into the new inflationary exchange rate and follow that by subverting the monetary discipline that lies at the heart of the ERM. By doing that, the Labour party would remove the very features of the ERM that make it an anchor against inflation. The truth is that the Labour party does not want an anchor against inflation today any more than it did in the past.

Labour has no credible monetary policy. It has no credible policy on the ERM. We believe that an important step has been taken: one which enhances the credibility of our monetary policy, will help us to defeat inflation and will bring lasting benefit to the people of the country. I commend the motion to my right hon. and hon. Friends.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 188, Noes 323.

Division No. 331] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Boyes, Roland
Allen, Graham	Bradley, Keith
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Bray, Dr Jeremy
Armstrong, Hilary	Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Buckley, George J.
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Caborn, Richard
Barron, Kevin	Callaghan, Jim
Battle, John	Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Beckett, Margaret	Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Beggs, Roy	Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Bell, Stuart	Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Bermingham, Gerald	Cohen, Harry
Bidwell, Sydney	Coleman, Donald
Blair, Tony	Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Blunkett, David	Corbett, Robin
Boateng, Paul	Cousins, Jim

Crowther, Stan
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Hara, Edward
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Trimble, David
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Sir George Young and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 300, Noes 227.

Division No. 332] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*

Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir George Young and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Body, Sir Richard
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dicks, Terry
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janman, Tim
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John

Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mudd, David
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Hara, Edward
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Trimble, David
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House congratulates the Government on joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism of the European Monetary System; notes the clear evidence that the Government's tight monetary and fiscal policies are reducing inflationary pressures in the economy; and believes Exchange Rate Mechanism membership will reinforce the Government's counter-inflationary strategy and help to strengthen the framework for a sustained improvement in economic performance.

Hong Kong

10.28 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): I beg to move,

That the draft British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 15th October, be approved.

Subject to approval in this House and in another place, the order will come into force on 1 December.

The order sets out the scheme that the Governor of Hong Kong proposes to use to select up to 50,000 key people whom he will recommend to the Secretary of State for registration as British citizens under the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act 1990.

The selection scheme that the Governor has presented to the Home Secretary, which is before the House tonight, is a complex one. Comments and suggestions have been received from a wide range of bodies with interests in Hong Kong's continued prosperity and stability, and both Houses examined outline proposals for the scheme during the passage of the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act.

During those discussions, the Government made it clear that they intended to listen with an open mind to suggestions for ways in which the scheme might be improved. That is precisely what we have done. I believe that the detailed proposals now before the House represent a thorough, fair and objective means of selecting those Hong Kong residents whom it would be most damaging for the territory to lose and to whom we hope to give confidence to remain.

I have already written to more than 60 right hon. and hon. Members who were fortunate enough to catch Mr. Speaker's eye during the debates in this House, and to those who served on the Committee, to explain how the scheme now proposed by the Governor differs from the one envisaged in the explanatory notes that the Government made available during the passage of the Act.

For the benefit of others, I should like to say a few words about the scheme and the principal changes that have been made. The broad structure remains as envisaged in the explanatory notes. Subject to approval, the scheme would consist of four classes, each of which would be given a share of the 50,000 places. The general occupational class receives 36,200 places to be allocated among the 20 occupational groups specified in annex 1. Some 7,000 places go to the disciplined services class, covering the nine services set out in article 18 of the order. The sensitive service class—those in the public or private sectors serving the interests of the Crown or involved in other activities of a sensitive nature—will receive 6,300 places, while 500 places are reserved for the entrepreneurs class, in which the Governor will recommend those whom he considers to have made a special contribution to the economy of Hong Kong. The criteria that the Governor will take into account are set out in article 24.

With the exception of those in the entrepreneurs class, the available places will be distributed in tranches, the size of which will be set out in directions by the Home Secretary. About 87 per cent. of the places will be awarded in the first tranche.

If the order is approved, applications for the first tranche will be invited from 1 December with a closing

date of 28 February 1991 and will take some two years to process. The rest of the places—some 13 per cent.—will be awarded nearer 1997.

Applicants under the general occupational class and the disciplined services class will be selected on the basis of a points system. The broad criteria against which points will be awarded, and the maximum number of points available for each criterion, remain as set out in the explanatory notes.

Concern was expressed, especially in Committee, about the 150 points available for "special circumstances", in particular the amount of discretion available to the Governor in awarding up to 50 points for individual merit. Article 14 of the order now makes it clear that up to 30 of those points will be tied objectively to occupation-related merit or achievement—for example, local or international awards. A further maximum of 30 will be available for unpaid service with specified voluntary agencies or institutions in the social, medical or educational field and up to 20 points will be awarded for officially recognised and rewarded acts of bravery or gallantry.

Since the whole focus of the scheme is to discourage people who are prone to do so from emigrating, the Governor needs greater flexibility to recognise particularly high rates of emigration within occupational groups. The number of special circumstances points available for that purpose has therefore been increased from 50 to 75.

The final 50 points for modifying age, qualifications or experience to reflect the needs of a particular occupation or group remain unchanged. The total number of points that can be awarded to any individual under the special circumstances heading is still capped at 150.

On the question of age points, we considered very carefully with the Governor whether the criteria should be adjusted to give more points to those over 40, as some suggested during the passage of the Act. We have concluded that the proposed scale should not be changed. Maximum points are justified for those aged 30 to 40 because people in that age group would be moving into key positions in the years up to 1997 and immediately after, and a particularly large number of them are now emigrating. There is also, of course, as I said earlier, some extra flexibility available where age is concerned under the special circumstances heading.

Concern has been expressed in some quarters—particularly in the British business community in Hong Kong—about the number of points which can be awarded to those employed by British firms. We have been urged to increase them. But the award of those points is not designed to guarantee success for all applicants working in British companies. It would be wrong to rig the system in such a way that employees of British firms won places at the expense of others who were better qualified and therefore arguably more key to Hong Kong as a whole.

We have looked at the issue with particular care and believe that it would be a mistake to increase the maximum of 35 points that is available under this heading. Competition for places in the general occupational class will be fierce and there are bound to be groups of applicants bunched around the qualifying mark. In those circumstances, even a handful of points for those serving British firms will ensure that they are placed higher up the list than their counterparts who are, in all other respects, equal.

We have, however, agreed a change in the way in which the points should be awarded. They will be given to current employees of British firms for any previous periods of service with a British firm or firms or with other British institutions. We have dropped the requirement envisaged in the explanatory note that such service should have been continuous.

We have considered very carefully how a "British firm" should be defined for the purpose of awarding those points. Adopting a narrow definition, restricted, for example, to firms with headquarters registered in the United Kingdom, would have rendered ineligible some of the major firms in Hong Kong which are generally regarded as British and which have extensive trading links with this country going back over many years. Looking therefore to the wider interests of Hong Kong, we have used the term "British undertaking" in the order and defined it as a company or firm which the Governor is satisfied has a close connection with the United Kingdom. In reaching his decisions, he will be assisted by a committee in which our senior British trade commissioner in Hong Kong is expected to play a leading part.

As a result of discussions in Committee which the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) will recall as he was interested in this, arrangements will be made for the steering group to advise the Governor on the use of special circumstances points on the basis of information from which the names of individuals have been removed.

As I have said, this is a complex order because selecting 50,000 people for British citizenship from a pool of many tens of thousands who could claim to be "key" to Hong Kong's future prosperity and stability is a complex task. The fact that so many different people from so many different walks of life will be eligible to apply demonstrates that this is not, as some had earlier suggested, a narrow, elitist scheme. It is one based on merit and achievement. The criteria are both fair and objective and the scope for bias or corruption has been, as far as humanly possible, eliminated.

The principal aim behind the scheme is to rebuild confidence in Hong Kong. To this end, those recommended by the Governor will, if acceptable, be registered on the Home Secretary's behalf by a team of officials based in Hong Kong. I hope that those selected under the scheme, and other British citizens in Hong Kong whose passports need renewing, will take advantage of the arrangements that are being made to issue British citizen passports in Hong Kong. Those will be standard machine-readable passports and identical to full passports issued elsewhere.

This scheme will, I believe, serve Hong Kong well and, by extension, the interests and responsibilities of the People's Republic of China and of the United Kingdom—as we both have a duty and a concern to maintain the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong in the years immediately ahead. I therefore commend the order to the House.

10.38 pm

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): The Opposition will not divide the House on this order tonight. We opposed the scheme and the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act 1990 because the proposal is flawed in concept, and we set out our position in some detail in the Standing Committee. However, if we are to set up such a scheme, it can operate only on a points system. We must understand that any points system will result in difficulties and will undoubtedly in some cases result in significant unfairness.

[Mr. Alistair Darling]

I visited Hong Kong briefly after the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Bill received its Royal Assent earlier this year at the invitation of the Hong Kong Government. I repeat the assurance that I gave there and in Standing Committee: a Labour Government would honour all passports issued under the Act. We shall review the way in which the scheme has been operating when we come to office as the present Government have said they will. All passports granted under the scheme will be honoured by us.

The Minister said that some changes were made after the scheme was originally opposed. By and large, those changes are an honest attempt to improve the way in which the scheme operates. I believe that the Minister has made a valiant effort to try to meet some of the criticisms that were made, although, as I said, I do not believe that he has succeeded in doing so completely.

The Minister referred to article 14, which deals with special circumstances. Although the Committee and civil servants in Hong Kong did their best to eliminate discretion on the part of the Governor by allocating a set number of points for the various qualifications set out under the scheme, it is the case, and it is bound to be the case, that judgments will have to be made as between one applicant and another. As a result of that, it is inevitable that some people will feel hard done by. It is particularly difficult to follow the Government's route on British firms. We have a responsibility to the entire colony in Hong Kong, not just to British firms. France in particular has favoured French firms, but we should remember that the entire colony, not just British firms, is the responsibility of Britain.

We should understand that the new Act was never designed as a safety net for the majority of the population of Hong Kong. It was never designed to ensure that the whole population would be able to leave or to get out in the event of some danger, although many people at the time thought that that was what it was supposed to do. The Act was an attempt to keep in the labour market those with skills that were in short supply in the colony, and, by definition, those who could migrate quite easily. People in that position could usually find jobs elsewhere. For that reason, the scheme can never be entirely fair because it tends to favour people who already have choices.

It is unlikely that those people would come to the United Kingdom, as I suspect that they could get rather better jobs doing the same thing in different parts of the world. I do not think that that is a particularly real fear in respect of people who are likely to qualify under the scheme. But, because of their mobility, those who qualify under the scheme can in many cases qualify for other schemes being operated by various other countries. Perhaps the Minister will confirm that, if someone already has citizenship of another country, the points system will operate in such a way as to make it less likely—in fact, very unlikely—for him to qualify under our scheme.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Perhaps it will be convenient if I answer that point now. There are negative points for those who have nationality of another country—minus 200—which makes it almost certain that they would not be able to achieve British nationality as well. The scheme is weighted heavily against them, although they will be able to enter it should they wish to do so. The knowledge that they would be "minused" in that way would encourage few of them to do so.

Mr. Darling: I am grateful for that assurance, especially as, in the four days that I was in Hong Kong, several people seemed to be under the impression that they would probably qualify for our scheme as well as other schemes on offer. Some of the people who might have applied would have liked Britain as their first choice, rather than Australia or Canada. It is important that we do not end up simply giving a large number of people passports while other people receive none at all.

The people who are likely to qualify under the scheme already have other choices available to them. Anyone who thinks that the Act or the scheme has anything to do with expanding the opportunity for people in Hong Kong to go elsewhere should the need arise should realise that the additional choices are being given to people who, for the most part, already have choices.

There is no doubt that the number of people who will be seeking passports will vastly outnumber the number of passports that are available. Because of that, there is a grave risk that there will be a sense of unfairness. With the best will in the world, any points scheme is discriminatory, and a large number of people will be disappointed. Those who operate the scheme have made every effort to avoid that possibility, but, none the less, it remains.

Under article 14—I dwelt on the matter at some length when we considered the Bill in Committee—the Governor still has much discretion. It is regrettable that the Government have sought to exclude judicial review. Individuals may feel aggrieved because their applications have been refused. They may feel that, in effect, they gave points to others who applied and were accepted, and who on the face of the applications seemed to be in exactly the same position as themselves. The risk of that happening has been reduced by spelling out the number of points that are available for certain qualifications, but it is one that remains.

It is regrettable that the scheme still maintains points for an applicant's wage level. That criterion is a classic example of the unfairness of the scheme. It attempts to equate additional value to society with higher remuneration. That is made clear in annex 3. It counters the Minister's claim that the scheme recognises merit and achievement. There are many in Hong Kong who have much merit and have achieved a great deal, but they will never qualify under the scheme because they are not at the top of the wage structure and have not achieved some other pre-eminence. Judicial review might have been an opportunity to set people's minds at ease. It might have provided an opportunity to put right some decisions that went wrong.

The Opposition do not believe that the Act and the scheme will determine the future of Hong Kong. It is obvious that the people want to stay there and will leave only as a last resort. The colony has always had a high turnover in its population, however, and that is likely to continue. The determining factor in the success of Hong Kong will be the relationship with China and China's internal development. The opportunities for investment in China and the entire Pacific basin are there to be taken. Britain could help to provide for confidence in the region through British companies. Britain does not enjoy an especially high reputation in that part of the world. The

Government, through their various agencies, could do far more to show that Britain is still committed to Hong Kong to 1997 and thereafter. As in many other parts of the world, we find that Japan, France, Germany and the United States are all bidding for work in Hong Kong. British companies are in evidence, but the Government could do much more to encourage those that are firmly rooted in Britain and other parts of Europe to realise that there are tremendous opportunities in the Pacific basin if Hong Kong is used as a base. That encouragement would do much to build confidence in the colony if it believed that the Government and people of Britain still cared about it.

The future of Hong Kong lies in the hands of the Foreign Office and the Department of Trade and Industry and not so much in those of the Home Office. I have never accepted that the Act was a matter of immigration. I know, however, that those who wished to parade their own prejudices and venom in society latched on to the measure. They recognised that it gave them the opportunity that they sought. I believe that the Act relates to the confidence of Hong Kong and that it is not merely a vehicle for the granting of passports. There is much more to it than that.

I make yet another plea to the Government to think again about those who do not qualify under the scheme. I realise, of course, that the Act provides that an annual report has to be laid before the House. I urge the Government to reconsider the position of those with no effective nationality. They may well be in an extremely difficult position in 1997. I have much in mind also the concern that was expressed on Report, especially for the wives of British citizens who do not have automatic rights in respect of this country. It would be nonsensical if people were obliged to return to Britain to live here for three years to ensure that their spouses qualified. That is something that must be kept open for review.

If we regarded Hong Kong as an asset to build upon rather than as a liability, we could do far more for the colony and the entire region than I suspect that we shall do under the scheme. A positive attitude on the part of the United Kingdom in Hong Kong and in China is essential if the Hong Kong agreement is to be fulfilled.

10.49 pm

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): At this stage in our consideration of this legislation there is no point in attempting, even if it were not for the fact that it would be out of order, to go over the general principles of the Act. It is curious, however, that we can scarcely discuss details without reflecting upon the Act as a whole. Some of the provisions that are before us may appear to be erratic or peculiar, but they are based upon an Act which is both erratic and peculiar in the literal meanings of those words. So having swallowed the camel we must not strain at the gnat of the order.

I do not propose to detain the House long this evening but it is a great pity that my hon. Friend the Minister could not bring us some news when he introduced this statutory instrument of the further reaction from Peking to the legislation. It would have been comforting for those of us who opposed the Bill to be told that we were wrong in our assessment of the reaction of the Chinese Government and that the British Government were right. Unhappily the reverse is true. The Chinese Government have made it clear that they regard the legislation as an insulting interference in their affairs and have made it plain that it is an obstacle, rather than an assistance, to the further improvement of relations between Great Britain and the People's Republic of China. That is sad, but I guess that we shall have to live with it now, as the legislation has been passed.

I have to reflect somewhat lightheartedly on the sheer joy of seeing the various valuations that are placed on certain individuals in Hong Kong. Who am I, above all, to disagree with the view that a qualified kindergarten teacher qualifies for exactly as many points as someone who has a bachelor degree in law? It seems to be one of the better assessments of social work that we have had for some time, although I realise that not everyone would agree with me on that.

The instrument contains one curiosity which I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister can explain. If he turns to page 17 he will find that if one is a journalist with a bachelor degree other than in journalism or communications one scores 45 points. Does that mean that if one is a practising lawyer with a bachelor's degree one is given 10 points but if one is a journalist with a bachelor's degree in law one is given 45 points? If so, that is curious and extraordinary in the extreme. It underlines the remarkable nature of this complex legislation, built upon a piece of bad legislation which is a minefield and a trap for anyone trying to find their way through it with common sense.

My hon. Friend the Minister might reflect on one person who, as far as I can see—although I have not checked out the numbers in detail—would probably have qualified under most of the criteria in the statutory instrument. He was a distinguished business man in Hong Kong. In fact, he was the chairman of the Hong Kong stock exchange. I take it that the fact that he has now been convicted of criminal offences will disqualify him. What an extraordinarily good thing that he was not given his British passport before he was convicted.

10.53 pm

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): The order is not amendable and therefore there is a limit to the value of criticisms of any part of it. I want to use this opportunity, however, to ask the Minister about the effectiveness of the scheme at present and his perceptions of the response in Hong Kong to its provisions.

On the face of it, the scheme is not serving the purpose for which it was dreamt up. The prevalent anxiety in Hong Kong is about a breakdown in law and order. Those anxieties were referred to by Sir David Wilson in his speech to the Legislative Council two weeks ago, and I should be astonished if the Minister was unaware of them. It has been admitted that 150,000 members of the Triad organisation are no longer the subject of special attention by a division of the Hong Kong police, and that is causing great anxiety. Public service recruitment has been frozen and the staff targets for the police—a disciplined service specially referred to in the order—have not been met and have fallen short by about 50 per cent. Can the Minister say whether that is due to emigration? Are there any other reasons for that shortfall?

What is most alarming, as the Minister will be aware, is that Sir David Wilson has predicted that emigration will rise to 62,000 this year. It does not appear that the

[Mr. Robert Maclennan]

Government's efforts to stabilise the population are meeting with the sort of success that can be the only justification for the scheme set out in the order.

In common with the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), I shall not enter into the merits of the Bill. The Minister is aware that I opposed it in principle in the belief that if the population retained in the colony was to be sufficient to guarantee the economy more people should have been eligible under the Government scheme.

We are entitled to know what value the Government place upon the scheme on the basis of the evidence of recent months since the Bill's enactment. It is difficult to agree with the Minister that bias will not enter into the consideration of entitlement under the scheme. Bias is built into the scheme. Indeed, the Minister spoke of the consideration given to whether there should be an adjustment of the points awarded on age. It is clear that the scheme leans heavily towards the 30 to 40-year-old group. It is therefore biased against some people who may have given great service to this country and to the colony for substantially longer than those in the aforementioned group. That older generation may feel a great sense of grievance.

The categories specially favoured by points will be the subject of great debate. The Minister has already drawn attention to a particular common commercial group and for every person satisfied there will be many more who are dissatisfied.

The scheme has contributed to the growing unrest in the colony and it has resulted in the increase in the numbers seeking to emigrate. That unrest must be contributing to the downturn in the growth of the colony's economy. This year it witnessed an economic growth of 2·5 per cent., the lowest in the Pacific basin. Inflation has also risen to nearly 10 per cent. and it is clear that we are judging the scheme against an unhealthy state of affairs.

In this short debate, I hope that it will be possible for the Minister to say something about how he sees the scheme contributing to the future of Hong Kong on the basis of the experience gained so far.

10.58 pm

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): As I have watched the events in the middle east unravel on the television screen in the past few months, I have wondered why a small enclave, Kuwait, clinging to the fringes of an alien and hostile country ruled over by a dictatorship, should command such concern here and elsewhere in the world when the liberty of its citizens is threatened. In comparison, we offer no hope or promise to the people of Hong Kong, over which this country has far more say, that should the alien power behind them decide to invade and perpetrate the crimes now perpetrated in Kuwait, we and the rest of the world will go in to defend the remnants of their liberty. Had we given those people that assurance when we last debated this issue, we should not now need to be discussing the points scheme. I have always opposed the points scheme and moves to remove the elite from Hong Kong. After all, they are the very people who may have been able to develop a system of resistance to an alien force that might decide to move into that territory.

Even now we are not meeting the understandable and natural fears of the majority of the people there. While there is still time, let us consider what more we might offer them by way of consolation, in view of our concern, as the member of an international body, for the plight of small, unprotected or difficult-to-protect groups who have strong ties with our way of justice and law and who have strong economic ties with us.

There is still time for us to discuss ways, in addition to the points scheme, of giving those people a greater sense of security and reassurance about the future. Let them, too, feel that should what has happened in Kuwait happen to them, we and world bodies would adopt the same attitude and protect their liberties. Then, perhaps not so many of them would wish to flood away from that country. After all, it is our creation. It reflects our way of life and our belief in freedom. Their energy and exuberance have created there a prosperous and free state. If they felt that we were prepared to back what we have helped to create there, in precisely the same way as we are saying to the people of Kuwait, "We shall come in and restore your liberty," that would reassure the people of Hong Kong, for they would feel that we were prepared to do for them what we are prepared to do for the people of Kuwait.

11.2 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): We should not lose this opportunity to congratulate whoever devised this devilish scheme. I was a member of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and we funked the task of going into the matter in too much detail. We said:

"We appreciate the difficulties of defining coherent categories of suitable people apart from public servants . . . to whom a right of abode or an assurance of a right of entry for settlement might be offered."

Lord MacLehose said, when giving evidence to the Committee:

"There are people in the Home Office who are frightfully ingenious at keeping people out and I think they are perfectly capable of thinking of a formula for letting them in."

That led us to the conclusion:

"We believe such assurances could be provided to a significant number of Hong Kong BDTCs in key positions."

We would not go further than that. But it looks as though the Home Office or somebody else has come up to the expectations of Lord MacLehose and has devised a devilishly ingenious scheme. So ingenious is it that few of us can think of anything to say when faced with the statutory instrument.

But having congratulated whoever devised the scheme, I wonder whether we might hear from the Minister whether the purpose of this devilish scheme, which was to give some reassurance to the very groups of people in Hong Kong who are expected—because, in earlier figures, they were shown to be doing so—to leave Hong Kong as 1997 approaches, is being effected. We did not have such a statement from the Minister earlier, and I hope that, when he replies, he will feel able to give it.

We said in our report, which was accepted by the Government, that although between the years 1980 and 1986 the average yearly outflow was about 20,000, in 1989 it was 42,000 and this year it was expected to be 55,000. The whole purpose of the scheme, devilish or otherwise, was to try to stop that haemorrhage of great talent from Hong Kong and anchor the people there so that they would continue the success of Hong Kong, making it a great and happy place when eventually the takeover took place.

We know that this is the second draft of the scheme and there has been much discussion in Hong Kong about the scheme's detail. It would be encouraging to hear from the Minister that the number of those leaving is already beginning to turn down. If the scheme is not having that effect, something more will have to be done. We do not want to have to keep coming back to the House at such a late hour to consider even more devilish schemes, which is the way that the gentlemen in the Home Office, who are so skilled at devising such proposals, will be forced to proceed if what we have done so far shows absolutely no signs of success. Therefore, I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to give us some reassurance on that, because, apart from reassuring us, he will comfort the people of Hong Kong who are probably just as puzzled as most of us appear to be by the way in which the categories have been worked out and the numbers allocated.

11.7 pm

Mr. Peter Lloyd: A number of points have been raised and I shall try to answer each of them in turn as best I can.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central, (Mr. Darling) talked about British firms and wondered whether any extra points should be given for British firms in Hong Kong. He shakes his head, which means that I must have missed his point entirely, and I would be grateful if he would tell me what he meant.

Mr. Darling: I was commenting on the fact that I thought that the Minister said that he had devised a formula that would make it slightly more favourable for people employed by British firms. I was simply making the point that Britain is responsible for the whole colony; people there work for firms that are owned by many countries—it is an international community. I do not think that favouring British firms has as much merit as the Minister was hinting at. We have responsibility for the whole colony, not just for people employed by British firms or, as he said, firms that might have some connection with Britain.

Mr. Lloyd: I did understand the hon. Gentleman. In my opening remarks I said that we had broadened the definition of British firms so that many firms in the colony

[Mr. Lloyd]

would be accommodated. Secondly, I said that we had decided not to increase the number of points for British firms beyond 35 so that it would act merely as a tie breaker between those who were equally qualified. As it is a British passport and British nationality being given, it seems right that British firms should, when everything else is equal, be the ones to benefit, not least because, as the hon. Gentleman said, firms of other nationalities in Hong Kong are generally taking steps to look after their own employees in that way. Therefore, we are doing little more than evening up matters.

The hon. Gentleman spoke of those who already had choices being given more choices. That is the basic intention of what we are doing. It is those with choices who are leaving. Those who do not have choices are staying in Hong Kong. We are trying to ensure that those who have the choice to leave have another choice to take up British passports and nationality, and stay in Hong Kong, which British nationality will give them the confidence to do.

The hon. Gentleman also said that pay levels should not be taken into account. He is mistaken in his belief as to how widely they are to be taken into account. There is only one group to which they relate—business men and managers. It is only one measure among many that will go to make up the number of points that they can score. As ability to earn is one of the characteristics of a successful business man it would be wrong, in fact one would be blind, not to take it into account, at least for some of the points that he may earn.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): This is the provision that I find offensive. It seems to me the most dangerous example of one law for the rich and one for the poor that I have ever seen. I hope that when this matter is reconsidered we can get away from this provision. It does not make a spectacular difference, as my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary has just said, but if it were on the statute book it would be a very unhappy state of affairs.

Mr. Lloyd: That is very misguided of my right hon. Friend. Of course, in the business sector, one of the indicators of success is the amount that people earn. If my hon. Friend does not want to face that, or believes that we should not face it when we determine the key people who should be anchored, he is facing the problem in a blind way, as it cannot and should not be ignored. Those are the sort of people whom we want to anchor in Hong Kong. As I told the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central, those are the people who find it easiest to emigrate. That is why the provision is in the Bill, and it is right that it should be.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central also mentioned special circumstances points. As I said in my opening remarks, we have tried to make them as objective as possible. The hon. Gentleman says that it is not quite objective enough for him, but if he reads the rules carefully he will understand that, although the Governor has the opportunity to change the balance of special circumstances points, according to the needs of a certain class or category, nevertheless he has to apply them similarly to everyone in that category. So, as far as the category is concerned, the points are applied objectively.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend is not quite correct. Article 14(2), on special circumstances, states:

"The Governor may allocate up to 75 points to an applicant if he considers that there is an exceptionally high propensity to emigrate amongst those serving in the relevant occupation or amongst a particular group of persons serving in that occupation."

I do not want to push the matter to the extent of saying that the "particular group" could be people called Lee, or Lloyd, or something like that, but it gives the Governor a pretty enormous discretion to specify a particular group.

Mr. Lloyd: My right hon. Friend entirely misses the point. The whole purpose of the scheme is to anchor those people in Hong Kong who have a particular propensity to emigrate; and enabling the Governor to take into account the greater propensity of a particular group to emigrate underlines the object of the points system.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend misunderstands me. I know that the Act is based upon partiality and favouritism. The amount of discretion in exercising partiality and favouritism which is extended to the Governor is quite enormous. He can even decide, according to the order, not to give points for a particular qualification if he does not like it; he can add qualifications which are not included if he likes them. That is part of the Act.

Mr. Lloyd: My right hon. Friend does not want to understand the system, because if he did he would say that of course the Governor has the discretion to apply different points, but he has it only to apply them to different groups. They have to apply equally to those people in those groups. Therefore, he does not select one person as against another; he recognises the reality of the position that a particular group is in.

Mr. Tebbit: How does one define a qualifying group? Could it be of Wykehamists or Old Etonians?

Mr. Lloyd: I think that if it was plain that he was doing that and that he was exercising his discretion unreasonably —my right hon. Friend will remember our debate on Report—that would clearly be a matter on which judicial review could be sought. My right hon. Friend takes his case to the point of absurdity where the Governor would be exercising his discretion not reasonably but unreasonably.

Mr. Lawrence: In which countries will the judicial review be sought?

Mr. Lloyd: Of course, it will be in Hong Kong where common law applies and the possibility of judicial review exists, as it does here. My right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford made great play about the way in which the points are made up in the appendix to the rules. He forgets that lawyers and journalists are in separate groups and are not comparable. Points for professional and vocational qualifications are earned only for occupation-related qualifications. He mentioned lawyers in particular. A bachelor degree in law will be a preliminary qualification worth 10 points, but the degree holder will have other qualifications to add. My right hon. Friend should look at how the system will work as a whole rather than picking out and making a misinterpretation of how the Governor will be able to use the system.

Mr. Tebbit: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Lloyd: No, because I should like to answer some more points.

Mr. Tebbit: My hon. Friend has not answered my points.

Mr. Lloyd: I most certainly have, and if my right hon. Friend reads *Hansard* he will see that that is so, especially if he reads it in the light of his earlier remarks.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) wondered whether the scheme was already working. Of course it is not because it is not yet available. If the orders are approved it will come into effect on 1 December. The emigration rates indicate the plans that were made by people who were worried about staying in Hong Kong 18 months to two years ago. We shall not see the effect of the scheme until it is well under way and British citizenship is being granted. If the hon. Gentleman wants an example of how such citizenship can work, I suggest that he looks at the figures for Singapore. It issued some 25,000 passports to citizens in Hong Kong and very few of them have moved from there. The passports have succeeded in anchoring those people for the present. I have no doubt that British passports will do that even more effectively in Hong Kong.

Mr. Maclennan: Is the Minister saying that anticipation of the possibility of being one of the fortunate 50,000 is in itself of no importance and is not an anchor? I thought that that was part of the Government's argument.

Mr. Lloyd: I am saying that somebody who has decided that he really must emigrate because he did not want to stay in Hong Kong 18 months or a year ago would not withdraw his application, especially if he thought it might be successful in Canada or Australia, on the offchance that the Bill might become law and the order might be approved. We shall see the effect of these only in the coming years and they certainly will not affect decisions that were made 18 months to two years ago.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland also asked whether members of the police force were emigrating and said that recruitment to the police was difficult. The indications are that people are leaving the police force to go into the private sector rather than emigrating. However, it is to address the problem of retaining high-grade staff in the police and the other disciplined services that we have included a special category in the Act and in the rules.

The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland talked about the bias in the rules. Naturally, the whole purpose of a points system is to give additional points to people with qualities, experience or characteristics that are particularly valuable, in this case to Hong Kong. However, I do not accept what he says about bias between people. People in the same situation are treated in the same way and get a similar number of points. There is no way that under the discretion allowed to the Governor he can apply the rules other than in that manner, even if he wanted to do so which, of course, he would not. He would like the system to work in a manner that benefited Hong Kong. That is also the intention of the Act and the rules.

My hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) said that she would not support a points system and would use some other method to show Hong Kong that we were concerned for it and would try to assist its stability in the years ahead. She did not say what her method would be but drew a parallel with Kuwait. Other than sending the Desert Rats to China, I am not sure what she had in mind.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) called our scheme devilishly ingenious. It is honest, straightforward and practical. I refer my hon and learned Friend to what I said to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, who wondered why the scheme was not yet having an effect. I told him that we have not even passed the Orders in Council on which the scheme depends. The decisions that are being seen by the number of people leaving—which has, indeed, increased—were made a year, 18 months or even two years ago.

The figures cited by my hon. and learned Friend and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland suggest that there is an increasing problem in Hong Kong—the problem of emigration. We badly need an Act and some rules to contribute towards the anchoring of at least some of those people in Hong Kong, especially the most able. That is why I have every confidence in the order. The Bill was passed by a large majority on Second Reading, and the principle was accepted without a Division on Third Reading. I am therefore confident that the House will back the order now.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 15th October, be approved.

TELEVISING OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones be discharged from the Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House and Mr. Tom Sackville be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

11.22 pm

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): It is no exaggeration to say that health care in West Essex district health authority is probably worse than I have ever known it. We have some of the worst and longest waiting lists in the country; we are expected to have a deficit of some £2 million next year. Yet some people will still say that the problem is due to mismanagement by the district health authority.

I wish to refute that. Way back in 1984, plans were presented to reduce the deficit to the tune of £1 million a year. This debate is all about what happened on 24 September this year: that is the date on which my constituents—and those of my hon. Friends the Members for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) and for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst), who have a keen interest in the matters—were betrayed by North-East Thames regional health authority. That is the date on which the capital programme to centralise the Princess Alexandra hospital in Harlow bit the dust, along with the £40 million development plan involving a community hospital—St. Margaret's hospital, Epping—and others in Hertfordshire and Essex, despite the region's promises.

Let me briefly run through the chronology of events. In 1984, the major capital scheme was approved in the region's strategic plan for 1993. It was realised that it was ridiculous to have three accident and emergency departments in one district; it did not work, it was not efficient, it was not good for patient care or health, and it led to the haemorrhaging of over £1 million a year. West Essex health authority took the bull by the horns, and presented a sensible capital development plan.

On 19 April, Mr. Michael Chapman was appointed chairman of the health authority. He had the following brief:

"Persuade the public of the need to centralise acute services at Harlow . . . Develop the concept of community hospitals".

That was an heroic task: it was not easy at all. The proposed closure of the Honey Lane hospital was challenged by judicial review by Epping Forest district council, and its application was defeated. The hospital—in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris)—was closed in July.

In October 1986, a regional report confirmed the cost of the scheme, compiled with current service planning and financial criteria, as £40·6 million. In early 1987, informal public consultation meetings were started by Mr. Chapman, and action committees to save the local hospitals in Epping and Bishop's Stortford had already been formed by local people. On 10 July 1987, Mr. Chapman made a presentation to the Herts and Essex hospital action committee meeting. All parliamentary candidates were present. My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford quite properly publicly supported the draft plans. On 11 June 1987—how could we forget—there was a general election. On 18 September, approval was given in principle and documents were approved by West Essex district health authority. That was followed by staff meetings at all sites. There were more than 50 meetings, and they included meetings with the Essex family practitioner committee, all the district councils, some of the town and parish councils and all general practices. There were community health council public meetings with both West Essex and East Hertfordshire district health authorities, plus other voluntary organisations. The district chairman, the general manager and a member of the consultant medical staff attended all meetings.

It was not a painless process. There was a great deal of local outrage and upset. At a public meeting in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest, the district chairman stated that we had a national health service and that the money from the sale of the local hospital—and it was the second to be closed—was to be used for the good of all the people in the West Essex district health authority area, at the district general hospital in Harlow.

In January 1988, the document that had been approved in principle was submitted to the Minister. It was supported by the community health councils—and that was not an easy task, even though an independent report prepared for the West Essex community health council favoured a two-site solution. It was supported by all the consultant medical staff of the district.

On 12 May, my right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton)—then Minister for Health—publicly announced at Harlow approval for the scheme to proceed. A project team was appointed with commercial project managers to ensure value for money. It was the first occasion when outside project managers had been appointed for a district general hospital scheme in the North-East Thames regional health authority area.

On 15 December, a by-election was held in Epping Forest. In the run-up to the election, my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest publicly supported the centralisation plans, even though that involved a change in the use of St. Margaret's hospital. Part of the overall plan was new buildings for the community hospital in Epping. I say with respect to my hon. Friend that that involved considerable political risk.

Mr. Steve Norris (Epping Forest): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for allowing me briefly to intervene. Like my hon. Friends the Members for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) and for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst), I am here because of my concern about the very parlous state of the finances of our health authority. My hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) was right to say that it caused me a great deal of embarrassment during the by-election to stick by the capital programme, which I took to be the right programme. I believed that then and I believe it now.

My hon. Friend will agree that while the decline in capital values in the property market generally has undoubtedly had an effect on the region's finances—and that was inevitable—it is a crude response simply to abandon all the carefully thought out programmes for which many of us have fought hard. Although I have, on occasions, been critical of the district for failing to meet its expenditure targets from time to time, to suggest that it will be in a position to think not only about what it will do without the new capital programme, but to deal with a revenue cut of the size being contemplated of £2 million is to demand too much even of the most vigorously effective health authority.

Mr. Hayes: My hon. Friend makes his point well. The region is saying that falling land values prevent the spending of the money. The truth of the matter is that £20 million worth of that money was raised through land sales in my hon. Friend's constituency. It is not the region's money. My hon. Friend the Minister will rightly say that that is the way in which the health service is financed regionally, but this is money which belongs to my hon. Friend's constituents and to the West Essex district health authority and it should be spent for the district.

It is not just my hon. Friend who took political risks and who is severely embarrassed. My hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden also played a major part.

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): My hon. Friend has missed out one date in his chronology, and that is June 1985, when the Government took a decision that Stansted airport was to be developed into London's third airport. Those of us who said that there may be a need for further hospital facilities to be maintained in Bishop's Stortford were pushed aside on the basis that a major district general hospital at Harlow would be the right way to deal with the needs of the airport and the growing population that would come with it. The Government have willed the appearance of the airport, albeit built with private money, but what will they do now about the demand for health services in the area that will accompany it when the district general hospital is cancelled?

Mr. Hayes: It is not just my hon. Friend who is concerned. My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford, despite considerable local difficulty, did his best for the Herts and Essex hospital. But part of the deal in the considerable risk that he took was that there should be a community hospital in the heart of Essex. That was all part of the deal and my hon. Friend will tell the House what happened.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Not only was there a promise of an up-to-date modern community hospital to take care of the 95 per cent. of the hospital needs of Bishop's Stortford, but it must be remembered that a second hospital in Bishop's Stortford, which had been contributed by the townspeople of Bishop's Stortford, had been sold. Therefore, in addition to the £20 million from Epping Forest, some £7 million, plus interest, I hope, is owing to the people of Bishop's Stortford as a result of the sale of that hospital. I have come to the conclusion that all the money will be sucked out of our district. We shall never get a fair deal for our people while the district remains in the North-East Thames regional health authority or any other London-based region. Our constituents will not get the level of hospital service that other places expect and enjoy while we administer the district through a London-based hospital system that absorbs all our money and retains it in the capital.

Mr. Hayes: My hon. Friends make their points well. This is not a health authority riven with difficulty and division, with politicians fighting each other. This is a health authority where consultants, community health councils, staff, patients and everyone else have pulled together, with the encouragement of Ministers and the regional health authority. That is why there is so much outrage and anger that the plan should have been cancelled.

It may be helpful if I continue the chronological order of events because it is only right and proper that that should be put on record. In 1989, after long negotiations with Epping Forest district council, planning and other problems were overcome and the site of Waltham Abbey was ready for sale. On 16 March 1989, the district chairman wrote to the regional chairman expressing concern at the sale price and the regional difficulties being experienced with the capital programme.

The sale proceeded at £20 million, with the first payment balancing the region's capital programme for that year. Assurances were given that the money would be made available in west Essex when needed. In April 1989, improvements were made to the plans contained in the consultation document because the designers were able to deliver a functional solution with the cost advantage of a shorter building period.

In June 1989, further savings were identified and agreed with the design team. From April to December 1989 there were weekly meetings between the design team and sub-groups with the consultants and other staff, and at the end of the briefing stage a full report on the major capital scheme was submitted to the region in December 1989.

On 6 February this year, the region reaffirmed the capital scheme and gave instructions to proceed with the plans and design work. On 17 September, plans and costings were submitted to the region—and all were within budget and on time.

Here comes the rub. On 24 September, the regional health authority cancelled all its capital schemes where contracts for building had not started. In addition to the major capital scheme, those affected included schemes for the Epping community hospital and for Bishop's Stortford hospital.

Can that be called poor management on the part of the district health authority, which followed Government policy to the letter and was encouraged by Ministers? All of us involved, quite properly, lobbied Ministers and secured their active support and encouragement, as well as that of the region—and then we were told that the money had been spent elsewhere.

My constituents and those of my hon. Friends are angry and outraged. The health service is not just about statistics. It is also to do with relieving pain and suffering, and with offering speedy operations where they are needed. When constituents have to wait two or three years for a hernia operation, a year or more for a cataract operation, and much longer in other cases—and that situation will not improve unless there is a resolution to the problem—they have every right to be angry and outraged.

Perhaps these are only the opening shots in a war—although I hope that it will not be a terribly long war. Later this week, my hon. Friends and I will be meeting my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Minister, so I do not expect my hon. Friend the Minister to say too much tonight. However, the very least that we expect——

Mr. Wells: Is an apology.

Mr. Hayes: Never mind an apology, although my hon. Friend is right to seek one. We want some money—and what is more, we want our money. We want the money that was raised locally through sensible land sales to provide decent health care, which has been denied to us

[Mr. Hayes]

and of which we have been robbed by North-East Thames regional health authority—and that is totally unacceptable.

11.38 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Stephen Dorrell): I was relieved to hear at one point in the very effective speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) that he did not intend that there should be any political infighting. He congratulated the members of West Essex health authority on the ground that they were not the prisoners of political faction and had attempted over many years, and were attempting now, to run their area health service effectively and without regard to party political considerations. I hope that we shall be able to approach the undoubted problems affecting the delivery of health care in my hon. Friend's district in the same spirit, both this evening and at my meeting with my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow and other hon. Friends later this week.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow and my hon. Friends who represent neighbouring constituencies. They have not only raised the matter on the Adjournment; they are to raise it with me in a meeting later this week and, perhaps more important, this is merely the latest stage in a long campaign that they have waged to ensure that the problems of their health district have remained very much to the fore in my mind and in the minds of my predecessors and present colleagues at the Department of Health.

Sometimes, when I reply to an Adjournment debate, I approach the subject fresh and with a newly prepared brief——

Mr. Norris: This one is dog-eared.

Mr. Dorrell: As my hon. Friend rightly says, the brief on this issue is becoming somewhat dog-eared. The ground has been well ploughed and, although this is the first occasion on which I have had to answer a debate on this subject, it is certainly not new to the officials who have been discussing it with me today. The effect of my hon. Friend's campaigns over the years has been to ensure that those in the Department who are responsible for these matters are fully aware of the strength of local feeling on them.

As some of the interventions in the debate have illustrated, although our main purpose was to concentrate on the capital programme in West Essex, that is not the only issue that arouses public concern—or, indeed, the only issue that health service managers in the area must address. There are also difficult questions associated with the revenue budget of West Essex, and it is perhaps unrealistic to expect to approach either topic in isolation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Harlow underlined the fact that the approval in principle for the Princess Alexandra hospital dates back to 1985. That programme was clearly intended as a major investment in improving the delivery of health care in the West Essex district. For that reason alone, one might have expected the project to be popular with and looked forward to by local people and consequently that any decision to postpone or shelve the proposal would arouse real concern.

I recognise that that concern is compounded by the fact that we are not talking merely about another health service investment—the kind of investment of which there are many currently in train in the health service—to improve the delivery of health care in the district. The proposal was the cornerstone of the district's and the region's strategy for the delivery of health care in West Essex over the intervening period of five years.

It was the approval in principle of the Princess Alexandra scheme that provided the framework for the concentration of acute services on a single site—moving away from the wasteful delivery of such services across three sites in what is by no means the largest district in the NHS, although it is certainly not the smallest. Clearly, the prospect of being able to deliver acute services from a single site, and in a more efficient manner, was particularly important in the context of planning the future of West Essex, given the pressures—to which several of my hon. Friends have referred—on its revenue budget. Both the region and I are fully aware of the real and understandable public upset voiced by my hon. Friends this evening.

It is important to consider the implications of what the regional health authority decided on 24 September and where we go from here. The first decision that the authority made is wholly incontestable. It decided that its capital programme at 24 September was undeliverable because it was too ambitious; the programme was over-committed. It also decided that, against an over-committed programme, the only sensible action was to shelve any scheme for which it had not signed a fixed contract and to reappraise the remaining schemes in the programme. I am sure that that was the correct decision. Any other decision would have involved leaping to ill-considered conclusions about the relative priorities of schemes which had been included in the over-committed programme.

The regional health authority is now committed to that complete reappraisal of the capital programme with the objective of developing a new approach to the planning of new national health service building which, against the pressure on the capital programme, will ask all district health authorities in the region to achieve acute sector rationalisation quicker and with less reliance on capital investment. That is being encouraged throughout the health service. It is not unreasonable to require that people in charge of a capital programme should satisfy themselves that they are using the capital as efficiently as possible. That is an entirely proper pressure for a region to place on those who espouse a particular capital scheme.

I have already said that I understand that that decision was hardly likely to be popular in West Essex or in the other districts affected by the region's decision of 24 September. However, I do not believe that the region had any realistic choice once it found itself in that position. It is unrealistic to expect the NHS investment programme to escape unscathed the implications of falling land values. That pressure applies right across the economy, and the NHS cannot expect to be exempt from it.

Any institution with a capital programme must face up to the implications of the falling values of the assets that it has for disposal. The region is entitled to some credit for having faced up to the implications instead of trying to hold out unrealistic prospects which it would later have to dash. It is far better to face up to the implications, address the issues and make a series of rational and ordered decisions than to try to fudge the decisions away.

The region's decision will give it the headroom to make decisions about proper priorities within the scheme once the deficit caused by the existing contracts on the over-committed programme has been cleared. We expect that deficit to be cleared by 1993.

Reference has been made to the £20 million raised by the sale of the Honey lane site. It is important to understand the principle that the NHS does not regard the resources raised by the sale of capital assets as district-specific. It would make the NHS quite unreasonably inflexible if we were to resile from the principle that capital raised by the sale of assets is a resource which should be redistributed through a proper mechanism within the NHS.

It is also fair to point out that, against the £20 million which has been raised from a site within West Essex, we must weigh the £11 million capital investment programme; nearly £2·5 million for refurbishment at the Princess Alexandra; over £1 million for the elderly day hospital at Saffron Walden; and a further £3·3 million for various projects for mentally handicapped patients. It is not as if it is £20 million out and nothing back.

With regard to the prospects for the capital programme, the district has made clear its belief that the Bishop's Stortford community hospital project may well be able to be financed in conjunction with a developer. Therefore, hopes for that scheme have not been entirely dashed by the pressures that apply across the rest of the investment programme.

I recognise the disappointment which people understandably and properly feel about the implications of the region's decision about the future of the Princess Alexandra hospital. We must consider how best to develop realistic and deliverable plans to achieve our objectives for improving health care within West Essex.

Mr. Bowen Wells: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Dorrell: No. I have only a minute left and I prefer to make a final point.

The analysis which determines that the single-site delivery of acute services is the most efficient use of resources has not been abandoned. The task that now falls to all those who are willing and able and want to consider the future delivery of health care to the people of West Essex within the resources that are likely to become available and within a realistic timescale is to consider the new circumstances and how best that objective can be delivered with regard to the most efficient use of capital in the context of West Essex. That is the——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock, and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at eight minutes to Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 24 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

SHARD BRIDGE BILL

Read the Third time, and passed.

STANDING ORDERS (PRIVATE BUSINESS)

Ordered,

That the Amendments to Standing Orders relating to Private Business set out in the Schedule be made.

SCHEDULE

Standing Order 1

Leave out lines 72 to 75 and insert—

'the term "water company" means a company appointed to be a water undertaker or a sewerage undertaker under Chapter 1 of Part II of the Water Act 1989'.

Standing Order 4A, as amended in 1986

Line 7, leave out 'a London borough or',

Line 16, after 'county' insert "metropolitan district or London borough'.

Line 23, after 'counties' insert 'metropolitan districts or London boroughs'.

Line 35, after 'county' insert 'metropolitan district or London borough'.

Line 38, after 'county' insert 'metropolitan district or London borough'.

Standing Order 7

Line 2, after 'specify' insert 'by reference to the deposited plans'.

Standing Order 10

Line 12, after 'county' insert 'metropolitan district or London borough'.

Line 20, after 'county' insert 'metropolitan district or London boroughs'.

Line 29, after 'county' insert 'metropolitan district or London borough'.

Standing Order 27

Line 62, after 'Office' insert 'one copy at the Health and Safety Executive'.

Standing Order 29

Line 6, leave out from 'thereon' to 'shall' in line 8.

Standing Order 32

Line 11, leave out from 'the' to 'and' in line 12 and insert 'principal regional office of the National Rivers Authority for the area containing the river or estuary affected'.

Standing Order 33

Line 4, leave out 'which is subject to the jurisdiction of a water authority'.

Line 9, leave out 'office of that authority' and insert 'principal regional office of the National Rivers Authority for the area containing the river affected'.

Standing Order 36, as amended in 1986

Line 11, at end insert 'with the proper officer of the district'.

Standing Order 37

Line 8, at end insert 'and another at the Department of the Environment'.

Standing Order 39

Line 18, leave out from beginning to 'at' in line 19.

Standing Order 42

Line 3, leave out 'within the area of any water authority'.

Line 7, leave out 'office of the authority' and insert 'principal regional office of the National Rivers Authority for the area containing the water course affected'.

Standing Order 43

Line 7, leave out from 'the' to 'and' in line 8 and insert 'principal regional office of the National Rivers Authority for the area containing the river or estuary affected'.

Standing Order 45

Line 2, leave out from 'Office' to end of line 11.

Line 12, leave out from first 'bill' to second 'in' in line 13.

Line 16, after 'estimate' insert 'signed by the person making the same'.

Line 19, leave out from beginning to 'and' in line 21.

Line 33, leave out subsection (4).

Standing Order 46

That the Standing Order be repealed.

Standing Order 64

Line 17, after 'that' insert—

'(i) failure to comply with the requirements of Standing Order 62 (Consents of proprietors of statutory companies promoting bills originating in this House) or Standing Order 63 (Consents of members of registered companies, etc, promoting bills originating in this House) as applied by this Standing Order shall affect only such provisions as aforesaid, and shall not affect any other provisions of the Bill: and

(ii) that'.

Standing Order 99

Line 1, leave out 'water authority or other'.

Standing Order 155

That the Standing Order be repealed.

Standing Order 156

That the Standing Order be repealed.

Standing Order 156A

Line 6, leave out from 'might' to 'under' in line 7 and insert 'be taken into account in determining the sums payable by way of Revenue Support Grant'.

Standing Order 156B

That the Standing Order be repealed.

Standing Order 159

That the Standing Order be repealed.

Standing Order 162

That the Standing Order be repealed.

Standing Order 191

Line 7, at end insert—

'(c) any community charge, or the non-domestic rate; or'.

Line 8, leave out 'Rate' and insert 'Revenue'.

Standing Order 198

Line 7, at beginning insert 'In the case of a bill originating in this House'.

Line 9, leave out from 'time' to end of line 13.

Standing Order 235

Line 6, at end add 'and no Petitions other than those so deposited shall be received'.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

CITY OF DUNDEE DISTRICT COUNCIL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

ZETLAND MASONIC SICK AND WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

Read the Third time, and passed.

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

United States of America

1. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit the United States of America to discuss American-European relations.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I have no firm plans for my next visit to the United States. I am in frequent touch with Mr. Baker, and last met him in New York on 2 October during the meeting of CSCE Ministers.

Mr. Marshall: Does the Foreign Secretary agree with his American counterpart that, in the light of the end of the cold war in Europe, NATO is increasingly likely to become a political rather than a military alliance? If so, what steps does he intend to take to further that change?

Mr. Hurd: Those steps were clearly set out at the July NATO summit held in London. We set out the military essentials of the alliance. We—and, of course, the Americans and all the allies—intend to maintain the integrated command, the presence of substantial American troops on the continent of Europe and a sensible mix of nuclear and conventional weapons. We then went on to illustrate the change, in particular by holding out the hand of co-operation to eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Sir Peter Emery: Will my right hon. Friend go a little further? Does he realise that the North Atlantic Assembly is the only governmentally accepted body where American members of Congress and European Members of Parliament can meet? Although much consideration is being given to the military structure, the future of a body in which American members of Congress, Canadian Members of Parliament and European members can get together is of the greatest importance and is worthy of serious consideration.

Mr. Hurd: I know the importance of the Atlantic Assembly and the part that my hon. Friend plays in it. I certainly agree that such contacts, forming part of the political side of NATO's work, are extremely important.

Mr. John D. Taylor: As the IRA has extended its activities into many countries of the European Community, and as much of its funding comes from the United States—some of its blood money was probably used this morning in the atrocious attack on the Royal Irish Rangers in Newry and on another regiment in Londonderry, which no doubt the Foreign Secretary will take the opportunity to condemn—has the Foreign Secretary ever raised the question of funding by Americans for the IRA in Europe?

Mr. Hurd: Of course, I condemn this morning's tragic events in Newry and in Londonderry. We have often raised this point. When I was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, I raised it when I visited the United States. The present Administration and the Reagan Administration before them, have taken as strict a line as

they can within United States law to ensure that such contributions are not given in a way that could help the outrages about which the right hon. Gentleman is concerned. I agree that we need to keep those reminders constantly before the United States.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Does the Foreign Secretary agree that relations between America and Europe could be seriously undermined because of the failure of the EEC to put forward realistic proposals on agricultural expenditure? Does it worry my right hon. Friend, as Foreign Secretary, that, despite all the pleas that were made for strong action, the EEC is planning a substantial increase in its agricultural spending next year and that, once again, food mountains are growing to all-time highs?

Mr. Hurd: Yes, indeed. I made the first point strongly to my colleagues in Luxembourg on Monday. It is not sensible for the European Community and its leaders to suppose that they will attract much credibility when talking about economic and monetary union or, indeed, political union if they cannot produce a reasonable offer for the GATT negotiations. At the moment, the European Community is isolated. I believe that when examined at the negotiating table, the American offers will prove to have a good deal of fustian in them, but we cannot examine them at the negotiating table until we have a position of our own.

Mr. Kaufman: When replying to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall), the right hon. Gentleman referred with approval to the declaration made at the July NATO summit, which the Prime Minister signed. Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that in that declaration NATO endorsed a new NATO strategy making nuclear forces

"truly weapons of last resort",

and that those are the words of President Bush himself? Will the right hon. Gentleman explain why, in her speech in Helsinki on 30 August the Prime Minister said:

"Our first task is in reality to preserve the essentials of the present order. That means . . . continuing to station nuclear weapons in Europe, without putting new constraints on them such as . . . 'weapons of last resort'"?

As the Prime Minister signed that declaration and as she has disgracefully repudiated it, will the Foreign Secretary now uphold President Bush and repudiate the Prime Minister?

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gentleman has earned his reputation for selective quotation. He omitted—*[Interruption.]* I see that some of his text is highlighted, but I am not sure whether that is the bit that he left in or the bit that he left out. I recall clearly our discussions at Lancaster house on this point and the balancing sentences and phrases that were used to safeguard the position of the Alliance. One thing that it must preserve is a sensible mix of nuclear and conventional weapons.

Middle East

4. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to meet the Foreign Minister of Israel to discuss the middle east peace process.

8. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit Israel to discuss the middle east peace process.

Mr. Hurd: I met the Israeli Foreign Minister on 16 October. We had a thorough discussion of middle eastern issues. I have no firm plans to meet Mr. Levy again, but we agreed to stay in closer contact in future.

Mr. Marshall: Did my right hon. Friend congratulate the Israeli Government on their actions in deactivating the Basra reactor? Without that action, the bloodthirsty butcher of Baghdad would have been able to threaten the whole world with a nuclear disaster.

Mr.Hurd: I take my hon. Friend's point, but I am not sure that the world would be a safer place if everybody acted as Israel did in that respect. Nevertheless, I take note of what I believe is my hon. Friend's point for the future. Iraq has obligations of great importance under the non-proliferation treaty and it is of crucial interest to the whole community—not just to Israel—that those obligations should be respected.

Ms. Primarolo: Given the disastrous results of the Foreign Secretary's attempts to clarify the Government's position with regard to the Palestinian problem when he was in Jerusalem recently, will the right hon. Gentleman take this opportunity to make a clear and unambiguous statement to Parliament on the Government's commitment to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the west bank and the Gaza?

Mr. Hurd: As the hon. Lady knows, we have never had such a commitment. What we are saying and have said for a long time is that the Palestinians have the right to self-determination and that that right can be exercised only in the context of a negotiated settlement, which must also include provision for the security of Israel within secure borders. That has been the position for a long time, and I restated it in Jerusalem. I am sorry that, for one reason or another, the way in which it came out prevented Palestinian leaders from meeting me a week ago as I had hoped. That would have balanced my visit to Israel.

Mr. Sumberg: When my right hon. Friend met the Israeli Government did he raise with them the horrendous and appalling massacre of hundreds of Lebanese Christians by the Syrian army? If he did not, will he join me in inviting the United Nations to pass a resolution condemning that outrage to prove to the world and the parties in the middle east that it is not the one-sided, biased organisation that it sometimes appears to be?

Mr. Hurd: We made it clear with regard to the killings on Temple Mount, the later killings in Jerusalem, and what happened in the Lebanon, that we condemn all acts of violence of that nature. They are separate problems and neither will be resolved by political violence.

Mr. Janner: After his visit to Israel, does the right hon. Gentleman feel that he now has a better understanding of the legitimate sensitivities and anxieties of that democratic country? If Britain is to help in the peace process, it must be seen to be even-handed and balanced. That means continuing its opposition to the Arab boycott. If he believes that that is right, will he speak to the Secretary of State for Energy about the reported compliance of National Power with that boycott, which I am sure he would regard as intolerable?

Mr. Hurd: One of the purposes of my visit to Israel was to get into close touch with not only Israeli Ministers but

people such as Mr. Peres and Mayor Kollek. Israel is a democratic society and I hope that within the democratic debate in Israel there is a growing realisation that its security cannot satisfactorily rest on a regime of occupation. It is neither a just nor a sustainable basis for the security of Israel, about which Israelis, as the hon. and learned Gentleman said, are rightly anxious and sensitive.

On the hon. and learned Gentleman's second point, we deplore boycott efforts and campaigns of that nature. How specific British enterprises respond to them is not a matter for me.

Mr. Adley: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the presence of the Iraqis in Kuwait is totally unacceptable, as is the presence of the Israelis in parts of the Lebanon, Syria and Jordan?

Mr. Lawrence: Jordan?

Mr. Adley: Yes, in parts of Jordan. The presence of both forces is unacceptable for exactly the same reasons —*[Interruption.]* My hon. Friends have had their say and now they should let someone else have theirs. They are in defiance of the United Nations resolutions against invading and occupying the territory of their neighbours. Will my right hon. Friend also confirm my understanding of the position? The reason why we, the Americans and others are in Saudi is that we were invited there by the Saudi Government, in the same way as the Syrians are in the Lebanon because they were invited there by the Lebanese Government. Am I correct in that assumption?

Mr. Hurd: The right answers to both the problems which my hon. Friend mentioned have been set out in Security Council resolutions. In the case of Kuwait the resolutions are very clear because they respond to a clear act of aggression and require the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops. In the case of Arab-Israel, another set of Security Council resolutions, in particular Nos. 242 and 338, require the sensible reconciling of Israel's need for security—a particularly sensitive matter because of its geography and recent history—and the right of the Palestinians to self-determination. Those two things must be reconciled. They can be reconciled only through negotiations for a comprehensive settlement.

It is not sensible to draw too many exact comparisons between the positions in Syria and Kuwait but my hon. Friend is right that originally, whatever one's view of their later activities, the Syrians went into Lebanon at the request of the Lebanese Government.

Romania

5. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Romania about the development of democracy there.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs plans to visit Romania at present. However, I hope that Ministers will be able to discuss economic matters with the Romanian deputy Prime Minister in the United Kingdom next month. My right hon. Friend discussed Romania's troubled progress towards democracy with his Romanian counterpart in New York on 2 October.

Mr. Flynn: Despite 40 years of paranoid tyranny and the many betrayed hopes of the past nine months, will the Government now respond to the genuine encouraging trends in Romania with the first prosecutions of the miners who participated in the June repression and the fact that recent opposition demonstrations have not been harassed? Is not there a grave danger, however, that unless we take action now and acknowledge in a practical way the advances that have been made to the flawed but genuine democracy of Romania, we shall give encouragement to those sinister forces seeking to recreate the country's previous isolation?

Mr. Waldegrave: I certainly agree that we must reward the steps forward, but we must not ignore those things that are still going wrong. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will agree that we and our European colleagues were right to sign a trade agreement with Romania. However, we are holding back from further steps because there is evidence of further secret police activity of the old style and of the harassment of dissidents. I spoke to Doina Cornea about that when we met recently. It is a policy of carrots and sticks and both, I am afraid, are still necessary.

Mr. Aitken: Does my right hon. Friend agree that whole-hearted political and economic co-operation with the Government of Romania will be difficult as long as that Government appear to have a less than healthy commitment to human rights and freedoms? Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is still a great deal of fear among the ordinary people of Romania that the secret police, the Securitate, are still up to their old tricks? Have we made it clear enough to President Iliescu and his Government that we want to see further progress towards a truly free society before there is real co-operation?

Mr. Waldegrave: I believe that we have made that pretty clear. The Romanians are anxious to present the progress that they have made in as clear a manner as possible. As I said to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn), we must not forget that other things still need a great deal of improvement. The meetings that we were able to have in Bournemouth with a number of principal dissidents under Ceausescu warned us that, as yet, all is far from being in order.

AIDS

7. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent conferences on the international aspects of AIDS have been attended by Ministers or officials; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd): Officials have attended eight conferences on AIDS issues this year. AIDS is a global threat, and international co-operation is required to control its spread. Our strategy is highly regarded internationally, and we play a leading role in international meetings on the subject.

Mr. Kirkwood: It is reassuring to hear that officials are being sent to attend those important international gatherings, but does the Minister accept that ministerial involvement is also important? He should pay particular attention to the worrying increase in the number of AIDS cases in the heterosexual community, particularly those

cases that have been contracted as a result of foreign travel. What will Ministers do in future to ensure that business men and holiday makers are given the proper information that they need to protect themselves?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: This is a very important matter, and ministerial involvement is constant. With regard to the spread of AIDS through heterosexual contacts by travellers abroad, the World Health Organisation runs co-ordinated national AIDS programmes in almost every country and has published a booklet, "AIDS Information For Travellers", which is widely available.

Mr. Tredinnick: I support what the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) said. I have just come from a meeting of the all-party group on AIDS and the key message that we must get across is the danger faced by the heterosexual community. Given the worrying figures already mentioned, will my hon. Friend undertake to consider ways in which to increase awareness of the dangers in that community?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Of course. We are very much aware of the increase in AIDS in the heterosexual community. I shall certainly undertake to reconsider these matters to see whether there are any further initiatives that we can take.

Mr. Corbyn: AIDS is a terrifying problem which has serious implications—the likely death of millions of people throughout the world. What support has been given to WHO so that the spread of AIDS in other countries can at least be combated by publicity and that research done in Britain and the United States can be shared with the poorer countries, which are suffering just as badly, if not worse than ourselves, from the problem of AIDS?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The World Health Organisation is leading the action against AIDS. The United Kingdom is the third largest donor and we have pledged £16·83 million so far.

German Unification

9. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions are taking place within the European Community regarding the implications of German unification for weighted majority voting in the Council of Ministers and for the size of the European Parliament.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Garel-Jones): None, Sir.

Mr. Knapman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who will be aware that weighted majority voting in the Council of Europe bears little relationship to the populations of the countries involved. However, we now hear that following unification, both the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister in Germany have said that they do not require any increased representation "for the time being." May I take it from my hon. Friend that his reply "none" is 100 times more encouraging than "none for the time being"?

Mr. Garel-Jones: The German Government undertook not to request EC treaty amendments to accommodate German unification. They have made no proposals to amend qualified majority vote weighting or the number of Members of the European Parliament, both of which would require treaty amendment. But, as my hon. Friend says, it is clear that a number of small member countries, with Luxembourg a prime example, have made a notable contribution to the Community despite their size.

Mr. Trimble: Although we must welcome the extension of the Community by the inclusion of what was, before this October, a separate country, is not it inappropriate that the other countries of central Europe that experienced similar democratic revolutions and are at a similar economic stage—Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland—should be kept out of the Community while the former German Democratic Republic is allowed in?

Mr. Garel-Jones: There is no intention on behalf of the Government or the Community to keep anyone out of the Community. The Prime Minister has made it clear that we would welcome the day when those new, emerging democracies in the east are in a position, because of their internal politics and their economies, to apply to join the Community.

Mr. Soames: I warmly welcome my hon. Friend to his new position. Is it likely that such matters will be discussed at the intergovernmental conference and what position will Her Majesty's Government take?

Mr. Garel-Jones: There is no reason why those matters should arise in the intergovernmental conference. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his warm welcome.

Mr. Skinner: Was the Minister of State in favour of weighted voting when he was Deputy Chief Whip?

Mr. Garel-Jones: As the hon. Member will know, in those days I was in favour of hon. Members supporting their party—a lesson that he might take.

Eastern Europe

10. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet the European Community Foreign Affairs Ministers to discuss aid to eastern Europe.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly meets his European Community colleagues to discuss the Community's relations with the countries of central and eastern Europe. We strongly support the Community's policy of making aid to those countries conditional on progress towards political and economic reform.

Mr. Coombs: Although I recognise the vital importance of aid, in terms of trade credits and direct aid, to eastern European countries and the importance of exchanges of personnel through seminars and courses, is not it equally important to set up educational institutions, such as business schools, in eastern European countries so that people there can learn the sort of commercial skills that they will need in a newly competitive world? Will he ensure that the know-how fund is used to that end?

Mr. Waldegrave: There have been some such projects under the know-how fund. In general, it is better to try to develop institutions in the countries involved rather than bring them here, which is what they ask for on the whole.

Mr. Madden: Will the Minister acknowledge that it would be daft for Britain to provide aid to eastern Europe if that would result in the displacement of British jobs,

particularly in the textile and clothing industry? Therefore, will he take this opportunity to acknowledge, on behalf of the Government, that they do not regard the British textile and clothing industry as expendable and that there is absolutely no question of the multi-fibre arrangement being abandoned or phased out too quickly unless proper and adequate safeguards are put in place to protect the best interests of the textile and clothing industry and the British workers whose livelihoods depend on it?

Mr. Waldegrave: Similar arguments can be made in relation to every sector of the economy where we are trying to liberalise trade with the rest of the world—for example, agriculture. There must be some respect in which, if we are serious about opening our markets to poorer countries, we are willing to stand against our sectoral interests sometimes.

Mr. William Powell: Is my right hon. Friend aware that last week I had the opportunity of visiting the headquarters of the Stasi in east Berlin? Is not it perfectly clear that the Stasi hopes to return to power by establishing massive slush funds at home and abroad? Will my right hon. Friend ensure that when he talks to Community Ministers he discusses the recycling of looted Stasi funds into aid to eastern Europe?

Mr. Waldegrave: However much money was deployed by former members of the Stasi, I do not think that they would return to power in a democratic society.

Mr. Robertson: Does not Britain set a particularly bad example on this in the EC? The Prime Minister and other Ministers perambulate around Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland promising all sorts of help, but is not the sad reality that the total amount of know-how help for central and eastern Europe in this financial year adds up to £15 million, that all of it is already committed and that, despite the growing demand, desire and need for it, no new projects can possibly be sanctioned before April next year? Does not that show up Tory concern for the new democracies as the sanctimonious propaganda that we all know it to be?

Mr. Waldegrave: The answer is no. There is still no parallel among other European countries for the know-how fund and I welcome the fact that the rapid spread of democratic and free enterprise societies in eastern Europe has meant that we can move much quicker than expected this year, and negotiations are already under way for next year. Such help has been far more effective than the huge generalised soft loans, many of which have not been taken up, which hit the headlines but do little good.

Mr. Rathbone: Will my right hon. Friend reassure the House that contributions of know-how and other non-financial kinds are being co-ordinated in the same way as financial contributions within the EC?

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes, we try to do that, but I am sure that there is always room for co-ordination to be improved. Our view has always been that if we have a good project we should back it first and try to co-ordinate later, rather than be too bureaucratic.

Ethiopia

11. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement about the peace process in Ethiopia.

Mr. Waldegrave: As a result of recent contacts in the United States, there is a prospect that the negotiations between the Ethiopian Government and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front may resume.

Mr. Bennett: Given all the talk about a new world order, does the Minister agree that that new world order should try to inject some urgency into peace negotiations within Ethiopia, because until peace is established within Ethiopia there is little hope of effective aid reaching the large numbers of people now starving in Government-held areas and in areas held by the various liberation fronts? Will the Government use all their offices to get some action, rather than simply talking about talks?

Mr. Waldegrave: I agree with the link that the hon. Gentleman makes between the establishment of peace and effective aid. Until there is peace, there will never be an end to the hunger crisis in that country. The principal responsibility must lie with the warring factions, who too often in recent years have seen the mirage of a military victory and therefore broken off negotiations again, but it is somewhat more encouraging that they are talking again.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: Does not my right hon. Friend consider the disastrous situation in Ethiopia to be yet another example, in economic and human terms, of Marxism in action?

Mr. Waldegrave: Certainly the Ethiopian Government have had a terrible record in the past both on human rights and in the competence of their economic and social doctrines. They are now jettisoning those doctrines very fast, which gives some hope for progress.

EC Intergovernmental Conference

12. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress he is making in preparation for the intergovernmental conference in December, with particular reference to the issue of political union.

Mr. Hurd: I attended the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 October, which discussed preparations for the intergovernmental conference on political union. The Italian presidency will report on progress to the special European Council—the summit—on 27 and 28 October. Our aim continues to be a more efficient, effective and democratically accountable Community.

Mr. Sillars: Has the Secretary of State read reports of the rather bad-tempered presentation at the European Parliament yesterday of the Commission's document on political union, which will ultimately go before the intergovernmental conference? Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the document confirms that, as the Community was established by international treaties agreed by sovereign states, it is perfectly possible to deepen and widen its integration and to create greater cohesion

without crucially altering its legal basis? Does not the Commission's document point to the model for the future being not federalist but confederalist?

Mr. Hurd: I have not read the Commission document, but Mr. Delors outlined it at the Foreign Affairs Council meeting on Monday. Having heard that outline, and subject to my studying the document, I do not believe that it offers a way forward that my Government would want to follow. In all the discussions in the intergovernmental conferences beginning in December on economic and monetary union and political union, we shall be arguing —for example, in the GATT round—about many of the issues confronting the Community. We shall argue not from an un-European or anti-European stance, but for a Europe that is liberal and open. There will be considerable discussion of those points.

Mr. Haselhurst: What specific gains does my right hon. Friend think will emerge from the intergovernmental discussions? Would not it be helpful to Britain if they could be clearly explained ahead of the meeting, rather than merely expressing a generalised commitment to a better Community?

Mr. Hurd: I tried to offer such an explanation when the House debated that subject in the summer. The gains can be easily summarised. We want to improve co-ordination between the Twelve on foreign policy and the role of national parliaments—including that of working together in controlling and monitoring the Council's activities. We want to improve also the work of the European Parliament, not by extending its legislative powers but by encouraging it to be more effective in monitoring and invigilating the Commission's work and expenditure. We should like to find a sensible definition of subsidiarity which would establish clearly where Community action is necessary, and what action should best be left to national Governments—particularly as it is national Governments who decide among themselves what the role of the Community should be, and not the Community which decides the role of national Governments.

Mr. Maclennan: Will the right hon. Gentleman make it clear at the intergovernmental conference that it is no part of the Government's policy to countenance a two-speed Europe, with Britain on the outside track, which would be a disaster for our country?

Mr. Hurd: It would be a disaster not only for this country but for Greece, where I discussed the matter last week, for Portugal, for Spain, and for many other countries. I hope very much that those in charge of the discussions on economic and monetary union in particular will bear that point in mind. It is most important that we travel at a speed and in a direction which commands consensus.

Mr. Favell: Can my right hon. Friend say yet what the Government's attitude will be if the 11 other members of the Community accept the Delors proposals?

Mr. Hurd: The Delors proposals deal with economic and monetary union, which is beyond the scope of the question. As to the intergovernmental conference on political union, there can be no change to the treaty unless all 12 member states agree.

CSCE Summit

13. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the forthcoming CSCE summit in Paris.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend will attend the CSCE summit in Paris. We envisage that a conventional forces in Europe agreement will be signed. The conference should consolidate the recent progress in Europe by strengthening democratic and economic reforms. We believe that the rights won in the reforms should be enshrined in a magna carta for Europe.

Mr. Atkinson: Given that all but three of the European CSCE participating states now send parliamentary delegations to the Council of Europe and that the remaining three—Romania, Bulgaria and Albania—expect to do so shortly, does my right hon. Friend agree that next month's summit need look no further for its proposed assembly of Europe, as suggested by the NATO summit in July, than to the existing Council of Europe? Will he ensure that the Government put that proposal forward at next month's summit?

Mr. Waldegrave: The problem is that the United States and Canada are participants. I go this far with my hon. Friend—the infrastructure of the Council of Europe may well provide the basis on which a new assembly could meet, but we must pay attention to the importance of maintaining American participation in these meetings.

Mr. Wareing: Is it not the proposal of the chairman of CSCE that the European assembly from the Atlantic to the Urals should be a completely separate assembly? What efforts will the Government make at the next summit to ensure that there is a coming together, which I believe that the people of this country and of Europe will see as a positive step towards the unification of Europe in ways other than the old-fashioned ideas of the EEC?

Mr. Waldegrave: I think that the hon. Gentleman is right that we should not proliferate entirely new assemblies, and if we can build on what already exists in a way that is acceptable to the north Atlantic partners, that is very sensible.

Palestinian Refugees

14. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made during the past three months about Palestinian refugees to the Government of Israel.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State discussed the situation in the occupied territories, including conditions in the Palestinian refugee camps there, with members of the Israeli Government during his recent visit to the middle east.

Mr. Pawsey: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. He will be aware of the great concern in all parts of the House about recent events in occupied Palestine. The intifada goes on; the violence continues. Does not he therefore believe that it is now time for a major international conference to be convened, possibly under the auspices of the United Nations, to discuss the occupied territories and the refugee problem?

Mr. Waldegrave: We have always made it clear that at the right time an international conference will probably be necessary to help to produce the comprehensive settlement that my right hon. Friend spoke of earlier. I do not think that the time is yet right for that, unfortunately, and we continue to urge that contacts be built up between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government in the way they appeared to be about to begin to do before the present crisis in the Gulf.

Mr. Ernie Ross: Will the Secretary of State take this opportunity to confirm to the Israeli Government that the United Kingdom Government's position is that east Jerusalem is occupied territory, and therefore that the provisions of the fourth Geneva convention on the protection of civilian persons in time of war apply absolutely and without exception? Will he also confirm that Israel's purported annexation of east Jerusalem is illegal and as such has no effect on the status of east Jerusalem as occupied territory; and that any measures that Israel purports to take to change the status of east Jerusalem are null and void?

Mr. Waldegrave: That is the position of the British Government, yes.

Mr. Lawrence: Is not it strange that Israel's oil-rich Arab neighbours have never thought it right to improve the standard of living of their Arab brothers in the refugee camps?

Mr. Waldegrave: That is rather unfair. One of the many legitimate accusations against Saddam Hussein is that his invasion of Kuwait has destroyed a country which was generous in its support of the Palestinian people. The consequences of that, and of the loss of remittances from Palestinian workers in Kuwait and elsewhere, are now causing even more problems for already hard-pressed people in the occupied territories.

Miss Hoey: In view of the news this morning that the occupied territories have once again been completely closed off by the Israeli Government, and given what we know that the Israeli Government are prepared to do when they are in public view, will the Minister take this opportunity to call the Israeli ambassador to the Foreign Office and insist that the occupied territories be open at the very least to the United Nations observers, who are not even allowed to go in and see the way in which people in the refugee camps are treated?

Mr. Waldegrave: We have made it clear that the Secretary-General's mission, which the United Nations has been attempting to send, should be received in Israel. We deplore the continuing cycle of violence described by the hon. Lady. It is our belief—a belief that I believe is held on both sides of the House—that no amount of military action against the Palestinians will suppress their desire for self-determination. The sooner the Israelis accept that, the more chance that there is of the two peoples living together in peace.

Mr. Conway: Is my hon. Friend aware of some of the excellent work to help physically and mentally handicapped children that is going on in some of the Palestinian refugee camps? If he is not, will he take the opportunity to find out about it to see whether we can do more to help that work?

Mr. Waldegrave: I am aware of the work, and my right hon. Friend is up to date on it as he visited one of those projects. I saw other work of this kind when I was in Gaza. Like the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East and other countries, we support this valuable work. I particularly mention the work at St. John's eye hospital, which has become excellent in dealing with the kind of injuries suffered in such situations.

Europe-USA Relations

15. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the United States Secretary of State to discuss European-American relations.

Mr. Garel-Jones: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State expects to meet Secretary Baker in November when they are due to sign a declaration on EC-United States relations at the CSCE summit in Paris.

Mr. Brown: When the Foreign Secretary meets representatives of the American Government, will he discuss the question of burden sharing—something on which the Americans are quite keen—in the context of the Gulf crisis? Having discussed it with the Americans, will he then dicuss the same issue with his Cabinet colleagues and get from them some intervention in those parts of the country, particularly my constituency, where substantial contracts with Iraq have been lost as a result of sanctions and major redundancy rounds have ensued? This is a problem that affects the north-east and Scotland, but so far there has been no response about domestic burden-sharing from the British Government. When can we expect one?

Mr. Garel-Jones: The hon. Gentleman is right in one sense—the contribution that the United Kingdom has made to the international peace-keeping force in the Gulf is second only to that of the United States. We lose no opportunity to invite other like-minded Governments to make a contribution. The matter of what happens within the United Kingdom is not for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend: Will the Government continue to remind the United States not only of the need for self-determination for the Palestinian people but of their right to have their own state?

Mr. Garel-Jones: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has already answered that question, and it would not be wise for me to add anything to what he has said.

Mr. Beggs: When the Foreign Secretary meets the United States Secretary, will he take the opportunity to discuss the recent Dublin Supreme Court decision and the constitutional imperative under which Irish Governments are required to work for a united Ireland? Will he seek the support of the United States Secretary in asking the Irish Government to remove this territorial claim and thus enable compliance with the Helsinki agreement, thereby denying the IRA and terrorists any right to exist and operate?

Mr. Garel-Jones: The British Government lose no opportunity to make clear to the United States the seriousness that we attach to IRA terrorism. As to the

constitutional matter that the hon. Gentleman raised in connection with the Helsinki agreement, it would not be right for the United States to intervene in the constitution of a foreign state.

Mr. Cash: Does my hon. Friend recall Winston Churchill's statement that the supreme fact of the 20th century is that Britain and America have marched together upon the basis of shared values? Does he further recall that at the time of the Gulf crisis on 2 August and in the following weeks it was Britain and America who stood together to prevent Saddam Hussein from taking up the position that he would undoubtedly hold at the moment, had he been allowed to do so—that is to be in Saudi Arabia? Does he further agree that the most important action that we have to take is to encourage our European partners to play a full part in making sure that we maintain peace in the middle east?

Mr. Garel-Jones: I agree with my hon. Friend that our alliance with the United States, through NATO, must remain the mainstay of our position. That does not run counter to our wish for a closer co-ordination of security and foreign policy within the Community. My hon. Friend, however, is absolutely right, that our relationship with the United States is crucial to the United Kingdom in terms of both defence and other matters.

South Africa

16. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions, and with whom, he has had about policy towards South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I visited South Africa from 19 to 21 September and met a wide range of political figures, including both President de Klerk and Mr. Nelson Mandela. I was encouraged by the commitment I found on all sides to move speedily towards negotiations aimed at ending apartheid.

Mr. Canavan: Will the Minister support Nelson Mandela who warned the South African Government earlier today that unless the new South African constitution guarantees the right to vote for all black people in South Africa, the probability is that violence will continue and escalate? Will the Minister also support the efforts that are being made to arrange a meeting between Nelson Mandela and Chief Buthelezi, with a view to bringing an end to the continuing violence in the townships, where more than 700 people have been killed since the beginning of August?

Mr. Waldegrave: On the first point, I found no one among the main-line politicians in South Africa who had any doubt whatever but that the constitution must be based on one man, one vote. The hon. Gentleman need have no fears on that score. On the hon. Gentleman's second point, I strongly agree with him. When I was in South Africa I met the secretary-general of Inkatha and urged that such a meeting should take place. I hope that it takes place soon and that it leads to an end to the violence in the townships. We all want to see that.

Mr. Hind: When my right hon. Friend holds discussions with representatives of other African front-line states will he emphasise to them that a great deal of the fighting in the townships is on a tribal basis between two groups who in the long term are seeking to have power in a future democratic South Africa? Will he urge those representatives to look in depth at the problem and see what they can do to bring the two sides together to end the fighting in the townships and hasten the march towards a free democratic South Africa?

Mr. Waldegrave: There is something in what my hon. Friend says, but it is a little more complex than that. A great deal of fighting is taking place between Zulus who are ANC members and Zulus who are Inkatha members. It is not, therefore, simply a tribal matter, although there is a tribal element to the fighting. Clearly, ruthless jockeying for political position is taking place.

Mr. Robert Hughes: Is the Minister aware that a South African delegation that recently saw Foreign Office officials was peddled the dangerous and disastrous line that there is no role now to be played in South Africa by external forces and that it is all down to the people inside the country? Will the Minister deny that that is the Government's position? Does he accept that there is a strong role to be played by Governments outside South Africa and that pressure must be maintained on President de Klerk to move faster towards the negotiating table rather than delaying that move, as he appears to be doing now?

Mr. Waldegrave: I profoundly disagree with the hon. Gentleman. I think that it is the ANC which is having difficulty in keeping up with the pace of movement towards negotiation. As a result of meeting external organisation representatives who over the years have honourably put a great deal of hard work into supporting the abolition of apartheid, I have the very strong feeling that they are increasingly being left behind. They often come to see me urging points of view which they believe are held by the ANC but which have already been abandoned by the ANC. I must urge that the lead being taken by major politicians in South Africa, both black and white, should continue. It is the most optimistic thing of all about South Africa at present and represents the best hope for the future.

Mr. John Carlisle: As my right hon. Friend once again expressed his disapproval of economic sanctions while he was in South Africa, will he now express the same disapproval of sports sanctions and boycotts? It is nonsense that although, with the full support of this side of the House, we rightly advocate the abandonment of economic sanctions, we still retain the sports boycott. When are we going to come out of the ridiculous Gleneagles agreement?

Mr. Waldegrave: With respect my hon. Friend is perhaps making the mirror image of the mistake made by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) as there are now senior ANC spokesmen saying that the abolition of the sporting boycott is coming near. It is better to leave the joint leadership being developed between the South African Government, Inkatha, the ANC, Azapo and others to tell us about the timing on some of these things. The ANC is moving well ahead of some of its alleged external supporters on this.

Cambodia

18. **Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Government of China to discuss the future of Cambodia.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs discussed Cambodia with his Chinese colleague, Mr. Qian Qichen, at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 28 September.

Mr. Williams: Will the Minister comment on continuing reports that the SAS is involved in training the Khmer Rouge to lay land mines in Cambodia? In view of the excellent reputation of John Pilger, the journalist who is making these reports, and the way he has spoken the truth about Cambodia for years, does the Minister realise that the public are horrified by the prospect that the British Government are supporting militarily the return of the Khmer Rouge?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The British Government have never given support or help of any kind to the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Winterton: Will my hon. Friend accept that it is time that the free civilised world entered into meaningful discussions directly with the Administration in Cambodia and stopped playing around with Prince Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot? That man is a tyrant and must never be allowed to set foot in the capital of Cambodia again to do what he did to the people of that wonderful country.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: That man was a cruel tyrant and we condemn him. I urge my hon. Friend to recognise the work of the five permanent members of the Security Council in their new initiatives and the formation of the supreme national council which has membership from all the different leading figures in Cambodia.

Mr. Foulkes: Further to the question of the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton), will the Government make it clear to the Chinese Government and to the House that they will oppose the continued illegal representation of Pol Pot at the United Nations and any representative of any coalition which includes Pol Pot? Will they make it clear that in the foreign policy of the United Kingdom the genocide of the killing fields will never be forgotten?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Most certainly, the genocide of the killing fields will never be forgotten. The Cambodian seat at the United Nations is not at present occupied. The supreme national council is supported by the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the factions in Cambodia. That is the new initiative and it will be up to the supreme national council to appoint an ambassador to the United Nations.

Mr. Bowis: Does my hon. Friend agree that the interests of the people of Cambodia are not best served by exaggerations and distortions which can appear in television programmes, and nor will they be served by the return of anything which included Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge? Does my hon. Friend agree also that the only part of Cambodia that has any sort of normal life now is that under the control of the Phnom Penh Government? Will he do what he can to ensure that the world community recognises that and pours into that part of the country the aid and investment that is so necessary?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Britain has committed up to £2 million worth of humanitarian aid to Cambodia. The new development quite different from what prevailed in earlier months of this year is the resolution of the United Nations permanent five—supported by the United Nations General Assembly, the Hun Sen Government and all the factions in Cambodia—to make progress in discussions to form the supreme national council. We should all be pushing for that because we all wish to see an end to the suffering in that country and for those wretched people to be able to live life in peace and determine their future.

Germany

19. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent meetings he has had with other Foreign Ministers regarding German reunification; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Garel-Jones: On 12 September in Moscow, with his German, French, American and Russian colleagues, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs signed the treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany. On 1 October in New York, they signed a declaration suspending four-power rights and responsibilities with effect from German unification on 3 October.

We welcome the unification of Germany in peace and freedom. We will be working with the united Germany as a friend, ally and partner for the peace and prosperity of Europe and the wider world.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister aware that it will not be lost on the British people, who are suffering from high interest rates, rocketing unemployment and a massive trade deficit, that in the next two years, in order to carry out the German takeover, not reunification, this lousy Tory Government are to hand out £32 million of taxpayers' money to bail out shipyards in East Germany while shutting down shipyards in Sunderland and Birkenhead? The whole thing stinks to high heaven.

Mr. Garel-Jones: I am delighted that the hon. Gentleman's question was reached this afternoon as it enables me to offer him an apology for suggesting that his voting record in support of his party was not what it might be. Not only did he vote against the last Labour Government more than anyone else—he also had one of the highest voting records in their favour because of his consistent attendance in the House.

As I explained to the hon. Gentleman on Friday, the cost of German unification to the United Kingdom this year will be nil, and next year it will be £32 million. That is considerably less than the British taxpayer has spent subsidising the coal industry over many years. I realise that he and many of his hon. Friends are unable to give unification the welcome that we can because they still aspire to a Trabant-owning autocracy.

Middle East

3.32 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Douglas Hurd): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on developments in the middle east since the emergency debate on 6 and 7 September.

In that debate, the House endorsed the Government's policy, which is that of virtually the entire international community: Saddam Hussein must leave Kuwait and the legitimate Government of Kuwait must be restored. Iraq must release our hostages.

Since the House met, at the United Nations we have applied growing pressure to Iraq. Negotiations are under way in New York for a further resolution to hold Iraq liable to pay compensation for the damage resulting from its actions, including the maltreatment of foreign nationals and property.

Sanctions have been enforced, in particular by the effective blockade by allied ships that are operating in the area. More than 100 ships from 12 countries are on constant patrol enforcing the embargo. The Royal Navy has challenged more than 1,100 vessels and has taken part in 10 boarding operations. The House will want to pay tribute to the courage and professionalism of the Royal Navy.

The United Nations must continue to tighten the screw of sanctions. We cannot relax our determination to ensure Saddam Hussein's complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. Since the House met, there have been many more examples of his tyranny. All the available evidence suggests that, far from being under strict orders to behave with discipline in Kuwait, Iraq's soldiers have been allowed complete licence. The House will be aware that many Kuwaitis who have been able to escape their occupied country have testified to wanton destruction of property and to cruel and inhuman treatment of Kuwaiti citizens, including several murders carried out in front of wives and children, rape and torture. We must remind the Iraqis once again that at all levels of authority, whether they be military or civilian, they are personally responsible under the Geneva convention for illegal acts committed as occupiers in Kuwait.

In those circumstances, one of the first concerns must be the welfare of the 800 British people still in Iraq and of the substantial British community remaining in Kuwait. In Kuwait, our embassy—now one of the last to stay open—is staffed by the ambassador and one colleague. They will continue, through the warden system, to help Britons in Kuwait as long as that is physically and practically possible.

We welcome the release of British nationals in response to the humanitarian appeal by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). But I must add that I find it grisly and repulsive that the Iraqis should set about deciding who is so sick and who is so old that he or she should be released from a position in which no human being should ever be placed and in which hundreds of human beings remain. All our nationals—all foreign nationals—should be allowed to leave Iraq. I admire the courage of those of our people who are detained or hiding in Iraq and Kuwait and of their families here. Our embassies have helped to organise the evacuation of more than 900 women and children and we are doing what we can to ensure that those who remain in Iraq have the money and comforts that they need.

The situation is particularly agonising for families here at home. We are working closely with the Gulf Support Group to provide as much help and information as we can. We cannot work miracles, but the staff in the Foreign Office and the staff at the embassy in Baghdad are working round the clock on these problems. Where complaints have been made, we are investigating them urgently, and where there is room for improvements, we are making those improvements as quickly as we can. We should not forget that the plight of these people—of our hostages—has been caused by Saddam Hussein. It is Saddam Hussein who is playing cat and mouse with them, and the British Government and this Parliament would not wish to be blackmailed.

On the other side of the question, the United States and Britain, in particular, moved fast immediately after the invasion of Kuwait to protect Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries from the threat of attack. Since then, a unique coalition of forces from 25 countries has been established in the Gulf. On 14 September, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced the deployment of the 7th Armoured Brigade and of more Tornado aircraft. This will bring the total number of British service men committed to the Gulf to about 16,000.

I believe that President Hussein will seek to cling to the country that he has acquired by force, or perhaps to negotiate his way out so that he can claim some gain for his aggression. He has tried, and is trying, to sow disunity in the coalition ranged against him, with a variety of bogus peace plans, delaying tactics and smoke screens. One of them is his presentation of himself as the champion of the Palestinian cause. In fact, the Palestinian cause has been set back by Iraq's aggression and the credibility of the PLO has been damaged by its ambivalent—to put it politely—response to that aggression.

Some have suggested that Saddam Hussein should be persuaded to withdraw from Kuwait in exchange for an international conference on the middle east as a whole. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the other countries of the Gulf and the Government of Kuwait have all firmly rejected that suggestion—because Iraq's withdrawal must be complete and unconditional. Hon. Members and British Governments have long argued the urgent need to find a lasting settlement in the middle east—including the Arab-Israel dispute. Once Iraq is out of Kuwait, we must return to that issue. The policy of the British Government is clear. It has been restated today and was restated during my recent visit. It involves self-determination for the Palestinian people and the right of Israel to live in peace behind secure borders.

The killing of 21 Palestinians on the Dome of the Rock, or Temple Mount, on 8 October and the later murder of Israelis underlines the tragedy of the Arab-Israel dispute. The cycle of violence is now repeating itself. I hope that the Government of Israel may yet agree to accept the Secretary-General's mission to investigate those killings because to do otherwise would risk diverting the Security Council from what ought to be its main task—getting Iraq out of Kuwait—and will give Saddam Hussein a cause which he will exploit ruthlessly.

Our aim remains as it was when we debated the matter: Iraq's complete withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate Government. At a

[Mr. Douglas Hurd]

meeting of the Kuwaiti ruling family and their people in Jeddah earlier this month, there was an impressive display of the loyalty of all Kuwaitis and of the unity which the crisis has produced. The Kuwaitis announced at the conference their intention, when the legitimate Government is restored, to implement in full the 1962 democratic constitution. Many will welcome that decision which was taken freely by Kuwaitis.

In the meantime, the pressures on Saddam Hussein remain diplomatic isolation, the economic blockade and the threat of forcible expulsion from Kuwait. Saddam Hussein has a simple choice—retreat or defeat. The Government and the House strongly hope that the restoration of Kuwait will be achieved without further bloodshed, but the daily destruction of Kuwait and the murder of its people continue. We are tightening the screw of the peaceful pressures, but we cannot shirk our part in the alternative course if that course finally becomes necessary.

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): I am glad that the Foreign Secretary confirms that the Government continue to share the objective that we in the Labour party also uphold: that all the United Nations Security Council resolutions on Kuwait must be implemented and that Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally.

Will the Foreign Secretary confirm that the first of those resolutions, No. 660, provides for negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait to resolve their differences, but that those negotiations can take place only once Iraq has withdrawn unconditionally from Kuwait and the hostages have been unconditionally released? We are glad that the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) has been able to bring home some hostages with him from Baghdad. However, I share the Foreign Secretary's view that it is a degrading spectacle to witness Saddam Hussein haggling and bargaining over misery that he has created.

Does the Foreign Secretary agree that unconditional withdrawal by Iraq from Kuwait does not mean partial withdrawal and cannot be conditional on a change of Government in a freed Kuwait? The internal government of Kuwait is a matter for the Kuwaiti people and we welcome the indication of greater democracy in a free Kuwait.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that it is our objective that sanctions should achieve the liberation of Kuwait, with force an option to be invoked by the international community only if there is clear evidence over a sufficient period that sanctions cannot achieve that United Nations objective? Will he confirm that there should be clear United Nations authority if force was to be invoked and that that authority must be obvious not simply to legalists invoking article 51 of the United Nations charter, but to the judgment of the world community? In that connection, will the Secretary of State explain what he meant on BBC radio on Sunday when he said in connection with the possible invocation of article 51:

"We have requests from the Government of Kuwait"?

It is important that the Secretary of State clarifies what he meant by those words.

Will the Foreign Secretary, on behalf of the United Kingdom in the Security Council, lay stress on the implementation of existing resolutions rather than be tempted to pursue distractions such as war crimes trials, which are neither relevant nor pertinent at this stage?

Does the Foreign Secretary accept that I do not join those who criticise him for having gone to Israel, as I believe that it is essential that all possible efforts be made to resolve this tragic and increasingly lethal conflict? The Opposition condemn the shootings by Israeli security forces on Temple Mount the week before last. We deplore the killing of other Palestinians and also of Israelis in recent weeks. Did the Secretary of State tell the Israeli Government that the use of live ammunition to deal with disturbances is not only wrong, but, as the former Labour Prime Minister and Defence Minister, Mr. Rabin, has said, ineffectual as a means of quelling such disturbances? Will the Secretary of State continue to emphasise that, if others are expected to observe Security Council resolutions, Israel cannot ignore them?

Did the Secretary of State meet leaders of the Israeli Labour party? They represent the other Israel—the Israel that advocates receiving the Secretary-General's mission, the Israel that wants to talk to the Palestinians and to trade land for peace, and the Israel that accepts that the Palestinians must have the right of self-determination and that that right does not exclude a state.

The Secretary of State says that he was misrepresented in Israel about this attitude to a Palestinian state. Will he therefore take this opportunity, which he did not take in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) at Question Time, to state with the utmost clarity the Government's attitude on a Palestinian state? Does self-determination include or exclude the right of the Palestinians to choose a state?

Will the Foreign Secretary endorse the wise words yesterday of Teddy Kollek, the Labour mayor of Jerusalem? He said that security and peace can come about only through peace negotiations. Mr. Kollek declared:

"When there is not even a faint light at the end of the tunnel, there is despair."

Finally, does the Foreign Secretary agree that everyone killed in Israel and the occupied territories—Arab and Jew, Israeli and Palestinian—is paying the unacceptable price of the failure to advance the peace process, and that anyone who refuses to participate in that peace process must accept a share of responsibility for those deaths?

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his opening remarks. He stated exactly the position that we all take. It is a great strength to our foreign policy and to the Foreign Secretary that, on all the basics throughout these anxious months, there has been a degree of national consensus. I confirm in particular that partial withdrawal, such as is floated from time to time, perhaps through misinformation from the Iraqis or by people of misguided goodwill, is not acceptable.

I confirm also that our aim is to increase pressures, including the pressure of sanctions, and to review the effect of those pressures before there is any question of the military option, the existence and importance of which the right hon. Gentleman also endorsed.

On 6 and 7 September we discussed the legal position. The right hon. Gentleman asked me not to dwell on that, so I will not, except to say that we are satisfied that the combination of article 51 and the repeated appeals for help which we have had from the Government of Kuwait would provide an adequate legal basis. If it were decided that the

military option was inevitable, how that would be implemented and what the timings and procedures would be is obviously not decided. But, as I said, I believe, in September, and as the Leader of the Opposition confirmed then, it would be important to do it in a way that maximised the support that the international community and the coalition that I have mentioned are giving to the enterprise against aggression. Meanwhile, we want to increase the peaceful pressures to ratchet up the strength of the Security Council resolutions. We are considering a new one, as I said.

The point about the individual responsibility of Iraqi officials and officers for acts that they may be ordered to carry out is important, and should not be lost sight of, as the matter is considered.

It was right to go to Israel. One of the things that I discovered there was the strong feeling in Israel that too many people neglected to visit the country as they swung around the middle east. I had an awkward and difficult time last Wednesday, for reasons that have been amply but not always accurately described. I was able to achieve a serviceable relationship with Israeli Ministers of a kind which I have not had before, but I was unable to balance that, as I hoped, with listening to the views of authoritative and respected Palestinian leaders. I met Mr. Peres who, as always, spoke as a wise Leader of the Opposition. I realised again that there is a healthy debate in Israel on matters that perplex us and make us anxious here, including the nature of the regime in the occupied territories.

We believe in the right to Palestinian self-determination, as I have stated for some time. We have never advocated a specific outcome and we have never specifically advocated a Palestinian state, as opposed to other outcomes that are conceivable and have been canvassed, such as a confederal link with Jordan. It is not for us to specify that. We say that that right exists and will have to be respected as part of a comprehensive and negotiated settlement, which must also include provision for the security of Israel.

I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman's last point. After the killings in Jerusalem and the renewed cycle of violence, it is unfortunately inevitable that the Security Council will need and will be determined to devote time to this matter in the remaining days of our presidency of the Security Council and thereafter. It will be necessary for the Security Council to deal with both those issues in tandem for the time being. We must not allow the international community to forget that anyone who is seriously interested in peace and tranquillity in the middle east must place the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait at the top of the agenda.

Several hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House knows that we have two other statements this afternoon and an important debate on European legislation. I propose to allow questions on this statement to continue until 4.20 pm. I shall not call today those right hon. and hon. Members who spoke in the emergency debate, but shall give precedence to the 56 hon. Members who were unable to be called on that occasion. It would help me if hon. Members who were called to speak in the emergency debate did not rise now.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Will my right hon. Friend take his mind to the situation that might exist if the United Nations resolutions were acted upon? A leader who would have feelings against the west and against America and who would probably be willing to use atomic weapons as a bargaining counter in the years ahead would be unsatisfactory for peace in the middle east. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the only way of bringing Iraq back into the international concomitance of nations would be a major change of regime within Iraq——

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Sir Peter Emery: —and that the people of Iraq should consider that most carefully?

Mr. Hurd: They may well consider that, but it is not a matter on which we can be decisive. My hon. Friend is entirely right to say that even if Saddam Hussein or Iraq were to comply fully with the Security Council resolutions, we would not have solved all the problems, and that when considering matters such as the retention of sanctions and the retention of forces, we would have to take into account the dangers that my hon. Friend has described.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Does the Foreign Secretary agree that some misguided people are coming close to awarding medals to Saddam Hussein for releasing some of the hostages, whom he should never have seized in the first place? Is not it intolerable that people should suggest negotiations about territory that was seized illegally?

Mr. Hurd: I agree with both the right hon. Gentleman's points, which he put clearly.

Mr. Michael Jopling (Westmorland and Lonsdale): As a result of Iraq giving away overnight to Iran all the things over which they fought wars for years and lost hundreds of thousands of lives, is my right hon. Friend certain in his mind that the border between Iran and Iraq will not become an area of sanctions busting?

Mr. Hurd: I discussed this with the Iranian Foreign Minister in New York who said, realistically, that there will always be a certain amount of traffic over those mountains. It is clearly not in Iran's interests that Saddam Hussein should succeed in this adventure. It is in Iran's interests that the adventure should be checked and reversed, and I believe that Iran will act accordingly.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): The Foreign Secretary has spoken throughout his statement of the necessity for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, but he has not gone as far as several others in his party, including the Prime Minister, who have said that it is also necessary to destroy Iraq's nuclear weapons bases, chemical weapons and biological weapons. Has that part of the determination been dropped? How would we carry that out if Iraq withdrew from Kuwait?

Mr. Hurd: Our commitment is to the three requirements of the Security Council, which the Prime Minister and I have often enumerated. I have already dealt, in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), with the situation that would arise and the steps that would have to be taken if the three requirements were peacefully accepted by Saddam Hussein. Even if that happened there would remain a job ahead of us.

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): Does my right hon. Friend agree that one weapon that may have been underdeployed so far in the area is the weapon of information? Has he observed the reports that some Iraqi soldiers appeared to think that hostages were there as volunteers? The lack of information appears to go right to the top. The leadership of Iraq may underestimate the determination of the allies to use force if necessary. Therefore, will he work with the BBC and other such news agencies, which have a unique integrity throughout the world, to see whether more can be done to promote truths in the area in the right languages?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is entirely right. We are doing precisely that. We are also working with friendly Arab Governments. When I went to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and when I discussed these matters again with the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, I stressed exactly my hon. Friend's points. It is particularly important that Kuwaitis should bear witness to what is happening in Kuwait. I do not know about the House, but British people do not seem to have absorbed the nature of the horrors taking place in Kuwait. It would come best from eye witnesses and from Kuwaitis, with whom we are in touch. The Kuwaitis are conscious of the need to put the information across to us and to their Arab brethren.

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): Is the Secretary of State fully aware that there are now almost 500,000 Iraqi and allied service men in the region and that there is a high risk of accident and possible action? Is he satisfied that the rules of engagement are strictly understood, bearing it in mind that engagement might be the final option, and the subject of a determined decision by the forces' commanders? To what extent does he see signals that give more hope that sanctions are beginning to work?

Mr. Hurd: The rules of engagement are always important, for the reason that the hon. Gentleman stated. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and his colleagues in other countries are working the matter out satisfactorily.

Sanctions are creating shortages. The hon. Gentleman will have seen the announcement about petrol rationing. Shortages are building up. I cannot say that those shortages will be decisive in the short term. However, the sanctions have been effective in the sense that the oil trade has stopped. I gave the figures for the Royal Navy. Other trade is down. Sanctions are effective and shortages will build up. I cannot tell the hon. Gentleman at what stage they are likely to be decisive.

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): Will my right hon. Friend comment on the extremely vulnerable yet crucial position of Jordan in the particular problems of the Gulf? Is he satisfied that there is sufficient support for the Hashemite monarchy to remain a staunch ally of the west as it has been for many years? Would he care to comment on the risk should the mob in the streets take over and Saddam be invited in?

Mr. Hurd: That has caused us a great deal of anxiety for the reasons that my hon. Friend gave. The Jordanian Government are making strenuous efforts to enforce sanctions. I believe that they accept and impress upon the Iraqis the need for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. There is a great deal of misunderstanding and, indeed, bitterness between Jordan and the Arab states in the coalition against the aggression. However, I believe that the two facts that I stated were accurate. I agree with my hon. Friend that it is hard to imagine anyone ruling Jordan better and more effectively than King Hussein does.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): The Foreign Secretary has provided us with a welcome opportunity to reaffirm the determination of the British people that the withdrawal from Kuwait by Iraq must be complete and unconditional. Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the unanimity of view expressed by the international community in the resolutions of the Security Council is the most hopeful development for peace as it can betoken further healthy developments in the middle east?

Although the right hon. Gentleman is entirely right to emphasise the primacy of the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, the Palestinian question is also a proper subject for the attention of that international consensual approach.

Can the right hon. Gentleman also report to the House on the visit of the Russian spokesman, Mr. Primakov, to Baghdad? Has he had any helpful information on the progress of those discussions?

Mr. Hurd: I agree that the coming together of the Security Council, particularly of the permanent members, offers a more general hope for the future. We want to keep that unity going on one subject after another, provided that that is realistic.

Mr. Primakov has spoken to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister about his visit to Baghdad and also spoke to me about it on Saturday. The Soviet Union respects sanctions and its Government have spoken clearly and strenuously to the Iraqi Government about the need for withdrawal. There is no ambiguity about Mr. Primakov's stand on either matter.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): Is my right hon. Friend aware that outside this House the public fear that the western nations are losing the propaganda war? Saddam Hussein has freed 33 very sick and old hostages, or what I would call prisoners, but as he holds about 10,000 people, that is scarcely an achievement about which we can be proud.

My right hon. Friend has spoken of the terrible tragedies that have occurred in Kuwait and one must ask what type of Kuwait we shall liberate. Will it be back to the desert? Will the Iraqis have scattered everyone and taken advantage of the weakness in the west to face up to responsibilities?

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Mr. Hill: We must know from my right hon. Friend how long he believes that it will take the sanctions to bite so that Saddam Hussein capitulates.

Mr. Hurd: I agree with my hon. Friend's first point and that is why I commented as I did earlier on the release of the hostages and the promised release of French hostages, about which we heard this morning.

My hon. Friend will be aware that our Government, together with the President of the United States and all his allies, must keep under review the working of sanctions. We must make a judgment about whether those and the other peaceful pressures will be effective or whether we

must have recourse to the alternative. It is neither possible nor sensible to start setting deadlines for that—one must exercise continual judgment.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Why is there such a transparent contrast between the immediate condemnation of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which has resulted in 25 countries sending their armies to that region so that the force now totals a quarter of a million men and women, and the passive acceptance of the occupation of Jerusalem, the west bank and the Gaza strip for 23 years? In the past three years alone more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed and tens of thousands have been injured. How is it that, after all that, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has sent only three assistants from his office to inquire into such matters? Could it just be that the difference is that the Palestinians have no oil?

Mr. Hurd: The difference is that the two matters are different. Kuwait is occupied by Iraq as a result of an Iraqi act of aggression against Kuwait. The occupied territories are occupied by Israel as a result of an attack upon Israel. The occupation is wrong and does not provide a basis for Israel's legitimate request for security. However, the historical background is different and the Security Council resolutions are different.

In the case of the Arab-Israel question, when the suitable time comes we must reconcile the two things that arise out of geography and history, but for now we must get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. In the future, however, we must reconcile the rights of the Palestinians, which the hon. Gentleman rightly champions, with the natural anxieties of Israel for security that arise from her geography and history.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): While not seeking to make the same mistake as the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East, (Mr. Nellist), may I say to my right hon. Friend that many of us would like the Israeli Government to realise how many friends they have lost during the past few years? Will he take every possible opportunity to impress on the ambassador here and the Government there that they can help to isolate this madman Hussein by acting honourably with regard to the Palestinians?

Mr. Hurd: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is a matter of wisdom, which would involve some flexibility in the attitude of the Israeli Government, for example to the Secretary-General's decision to send a mission. I hope that that wisdom and flexibility will appear.

Mr. Bernie Grant (Tottenham): What is happening with regard to the United Nations' inquiry? We know that it is not going into Israel because that Government will not co-operate, but will the Foreign Secretary say whether there will be an inquiry? I ask that question because I am aware that a party of 16 black social workers, lawyers and others witnessed the shootings at Temple Mount. They have film and recordings of it and would like to submit them to the United Nations' inquiry.

Mr. Hurd: They should do so, because whether or not the Secretary-General's mission gains entry to Israel, he will certainly wish to present a report to the Security Council. Discussions and ideas about how representatives of the Secretary-General might visit Israel are still going the rounds, so the idea is not a lost cause, which is why I made my appeal. The hon. Gentleman should advise his friends to submit their evidence to the Secretary-General.

Mr. Andrew Hargreaves (Birmingham, Hall Green): Will my right hon. Friend tell us something about the measures that have been taken in relation to the financial aspect of sanctions? At the beginning of the debate on this subject reference was made to the importance that we all attach to ensuring that Iraq does not gain financially, and that credit and other financial measures are withdrawn from Iraq. What international co-ordination has there been to ensure that Iraq is totally cut off financially?

Mr. Hurd: I believe that the stringent financial measures are effective and right across the world, particulary in the financial centres, Iraqi accounts are frozen. She does not have access to foreign reserves or other resources, although she took a certain amount from Kuwait which is keeping her going for the time being. If my hon. Friend or any other hon. Member has evidence of attempts by financiers of any kind to get through the regulations I hope that they will let us or the United Nations sanctions committee know.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): Will my right hon. Friend take this opportunity to place on record the praise of the House for the humanitarian and generous way in which the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has responded to the plight of Kuwaitis forced to flee from their country by providing free accommodation, food and clothing for them? Those of us who met the Association for Free Kuwait yesterday were told by its members that it was impossible to find adequate words to thank the Saudis for their help. Will my right hon. Friend ensure that when Kuwait is finally restored to the Kuwaiti people it will, through punitive reparations on Saddam Hussein, be in the same physical state as it was before the invasion?

Mr. Hurd: That second point is the main reason why we are pressing ahead at the United Nations with the specific draft resolution on compensation. I agree with my hon. Friend's first point and saw evidence of it when I visited the Kuwaitis in Taif last month. The Saudis are practising the genuine version of Arab hospitality as compared with the ghastly distortion of it practised by Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Is the Foreign Secretary aware that some—albeit a minority of us—in the Labour party are, quite simply, dismayed at his statement? Supposing military victory were attained, what would happen in the long term, after thousands of casualties and the oil fields burning from Basra to Kirkuk? What long-term assessment has been made of the number of casualties and of the effect in the rest of the Arab world, not least in Egypt, if blood were spilled? Some of us are profoundly unhappy, and frankly think that there should be diplomacy and talking and that peace plans should not be dismissed as necessarily bogus.

Mr. Hurd: Diplomacy and talking have been going on for some time, and I suppose that I am in charge of that on behalf of Britain. It is crucial to build up the peaceful pressures, a lot of which is diplomacy and talking, to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, and there is still a possibility that that will happen, provided that among those peaceful pressures is the knowledge that if he does not go in peace, he will be forced out. The hon. Gentleman

[Mr. Hurd]

would take away that certainty. He is blurring it, and if he were to blur it from a position of authority, such as that of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), he would be diminishing the peaceful pressures on Saddam Hussein, which he does not want to do. I put this point seriously to a serious intervention. It is important that there should be a growing certainty in Saddam Hussein's mind that, one way or the other, it is either retreat or defeat; either he goes in peace or he is forced out.

Of course, the military option would bring destruction, dislocation and suffering, but the hon. Gentleman is not facing the alternative, which is to allow a simple, clear act of aggression to prevail and the aggressor to benefit from it. Behind all his talk, that is what he is prepared to contemplate. That is not safe. The hon. Gentleman mentioned Egypt, but if he talked to President Mubarak about that exact point, as I did last week, he would find that the President of Egypt's view is my view, not his.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): How close are we to war in the middle east? What will be the military and political consequences, and what estimates have been made of the potential loss of human life, if such a war takes place? If it was unseemly for Saddam Hussein to haggle about hostages, will the Minister at least grant that it was not unseemly for the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) to haggle, because he achieved something?

Mr. Hurd: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman was present when I made my statement, but I did cover that point. It is not possible for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence or for me to give specific estimates of what the course or consequence of the military option might be. I have stated the general considerations and why it is clear in my mind, and that of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), that the military option cannot be discounted. It exists—it must exist in reality—and that fact is a crucial part of the peaceful pressures to reverse the aggression.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): Does my right hon. Friend accept that all the forces in Saudi Arabia are on a high level of alert because there is no assurance that Iraq will not invade? If my right hon. Friend were to respond to the call from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) by telling Saddam Hussein that we would not use military aggression against him until we had gone back to the United Nations, would not that allow the Iraqi forces to relax until such a resolution was passed by the United Nations?

Mr. Hurd: I have been careful to give no such assurance, as my hon. Friend knows. He is right to say that all the forces in the Gulf have to be in a high state of readiness. The immediate danger which existed in early August of a further attack on Saudi Arabia is now, obviously, less likely, but one cannot rule out any action by this man.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): When the right hon. Gentleman next meets members of the Kuwaiti royal family, will he obtain from them a commitment that the children who were illegally adopted by Kuwaiti citizens before Iraq's occupation of Kuwait will be returned? Although they are small in number, and appear to have been forgotten about, the mothers of those children are distraught because they see no hope, even after the Kuwaiti Government has been re-established, of their children being returned to Britain. Will the Secretary of State secure a commitment from the Kuwaiti royal family that one of their first actions, in return for freedom being restored to their country, will be to return British children who were illegally adopted by Kuwaiti citizens before the invasion?

Mr. Hurd: I am not familiar with the situation to which the hon. Gentleman refers. If he has not already written to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I shall be grateful if he will do so.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): Since full and effective enforcement of the economic embargo is important in achieving a satisfactory outcome to the crisis in the foreseeable future, and as front-line states such as Jordan, Egypt and Turkey are vital to that purpose, can my right hon. Friend bring the House up to date on the further steps taken, notably by Japan and Germany, to increase financial contributions to the front-line states, to which such support is vital if they are to play an effective part in applying economic embargoes?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is quite right. On 1 October, the European Community decided to make provision from the 1990-91 budget for 1·5 billion ecu of support for Egypt, Turkey and Jordan—always provided that Jordan continues to make strenuous efforts to apply sanctions. I expect that additionally Germany will make an individual contribution. It has already announced that it will. When I visited Japan, I urged that country's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to do more, and a few days later they announced a doubling of Japan's contribution. Germany and Japan are barred by law from sending ships, aircraft or men, but are now making substantial financial contributions.

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): Many of my Bangladeshi constituents have relatives who fled Kuwait, and who are now destitute in transit camps on the Jordanian and Turkish border. Has the Secretary of State visited those camps, and are there any plans to aid the people who remain in them? My Bangladeshi constituents feel that all the attention has centred on European refugees and that their relatives are being ignored.

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Lady's constituents may have that impression, but it is not an accurate one. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development, at my invitation, visited the frontier and the camps a few weeks ago. Britain was among the first to give help—particularly to the International Office of Migration, which has been co-ordinating flights out of Jordan of the refugees to which the hon. Lady referred. A substantially smaller number of refugees remain, and the movement of people homeward to countries such as Bangladesh has been speedy. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the burden of Saddam Hussein's aggression on Bangladesh and other poor countries is very great.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his skilful and robust handling of the crisis, which has greatly enhanced our country's standing in that important part of the world.

Although I appreciate that my right hon. Friend cannot set a timetable for how long it will be before economic sanctions are deemed ineffective and the military option will have to be exercised, he will be aware of the high state of readiness of British forces in the Gulf—whom I and a number of my hon. Friends have visited. Does he agree that the situation cannot be allowed to drag on, and that, although Saddam Hussein must be given the shortest possible time to do the right thing, we must then exercise the military option?

Mr. Hurd: I agree that the situation cannot be allowed to drag on indefinitely, which is why the President of the United States and the British Government, among others, will have to take stock of the effectiveness of the peaceful pressures to which I referred and then take a decision, which will not be easy. Nevertheless, it is not a decision that can be shirked.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): How does the Secretary of State react to the evidence that Saddam Hussein has developed terrifying weapons against which our allies have no defence? I refer to the fuel air explosive weapon, whose effect has been described as being as devastating as that of a small-scale nuclear weapon, and to biological weapons whose effects cannot be confined to the battlefield and will continue for decades. Will he investigate as a matter of urgency whether the assistance given by China in supplying lithium hydride to Iraq, by the firm of Industrias Cadoen in Chile, which has been helping Iraq with the FAE weapon, by our country, by Holland and by Germany has finally come to an end, and assure us that, when the crisis is over, he will make it a main plank of his new campaign to build a new world order to try to banish these terrifying weapons from the face of the earth?

Mr. Hurd: We take this very seriously and we follow up all reports such as the one that the hon. Gentleman mentioned. He will know of the precautions that have been taken in this respect. He will also have heard the answer that I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), who tackled me on this in a more general way in the first supplementary question on this statement.

Supposing that Saddam Hussein complied with the three existing Security Council resolutions, withdrew from Kuwait, let the hostages go and restored the Kuwaiti Government, we should still have a problem on our hands.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry that it has not been possible to call all hon. Members who have been rising, but I think that every one of them was called during Question Time——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Not my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan).

Mr. Speaker: He was called on Question 16 and also in the emergency debate. We shall undoubtedly return to this subject.

Social Security Benefits (Uprating)

4.21 pm

The Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Tony Newton): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement about the uprating of social security benefits. This will take place for most benefits in the first full week of the tax year—that is to say, the week beginning 8 April. The necessary statutory instruments applying both to Great Britain and Northern Ireland will in due course be laid before the House for debate.

As is customary, I will deal first with the main national insurance benefits, including most notably the retirement pension which now goes to some 10 million people. The basis for the uprating is the latest available figure for the increase in the retail prices index: the 10·9 per cent. rise recorded for the year to September 1990.

The retirement pension will accordingly rise by £5·10 per week for a single person, from £46·90 to £52, and by £8·15 per week for a couple from £75·10 to £83·25. This increase alone will cost about £2·3 billion, underlining once again our clear and continuing commitment to maintaining the pension's value.

Unemployment benefit will rise from £37·35 to £41·40 for a single person and from £60·40 to £66·95 for a couple; and sickness benefit from £35·70 to £39·60 for a single person and from £57·80 to £64·10 for a couple.

National insurance invalidity benefit will go up in line with the retirement pension. There will also be a 10·9 per cent. increase in all other non-income-related benefits for disabled people or those who are sick for a long period —severe disablement allowance, industrial injuries benefits, war disablement pensions, invalid care allowance, mobility allowance and attendance allowance. The 615,000 people now receiving mobility allowance will see it rise by nearly £3 per week, to £29·10. For the 750,000 people now receiving attendance allowance, there will be an increase of £2·75, to £27·80 in the lower rate, and of over £4, to £41·65 in the higher rate.

The age-related additions known as invalidity allowances, currently confined to those receiving invalidity benefit but being extended in December to give up to £10 per week extra to some 100,000 people receiving the non-contributory severe disablement allowance, will rise further in April to a maximum of £11·10.

Similarly, 10·9 per cent. increases will take place in widows pensions including widowed mothers allowance, war pensions, and all public service pensions, together with the special Ministry of Defence payment to the pre-1973 war widows, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence will raise from £40 to £44·36 per week.

For the income-related benefits—income support, housing benefit, community charge benefit and family credit—the uprating will be based, again as usual, on the RPI less housing costs. This is because, for those receiving these benefits, help with rent is available through housing benefit or help with mortgage interest through income support itself.

This index rose by 8·1 per cent. in the year to September 1990, and the relevant benefit rates, with one exception to which I will come later, will go up accordingly. Thus, income support for a single person under 25 will go from £28·80 to £31·15, the rate for an older single person from £36·70 to £39·65, and the higher pensioner premium from

[Mr. Tony Newton]

£17·05 to £18·45. For a family on income support with two children aged 10 and 12, benefit will rise by £7·75 per week to £103·30, plus full mortgage interest if they have been on benefit for more than 16 weeks, or full rent if they are tenants, and 80 per cent. of their community charge.

As the House is aware, statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay are both paid through employers. The link between the two schemes is frankly somewhat artificial, resting more on considerations of administrative convenience than on consistency in either structure or purpose. I have concluded that the sensible development of policy in both fields would now be better served by treating them separately.

First, I propose to build on the restructuring of SSP undertaken last year, taking account of the considerations that I outlined to the House at that time. Occupational sick pay schemes have grown to such an extent that more than 90 per cent. of the work force now work for employers providing this cover, reflecting what is in my view a proper acceptance by employers of a much greater responsibility to cover short-term sickness among their employees. This in turn means that, for the great majority of those in work, the rates of SSP bear little or no relation to the amount that they actually receive when sick. In those circumstances, it is better for additional resources from the taxpayer to be concentrated more clearly on those least likely to have occupational provision, or in other areas of social security for which employers cannot be expected to provide.

Therefore, I propose to uprate fully, from £39·25 to £43·50, the lower of the two SSP rates, which goes to the lower-paid employees who are generally less likely to be covered by occupational schemes to extend the coverage of this rate across the whole range of earnings bands within which employers pay lower rates of contributions, which currently covers employees earning less than £175 a week, and to leave the higher rate of SSP unchanged at £52·50. These changes will reduce expenditure by about £100 million in 1991-92, while fully protecting the lower-paid and with little or no effect for the great majority of others.

I intend also to adjust the arrangements under which employers are fully reimbursed, by deduction from their remittances of national insurance contributions, for the whole of their expenditure on SSP plus an amount to cover payments of such contributions on SSP itself. I propose instead to move to 80 per cent. reimbursement. This will reduce public expenditure in this area by about £180 million in 1991-92, in addition to the £100 million to which I have just referred. At the same time, however, I propose to make some offsetting reductions in the rates of employers' national insurance contributions. Full details will be given in the normal statement about contributions which is made at the time of the Chancellor's autumn statement, but I can say now that my intention is to reduce each of the lower rates—those which currently apply in respect of employees earning up to £175—by at least one quarter of a per cent. and to reduce the standard rate by 0·05 per cent. These changes will reduce employers' contributions by over £200 million, and take account also of the compensation employers currently receive for contributions paid on SSP itself. They will go a considerable way in helping employers, particularly smaller employers who tend to have lower-paid employees, to meet any extra costs which might otherwise arise from the new arrangements. Legislation will be required.

The arrangements for statutory maternity pay, where occupational cover is very much less extensive, will be left entirely unchanged except for any minor modifications needed in consequence of the separation from SSP. That separation, however, enables me to go further on the standard rate of statutory maternity pay than I have proposed for SSP. I intend not only to increase it by the RPI, which would take it from £39·25 to £43·50, but by a further £1 a week to £44·50. An additional £1 will also be added to the national insurance maternity allowance, taking it from £35·70 to £40·60 instead of the £39·60 which an RPI uprating alone would have indicated. There will thus be a real increase in benefit for some 315,000 mothers-to-be in the course of a year, at a cost of about £5 million.

Apart from this increase in maternity pay, my proposals on SSP, which I believe strike a sensible new balance in the partnership between the state and employers which has developed in this field, open the way to a number of other important improvements, both small and large.

In turning to those improvements, I should make one point clearly to the House—that support for families does not relate only to families with children, important though that is. It must acknowledge responsibilities towards the old as well as the young, and not least the particular pressures that families can face arising from disability, or the need for special care. In framing my proposals I have sought to take account of all those strands.

I come first to the needs of disabled people and their carers. We are already carrying through the major programme described in my uprating statement last year. Last April we made real increases in the disability premiums in income support, housing benefit and community charge benefit, including in particular those for children, extended mobility allowance to the deaf-blind, and extended attendance allowance to disabled babies under two. This month we have introduced a carers' premium in the income-related benefits, and extended attendance allowance to meet the special needs of the terminally ill. In December we shall make the increases in severe disablement allowance to which I have already referred, and we are preparing new benefits for introduction in 1992 to help those disabled people who wish to work and further to extend help with disability costs.

Against that background, I cannot of course propose today further measures on the same scale, but what I can and will do is to make five more specific improvements particularly directed at the needs of some of the most severely disabled people and their carers.

The independent living fund, now providing extra help —averaging £74 per week but in some cases several hundred pounds a week—to some 6,000 severely disabled people in the community, will have its resources nearly doubled to £62 million next year. It will thus have risen twelvefold, from an initial £5 million, in only three years.

We shall make an additional grant to Motability of £1 million per year to enhance the assistance that it can give with the expensive adaptation of cars which severely disabled people often need.

I intend, too, to modify the mobility allowance regulations to help those particularly unfortunate people

who suffer the amputation of both legs. The House will be aware of two recent cases—Mrs. Sandra Stones in Durham and Sergeant Andy Mudd in Colchester—where either mobility allowance was withdrawn or doubt was cast on continuing entitlement. While cases in doubt may be resolved by review or appeal, as I am glad to say has already happened in the case of Sergeant Mudd, we ought to do everything possible to avoid this sort of uncertainty and the distress that it can cause. I therefore propose an amendment to put the payment of mobility allowance in such cases beyond doubt.

I propose also two further useful improvements for carers. The amount which can be earned without affecting entitlement to invalid care allowance, increased last year from £12 to £20 per week, will in April go up by a further 50 per cent. to £30 per week. I intend to provide that the carers' premium, just introduced in income support, which as things stand would cease immediately on the death of the person being cared for, can continue to be paid for up to eight weeks thereafter.

With regard to pensioners, as I have said on a number of occasions in the House and elsewhere, in welcoming the rise in pensioners' real average net incomes which has taken place as a result of the spread of occupational and personal pensions and the growth of savings, we must not overlook those who have not yet gained from those trends. I therefore propose to make this year a real increase in the basic pensioner premium for those aged 60 to 74 in income support, housing benefit and community charge benefit, which will go up by £1 per week more for a single pensioner, and £1·50 more for a couple, than in a straightforward uprating. It will thus rise by £1·95 from £11·80 to £13·75 for a single pensioner and by £2·95 from £17·95 to £20·90 for a couple, contributing to total increases of £4·90 and £7·60 respectively in their income support.

This will cost nearly £80 million. It will assist some 400,000 pensioners directly through income support, and well over 1·5 million through housing benefit and community charge benefit. Taken together with the premium increases for the older and more disabled pensioners which took place in October 1989, it means that over 18 months there will have been a real increase in every one of the premiums applying to around 6 million less well-off pensioners, at a total cost of about £300 million.

I am making a major upward adjustment in income support in a field which brings together the interests of both elderly and disabled people and the families to which they belong—the limits relating to residential care and nursing homes.

The survey of costs we commissioned from Price Waterhouse to give us additional information in this field is being placed in the Library today. In brief, it shows that, while the limits for residential care are reasonably close to median costs across the country, those for nursing homes are significantly too low; but it does not provide evidence of a sufficiently clear pattern of geographical variation, except for Greater London, to justify the introduction of further such variations at this stage.

What I now propose takes account both of the Price Waterhouse results and of the many other representations to us by voluntary and charitable bodies and organisations of home owners, as well as by many hon. Members on behalf of their constituents.

For residential care, the basic limit will rise by £5 per week to £160. There will be larger increases of £15 to £185 per week for the category covering the very dependent and blind elderly, which includes, for example, Alzheimer's disease cases; and for those covering mentally handicapped, mentally ill and physically disabled people.

For nursing homes, the increases will be much larger —£45 per week, bringing the total to £255 per week, for the main category catering for the elderly, and also for the mentally ill; an increase of £35, bringing the total to £260 per week, for the mentally handicapped; and an increase of £35, bringing the total to £290 a week, for the physically disabled. On this occasion, the increase for terminal illness homes will be somewhat smaller, an increase of £15, bringing the total to £275 a week, taking account of the fact that this type of home received the largest increases last year, that the distinction between these homes and others is becoming increasingly artificial, and that voluntary hospices—many of which do not seek to make use of income support anyway—are now receiving extra financial help specially geared to their needs under the arrangements introduced this year by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

Additionally, I propose to introduce a special further nursing home supplement in Greater London to take it from £23 to £33 per week. Thus for an ordinary nursing home in Greater London the overall increase will be £55 per week.

The total cost of the increases will be some £225 million. Together with those made in April and August this year, income support expenditure on those in homes will have risen by more than £400 million per year in quite a short period—over and above the more than £1 billion that it had already reached by the end of March this year.

As the House knows, pending the changes now planned for 1993, the income support limits in this field are, and always have been, designed to help towards not only income maintenance but also housing and care costs. It has never been the intention, nor is it sensible, that in the generality of cases housing benefit itself should be available as an alternative to income support. An anomaly exists in the regulations, which has enabled such claims to be made, and in the light of the large increases in limits which I have announced, I intend to consult on amendments to re-establish the policy intention more clearly.

Last, but not least, I intend to make an increase in child benefit, which is and will remain a strong element in our policies for family support. It will not, however, surprise the House, in view of what I said earlier about considering the needs of families more broadly and the major improvements that I have just announced, that I am not able simply to uprate it across the board, which would have a gross cost of some £500 million and a net cost of some £380 million.

In fulfilling my statutory duty of review, I have therefore looked not only at whether there should be an increase but at the form it should take to make the most effective use of the resources that I am able to make available. I have concluded that the right course this year is to make an increase which gives a worthwhile amount to all mothers, and which will be particularly welcome to new mothers because it recognises that for the great majority of parents the arrival of the first child has much the largest impact on their finances, not only because of the initial costs that they incur but because, in a world where the great majority of women work while they are childless but where most feel it necessary or right to give up work, or to

[Mr. Tony Newton]

work less, for some considerable time thereafter, it is frequently associated with a sharp reduction in the family income.

I therefore propose this year an increase which acknowledges that fact by making an additional payment for the first or eldest eligible child of £1 per week, normally payable to the mother, of course, and in addition to the continued payment of £7·25 per week for each child. As it will go to every family, and will be larger than a retail prices index increase in one-parent benefit—itself, indeed, defined as a payment for the first or eldest child—would have been, I do not propose on this occasion to increase that benefit as well.

The measure will complement what we have already done in recent years to steer some £350 million of real extra help to low-income families through income support and family credit. It will give an extra £1 per week in child benefit to every mother in nearly 7 million families, at a gross cost of more than £350 million and a net cost of £260 million.

By choosing what I believe to be sensible priorities, I have been able to make a number of important improvements in social security, especially for families, without adding overall to what is in any case the very large cost this year of maintaining our uprating commitments.

What I have announced helps families with children and families-to-be. It helps large numbers of less-well-off pensioners. It will ease the anxieties of families concerned with the care of elderly or disabled relatiwes, and of those relatives themselves, and it builds on what we are already doing to give greater help to disabled people. In short, it carries forward the reshaping of our social security system, which was conceived in the 1940s, to meet the needs of the 1990s.

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): I welcome the small but useful increases in statutory maternity pay, in independent living fund resources and in the basic pensioner premium. Those are long overdue and will certainly bring some relief to a number of hard-pressed groups. Welcome as they are, however, they will not appease the deep anger felt by people with disabilities that these various minor improvements are being funded by much deeper cuts in the budget for disabled people over the period ahead.

We unreservedly welcome the significant increase in nursing home income support, which is necessary to prevent the increasing level of closures and evictions already occurring. Those are important additions, but they must be balanced—and, indeed, have been largely paid for—by the cuts in statutory sick pay, which amount to £280 million a year.

For child benefit, I cannot give the same welcome. I invite the right hon. Gentleman to recall that in the Tory party manifesto for the 1987 election he and his colleagues gave an unequivocal pledge that

"Child benefit will continue to be paid as now, and direct to the mother."

Will the right hon. Gentleman acknowledge that, having broken that explicit promise for the fourth year running, the Government have forfeited any claim not only to be the party of the family but even to basic honesty? Will he confirm that, had child benefit been raised each year as the Government promised, he would today be announcing a rate of more than £9·50 per week for each child—£2·30 per week higher than the rate at which it was frozen four years ago? Will he confirm that an average family with three children, even after taking account of the extra benefit for the first child that has just been announced, will this year be deprived of more than £300 which the Government promised and have since withheld? That sum is equal to almost 3p on income tax for a family on average earnings.

Will the right hon. Gentleman recognise that paying an extra pound a week for the first child only, with nothing for the others, is a mere fig leaf to cover the Government's deeply unpopular policy of perpetual freeze and, moreover, has been prompted by by-election panic? What is the principle behind it? If, as the right hon. Gentleman said, it is to compensate the mother for the drop in earnings at the birth of the first child, what compensation is £1 per week for a loss of earnings of perhaps £100 per week or more?

Is it not clear that the Government's real motive for this bit of window dressing is that it is cheaper? By letting child benefit wither on the vine, is it not manifest that the Government still have no family policy worth the name? Uprating child benefit for all children, at least in line with inflation, is the litmus test of commitment to the family because the Government cannot be in favour of the family while cutting benefits for children. By that test, the Government have failed.

Is the right hon. Gentleman proud that for the 12th year running the Government are denying any rise in living standards to the 2 million poorest pensioners, who are wholly dependent on the basic retirement pension? Is he proud that, as a result, the basic pension, which represented almost a quarter of average earnings in 1979, is now, even after his announcement, worth only a sixth? Will he confirm that had the Government not broken Labour's uprating link with earnings he would be announcing today a single person's pension of not £52 per week but £65 per week and a married couple's pension of not £83 per week but £105 per week? Will he admit that, as a result of the breaking of the pensions link with earnings a decade ago, the Exchequer has cumulatively saved no less than £22,000 million at the expense of pensioners? Does it not reveal the Government's real priorities when they choose to remove more than £20 billion which should have gone to pensioners, and which under Labour would have gone to pensioners, and to use it instead to fund a cascade of tax relief for the rich?

In particular, will the right hon. Gentleman further consider the plight of two of the poorest groups in society, who will remain vulnerable following his statement? The first consists of the 100,000 frail and disabled——

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Not in the middle of questions on a statement.

Mr. Meacher: The first consists of the 100,000 frail and disabled elderly people in private residential and nursing homes who depend on income support. As I said, we welcome the increase in income support that the right hon. Gentleman announced, but is he aware that the Independent Healthcare Association estimates that maximum state support levels currently fall short of by more than £100 per week fees actually charged for a nursing home and by nearly £40 per week for a typical residential home? Is it not, therefore, clear that the

announced increases of only £5 per week for residential homes and £15, £35 and £45 for nursing and other homes will still leave many thousands of frail elderly people desperately worried about problems of growing debt and possible eviction?

Is the right hon. Gentleman also aware that 130,000 claimants in desperate need are entirely omitted from his statement? They are the losers from the Fowler social security changes in 1988 who are on transitional payments and who, next April, will enter their fourth year running without any increase in benefit at all. How can the Government justify giving discounts on electricity bills this year to investors in the privatisation while pensioners and low-income families are struggling to pay fuel bills and some get no rebates and no increases in their benefits either?

There was one other important omission from the right hon. Gentleman's statement. Will he now recognise that pensioners and others on income support who for the first time are being made to pay 20 per cent. of their poll tax are not being fully compensated as Ministers claimed that they would be? That is partly because of clawbacks, partly because the poll tax turned out to be higher than forecast, and partly because of large regional variations. As the Prime Minister has said that income support claimants are meant to be fully compensated, will the right hon. Gentleman now undertake to make good that shortfall, and will he also ensure that the poll tax compensation element is separately identified within income support and uprated each year in line with the average increase in poll tax? Several polls have detected a clear change of mood in the country, which is now rejecting the endless enrichment of the better off at the expense of the less well off and the poor. The inadequacies and the gaps in the statement made by the Secretary of State today illustrate clearly the extent to which the Government are failing to meet growing public concern about the indefensible extremes of wealth and poverty in our society today.

Mr. Newton: It was almost with a sense of relief that I noted, by the end of the hon. Gentleman's remarks, that he was back to his usual overheated form. I was quite taken aback by the muted nature of his earlier comments, which seemed to suggest that he thought that I had done some rather good things. I am grateful to him for recognising that at the outset.

The hon. Gentleman raised a wide variety of questions, and I will deal with as many as I can. First, he made the ludicrous suggestion that my proposals on child benefit somehow breached the pledge that he accurately quoted. No one has seriously contended that the number of occasions on which there has been no increase in child benefit has been inconsistent with the pledge.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): We have said that.

Mr. Newton: The Opposition may have said it, but they have never managed to get anyone else to believe it. Given that fact, it is beyond belief that now that we propose to increase child benefit we are accused of breaking the pledge.

Another of the hon. Gentleman's suggestions should be knocked firmly on the head—the suggestion that what I have announced today, whether in respect of child benefit or in any other major respect, is in some way the result of a sudden change that has taken place in the past few days, let alone since last Thursday. The proposals are precisely what I agreed with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury nearly a fortnight ago—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Newton: The third major suggestion that the hon. Gentleman sought to make was that the Government were not interested in the needs of families. I think that I had the support of a large number of hon. Members on both sides of the House when I said in my statement that family policy is not only a matter of helping families with children. Important though that is, we must also take into account the needs of elderly and disabled people and their families. As the whole of my statement showed, we have sought to make changes that help families across the whole spectrum of their need and in a sensible and balanced way.

It is rich for the hon. Gentleman to talk about pledges to pensioners. If I remember rightly, he was a social security Minister when the last Labour Government fiddled the way in which they uprated pensions, precisely to avoid fulfilling their commitment to uprate in line with earnings or prices, whichever were the higher. So I am not prepared to listen to lectures from the hon. Gentleman on that.

I await with interest the next occasion on which the hon. Gentleman quotes from an organisation of private home owners to justify the suggestion that what they would like by way of increases in the residential care and home limits—although of course I understand that that is what they would like—is to be preferred to the evidence that the hon. Gentleman can read for himself in the Price Waterhouse survey. The increases in the limits for nursing homes are the largest ever made. They will greatly reduce anxieties and the hon. Gentleman should welcome them as warmly as others will.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know that the House is put in great difficulty by the fact that we have three statements on one day—especially on a day on which the main business has to end at 7 pm. As the Chairman of the Select Committee on Procedure is here, it may be worth suggesting that we might look into whether statements of such great importance should be printed and placed in the Vote Office so that hon. Members may study them before asking questions.

As we have another statement today, as well as a very important debate on the scrutiny of European legislation, and as the contents of the statements are debatable and could perhaps be discussed during our debate on the Queen's Speech, I propose to allow questions on the social security statement to go on for no more than 20 minutes—until 5.20 pm.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): What would the figure be if the current benefit levels this year were uprated by 10·9 per cent? Would they come to more or less than the package announced this afternoon? Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that, for an additional £120 million net, he could have uprated child benefit across the board? Is it not hypocritical for a Government who have had £100 billion-worth of proceeds from oil and gas and £40 billion-worth of privatisation

[Mr. Archy Kirkwood]

proceeds, and who profess an interest in promoting family policy, to refuse year after year to uprate child benefit fully?

Also, it is profoundly unsatisfactory to have crisis Downing street summits as a way of managing this country's benefit policy. Far too many people depend on it for that. What was the Prime Minister's impact on the policy change? What is the future for child benefit in the Secretary of State's hands?—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Newton: I am afraid that I missed the hon. Gentleman's last phrase in the slight hubbub. I can only repeat that what I have announced on all the major points today is precisely what I agreed with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury nearly a fortnight ago.

With regard to the hon. Gentleman's other points, I can only say that of course I should have liked to do all sorts of other things, as any Secretary of State for Social Security would, but if I had adopted the policy that the hon. Gentleman has been urging on me in respect of child benefit it would have been much more difficult for me to do what I have done for residential care and nursing homes. In balancing the needs of families, I believe that I have struck about the right balance.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): I am delighted that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has helped the family through the whole age range. That is extremely important. He will not be surprised to learn that I welcome in particular the uprating of the family allowance, as I still think of it, for the first child. That will be of enormous assistance to mothers when they have to stop work and if they wish to stay at home and look after children. On behalf of them, including my daughter who is to have a child at any moment, I thank my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I reciprocate her good wishes by sending my good wishes to her daughter.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): How much have families lost as a result of the Government not indexing child benefit fully during their stewardship? Does he agree that if it has been politically expedient at this distance from the election to pump an extra £230 million into the child benefit scheme—and I welcome that—it would be folly for a party to enter an election advocating the abolition of a scheme which is clearly popular among one third of the voters unless that party was drawing up a suicide note for the voters?

Mr. Newton: First, the calculation which the hon. Gentleman is inviting me to make, which his hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) tried to get me to make earlier, is artificial in the extreme. As with some of the pension calculations, had those sums of money been put into social security instead of being deployed in other ways, contribution rates would have been higher and tax rates would have been higher including taxes paid by the selfsame families about whom the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) is concerned.

With regard to the other point raised by the hon. Member for Birkenhead, I can only refer him to the sentence in my statement which states:

"child benefit . . . is and will remain a strong element in our policies for family support."

Sir Norman Fowler (Sutton Coldfield): Contrary to what the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) said, may I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on his statement today? May I particularly congratulate him on the extra support that he has provided for families? Will he clarify and perhaps emphasise one point? Will he give an assurance that there is no intention to change the general child benefit system to which we as a party and as a Government have been committed?

Mr. Newton: I have just underlined the relevant sentence in my statement in answer to the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field):

"Child benefit . . . is and will remain a strong element in our policies for family support."

Of course that does not exclude consideration of other ways of helping families. However, that should give my right hon. Friend—whose views in this area I obviously greatly respect, having worked rather closely with him for six years—the reassurance that he wants.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Is today's statement the last word before next April on the subject of improved community charge benefits, which are so important to so many people on low incomes, particularly disabled people? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that many disabled people who used to benefit under the old rate rebate system for adaptations are suffering and are as much as £400 worse off as a result of the community charge system? Does he accept that RADAR has dozens of cases of people who are worse off in that respect? That issue must be seriously considered.

Mr. Newton: I am obviously aware of the point that is frequently made in that area. Equally, the hon. Gentleman will be aware that the concession in respect of the rating system was specifically related to adaptations for disabled people's houses. It is difficult to accommodate that within the community charge system. I will draw the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, but I am not planning a further statement.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his uprating in respect of the disabled and particularly the extra money for the independent living fund will be welcomed by Conservative Members? Will he therefore consider modifying his White Paper proposals and make the ILF a permanent statutory feature of our total form of help for the disabled?

Mr. Newton: I do not think that I can undertake to do the latter, but we shall be looking with great care at the arrangements for 1993 when local authorities will take over new responsibilities for community care and care for disabled people and others.

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): Why did the right hon. Gentleman decide to recoup part of the cost of the child benefit change by refusing to uprate the single-parent additional premium when those are usually the poorest parents? Will he explain the thinking which led to the selection of the figure of £1 for the eldest child when he said

that it was partly to compensate for the loss of the woman's earnings? Women's wages are low, but not that low.

Mr. Newton: I am not, of course, suggesting that the problem to which I referred in my statement can be met entirely through the social security system. However, it is sensible to recognise within that system the obvious contemporary reality of what happens to family incomes when the first child is born. As for the £1, that relates to the large sum of money which I felt able to make available in that area alongside the equally large sums of money that I wish to deploy in other areas which are also important to many families.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): I warmly congratulate my right hon. Friend on his partial uprating of child benefit while deeply regretting that it has not been uprated in full. What my right hon. Friend has done is a great deal better than nothing. As the only countries in the world which give more for the first child are Malta and Iran, can my right hon. Friend explain what particularly persuaded the Government to follow their example?

Mr. Newton: I cannot speak for the rationale in other countries. However, it may well be that that goes back, as ours did with the old family allowance system, to a different world in which many women gave up work when they were married, not when they had children. The world has changed dramatically in recent years and over the last generation or so. I believe that it is sensible to recognise that in the social security system.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Secretary of State aware that, in the social security review to which he referred, many severely disabled people lost the additional supplementary benefit payments which were suitable for their special needs and they have now become heavily dependent on the independent living fund? Despite the doubling of that in the Secretary of State's announcement, that is still neither adequate nor permanent and that is causing deep distress among the most disabled people. Can we consider something more permanent?

Mr. Newton: I have obviously been aware for a long time of the right hon. Gentleman's concern in this matter and I very much respect him for that. However, the independent living fund has, to a very substantial extent, met not only the problems about which he was concerned at the point of transition to the new scheme, but has gone well beyond that to help people who would not have been helped under the old scheme. I have said that we intend to deploy additional resources in it and I believe that that will maintain its value as an important source of assistance for the people with whom the right hon. Gentleman is rightly concerned.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, by the arrangements that he has announced for increasing payments to those in nursing homes, he will have laid to rest a tremendous amount of anxiety, particularly in the south-east? He will not only have brought immediate relief to the anguish of relatives but he will have built some base on which homes can plan their financial futures, particularly in the interim between now and the implementation of the community charge.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I hope that she will think it right for me to acknowledge that, in referring to representations by hon. Members on behalf of their constituents in considering these matters, she was one of those whom I had very much in mind.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): How many pensioners will lose, especially with the withdrawal of housing benefits and the new uprating? That spectre has existed for years. How many more will be caught in the trap as a result of this uprating? I was aware of the Secretary of State's answer concerning Price Waterhouse. Mencap has said that the residential care allowance should have gone up to about £225, failing which some homes might close and others might not open. Did Price Waterhouse say anything about the possible growth of the cardboard city?

Mr. Newton: The Price Waterhouse report, a copy of which I have placed in the Library, does not go into quite as much detail in respect of individual categories of home, for sample reasons, as the hon. Gentleman or indeed I might like. Perhaps it would be better if the hon. Gentleman looked at the report before pursuing me further on such points of detail.

I was not quite sure what the hon. Gentleman meant in his earlier point. I have said that an anomaly has appeared, which seems to be making it possible for some people to make claims to housing benefit when it is absolutely clear that the income support limit is meant to embrace housing costs. That is not very sensible, and we need to tidy it up.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on commandeering the largest budget for pensions and benefits that this country has ever seen? Does he agree that it would be wise to consider also who is paying for all of it and that the burden of taxation still falls most heavily on ordinary families, often with children? They are also the ones who would gain most from a modest cut in tax rates and the ones who would suffer most if tax rates were forced to be increased in the way in which they would have to be if Labour's promises were ever fulfilled.

Mr. Newton: My hon. Friend has restored a healthy perspective to some of the things that we hear from the Opposition Benches. My only reservation about what she said is that I am not really sure whether I should like to be accused of commandeering resources. I prefer to think of myself as doing good work.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Before the Secretary of State gets away with masquerading as the family friend, or, perhaps more particularly, as the friend of the first born, are he and the Cabinet aware that £1 does not buy even one packet of 10 disposable nappies for the baby? They cost £1·24. Is he aware that a pair of shoes for a five-year-old costs about £15 and that an anorak for an eight-year-old now costs £12 to £15? How on earth can the first-born get assistance from that kind of increase? Why will the Secretary of State not return to his original pledge, or would he rather retitle child benefit and from now on call it first-born benefit as that is what it is proving to be?

Mr. Newton: I have no intention of renaming it because I have made it absolutely clear that the payments continue for all children, except that I am making an increase in respect of the first. As to the rest of the hon. Gentleman's

[Mr. Newton]

remarks, no one—not even the hon. Gentleman in his most extravagant moments, and they are pretty extravagant—and not even the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), has suggested that he expects child benefit to be at a level that would fully meet the costs of all children in all families. That has never been the intention, let alone the reality. What my pound does is to make a useful additional contribution.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I thank my right hon. Friend for his excellent statement and for the way in which he has targeted additional resources to those groups most in need—for example, families and the disabled—the way in which he has doubled resources for the independent living fund, and substantially increased income support for those in residential homes and in nursing homes. I do not wish to take from my right hon. Friend the praise that will be heaped upon him, but will he give an assurance that he will seriously reconsider the uprating of child benefit in future years not just for the first child but for all children as it is the most effective of universal benefits?

Mr. Newton: Until the last few seconds I was going to say that I had better quit while I was ahead. On my hon. Friend's last remarks, the only assurance that I can properly give my hon. Friend is that, just as I have demonstrated that I have carried out in good faith my statutory duty to review this year, so I shall continue in future years.

Mrs. Sylvia Heal (Mid-Staffordshire): While welcoming some of the small increases that the Secretary of State has announced, I must express my regret and that of many people with disabilities that there has been no increase in the earnings disregard. It was first introduced in 1988, and the sum was then set at £15. In effect, that means that the small number of people who are working and who have had pay rises have received no increase in their income. When will the Government break the link between dependency and disability?

Mr. Newton: Possibly the hon. Lady has missed the fact that one of the really substantial new benefit improvements that we are working on at the moment with a view to introducing it in 1992 is what we originally called disability employment credit, which some other people have called partial incapacity benefit. It is designed to find a much more constructive solution to the problem by enabling people to work and enjoy continued benefit but to get off income support and into a different kind of benefit that will help them while they are working.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Eltham): Does my right hon. Friend agree that his statement will be very welcome to carers and dependants with special needs and also to those who wish to live independently and to the 10 million pensioners and the parents of 12 million children?

To see only 12 Labour Back Benchers shows how much the Opposition care.

Does my right hon. Friend also accept that his meeting commitments on inflation-proofing of many benefits and pensions and finding £350 million for parents and children is much to be welcomed?

To those who are worried about child benefit going to the well-off, may I point out that the value of two personal allowances with the married man's allowance and mortgage relief allowance is equivalent to 12 child benefits? Perhaps the hard-hearted could look at those before getting at children.

Mr. Newton: I will not join in the aggression of my hon. Friend's remarks. I welcome his second remark. I shall have to study his third remark with some care.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): Is the Secretary of State aware that he has not increased child benefit as he claimed, that the accurate description is that he has increased benefit for some children, and that by freezing the rest he has effectively cut it for other children? Is he aware that most mothers will not accept the ludicrous rationale in his statement about the first-born having a far greater financial impact than subsequent children in the family and that most mothers cannot distinguish between the needs of the first-born and subsequent children in the family? Does not his position appear more ludicrous because he is really saying that, in the case of a mother who has twins when childbearing for the first time, the child who was born a few minutes earlier than the other is worth a pound more?

Mr. Newton: The latter question is a good one, and I shall reflect on it. I am sure that we shall be able to find a solution. On the hon. Gentleman's first point, I do not think that anybody could read into my remarks, either in my statement or subsequently, the suggestion that there was a particular difference in costs per child. However, I said that the impact on families is greater with the first child because of the simple, observable fact that at that point the household income tends to fall.

Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock (Batley and Spen): I thank my right hon. Friend for his statement. I welcome his commitment to two matters with which I am concerned. I welcome the commitment to child benefit continuing, although I should have liked it to be raised more. I also welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement regarding nursing homes and residential homes.

Will my right hon. Friend clarify one point regarding sufferers of Alzheimer's disease? He knows that I have a great interest in that matter. Quite often, nursing homes cannot cope with people suffering from Alzheimer's disease and families are asked to remove them to more specialised homes which provide terminal care but are not hospices. Will my right hon. Friend clarify whether such individuals and their families will be entitled to the higher rate of benefit to pay for that care?

Mr. Newton: It is rather difficult for me to do precisely what my hon. Friend has asked, although I shall not disguise the fact that she was another hon. Friend whom I had in mind when making the statement—hence the reference to Alzheimer's disease. Because the position depends on whether we are talking about a residential care home or a nursing home, and in which part of the country, and because I cannot specify particular limits for particular diseases, the provisions would depend on all the circumstances.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): Does the Secretary of State accept that his announcement about child benefit will mean absolutely nothing to the millions of children in families who depend on income support because the extra pound that will be awarded to them in child benefit will

mean £1 lost in benefit entitlement? Will he accept that the time has now come to exclude child benefit completely from income support assessments so that its application will be genuinely universal and so that we do not have the nonsense that those who need the benefit most are those who are excluded from it?

Mr. Newton: The latter point does not really make sense in terms of any sensible operation of the system. The normal offset between child benefit and income support will operate this year as on other occasions when child benefit has been increased. It is important that the hon. Gentleman should understand that another effect of the operation of this system is that those on income support will effectively receive the amount that they would have received if child benefit had been fully uprated across the board.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. As the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) has intimated to me that because of the pressure on time today he does not intend to move his 10-minute Bill on licensing reform, for which I am sure the whole House will thank him, I propose, therefore, to allow questions on this matter to continue for a further 10 minutes, but then we must move on.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): Although I believe that the general uprating of child benefit is still essential, I, too, think that my right hon. Friend has done well in what was clearly a different public expenditure round in achieving additional resources for child benefit. His statement that child benefit will remain a strong element in our policy will be widely welcomed. Does it mean that any alternative ideas of proceeding by way of child tax allowances have now been dropped and will the new extra benefit for the first child require primary legislation?

Mr. Newton: No, the extra benefit for the first child does not require primary legislation. Indeed, one of the advantages of that provision is that it will be possible for me to make the payments effective from April next year, at the normal uprating time. Obviously, child tax allowances are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, and nothing that I have said this afternoon rules out any consideration that he might want to give to complementary measures. I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) for welcoming my statement.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Surely the Secretary of State will accept that far more people receive residential care support than nursing home support, yet his statement increases residential care support by only 3 per cent. Is the right hon. Gentleman willing to accept the extra personal stress, tension and the loss in quality of care that will inevitably accompany his statement, especially in those parts of cities where residential care homes have now become a substantial industry? What has the right hon. Gentleman to say to the home owners and to the residents of those homes? Does he propose to put any gate or restraint on accepting more people currently in hospital care into that type of residential care?

Mr. Newton: The last point is, of course, primarily a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health. The hon. Gentleman is well aware of the plans, which have recently been deferred, for operating a different system from 1993. In answer to the hon. Gentleman's first point, I can only ask him to read the Price Waterhouse survey—I appreciate that he has not yet had the time to do so—which dealt with the numbers of people in the two types of home. Although the number of people in residential care homes is larger than the number in nursing homes, as the number in nursing homes is moving towards being half the total I do not entirely accept the hon. Gentleman's point. However, the main point is that the disparity in costs as against our income support limit is clearly much greater in nursing homes. It therefore seems sensible to put the extra resources principally there.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): My right hon. Friend has obviously spent considerable time putting together this detailed and welcome package, so will he totally scotch the Opposition's idea that it was rushed together last night?

Mr. Newton: Anybody who believes that the statement was put together hastily last night will believe anything. I have now said twice and, in view of my hon. Friend's question, will say a third time that the major elements in what I have just announced were agreed with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury nearly a fortnight ago.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): How many disabled people will still be below the poverty line in spite of today's minor improvements? Has the right hon. Gentleman noticed that, although a mother's income drops considerably if she gives up work as a result of the birth of her first child, it remains pretty low between her first and second children if she is out of work or even if she takes a low-paid part-time job, which is the lot of the vast majority of Britain's young mothers?

Mr. Newton: I am not sure what definition the hon. Lady was using in her point about disabled people. However, she can check that last year we significantly increased the disability premium, including the premium for disabled children, and made a wide range of other improvements in disability benefits. I forgot to comment earlier on the comments made by the hon. Member for Oldham, West on this matter, but contrary to the impression that he is seeking to create, the provisions will substantially increase the amount of help given to disabled people in the next few years.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): May I join in welcoming the partial uprating of child benefit, but advise my right hon. Friend that the decision to give the increase in respect of the first-born appears to be a radical change in the system of child benefit that we have had thus far? If we seek to provide most assistance to those most in need, would it not be fairer to recognise that some of the largest families are some of the least well-off families? Might it not therefore be better to have a smaller uprating for all children rather than a larger uprating only for the first?

Mr. Newton: These things are obviously matters of judgment, and I have outlined the reasons for my judgment. Larger families are, on the whole, much more likely to be receiving one of the income-related benefits, including family credit. About 40 per cent. of families with

[Mr. Newton]

more than three children are being helped either by income support or family credit, which we have improved substantially in recent years.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): The Secretary of State said that the arrival of the first child is most frequently associated with a sharp reduction in family income. What real effect does he expect £1 a week to have on that, especially when, with £1 a week, it will take about one and half years to save up for a second-hand pram, and more than three years to save for a new cot? We should compare that with the position of directors earning £70,000 a year who, in the past 10 years, have received £600 per week in tax cuts from the Government. Does not the right hon. Gentleman accept that most parents will see his announcement as being a transparent attempt at Elastoplast politics by Tory Ministers who are on £1,000 per week and have not a clue about the real costs of bringing up children?

Mr. Newton: I do not think that the nearly 7 million mothers who will receive an extra pound a week in child benefit will engage in the kind of political posturing in which the hon. Gentleman indulges.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): At a time of a tough spending round, with other Departments pressing for increases in real resources, my right hon. Friend deserves warm congratulations for having secured these nuggets. He will recall the meaning of that expression from an earlier incarnation. Is he aware that we welcome the fact that, despite the attention that will rightly be given to the increase in spending on the family, my right hon. Friend has not forgotten the poorer pensioners and the long-term sick and disabled?

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend because that is precisely what I have sought to do—to bring forward what I regard as a balanced package, looking broadly at the needs of families. I sense that most of my right hon. and hon. Friends think that that was the right thing to do.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Nothing that the Secretary of State has said today will compensate those pensioners who have been crippled with £20, £30 and £40 per month poll tax bills and who will receive only £5 per week extra as a result of his statement today, notwithstanding the fact that the wealthiest 1 per cent. in our society have received more than £26,000 million from the Government in tax cuts in the past 10 years. The pensioner in Downing street is living on £8 million per year from the taxpayer. That keeps her in Downing street and Chequers and as she gallivants around the world while 10 million other pensioners have to make do with an extra £5 per week. Does not that sum up the Government's attitude to the welfare state?

Mr. Newton: In this statement, we have fully fulfilled our commitments to raise the retirement pension and to steer some additional help to less-well-off pensioners. But for the taxation and economic policies that the Government have pursued over 10 years and more, it would have been far more difficult to sustain the improvements that I have announced this afternoon.

Mrs. Maureen Hicks (Wolverhampton, North-East): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on so effectively fighting his corner on behalf of all those mothers who depend on child benefit and have lived in uncertainty for the past three years.

Will he, however, acknowledge that there have been difficulties in giving help to the most needy families by targeting family credit? The money was there, but families were not always forthcoming. I hope that that lesson on targeting will help to convince him, as it has convinced me, that the present procedure for child benefit is the most popular and should remain a universal benefit. My right hon. Friend was absolutely right not to cause a divide by separating the under-fives from older children.

Could I also ask——

Mr. Speaker: No.

Mr. Newton: I suppose that I, too, had better be brief.

I hear what my hon. Friend says and I am grateful to her. I am not sure that I want to refer to "fighting my corner" with the Chief Secretary. As I have said three times, we agreed on these matters a fortnight ago.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am very sorry that I could not call those hon. Members who wished to speak. I shall certainly bear them in mind when we return to the subject.

Terrorist Attacks (Northern Ireland)

5.31 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Brooke): I regret to report that in the past two days seven people have been murdered by the Provisional IRA in three attacks in Northern Ireland. We must be grateful that a fourth attempted attack failed. This follows a number of other terrorist attacks in recent weeks, in which members of both communities have been brutally murdered. I know that the House will join me in extending sympathy to the families of all those killed and injured and also to those used as hostages in these atrocities.

First, at approximately 11.25 am yesterday, Mr. William Aiken, a taxi driver, was at the entrance to the Royal Belfast hospital for sick children. Two unmasked gunmen approached his Ford Sierra car, shot him in the head, and made off towards the Falls road. Mr. Aiken died a short time later from his injuries. The RUC are investigating and have appealed for witnesses.

Shortly after 4 o'clock this morning, a massive bomb exploded at the permanent vehicle checkpoint on the Buncrana road out of Londonderry, a few hundred yards from the border with the Irish Republic. The bomb is estimated to have consisted of about 750 kg of home-made explosive. It is thought that the bomb was contained in a vehicle which was driven into a search bay at the checkpoint. As a result of this attack, five soldiers were killed and nine injured, one very seriously.

The soldiers killed were serving with the 1st battalion the King's Regiment, based at Ballykelly. A number of civilian motorists in the area at the time of the explosion narrowly escaped death or injury. The checkpoint and about 25 houses in a nearby estate were extensively damaged; some residents were injured and many other houses sustained blast damage.

Prior to the attack, a house in Londonderry was taken over by terrorists and the householder abducted while his family was held hostage. He is still missing and there is grave concern about his safety. The follow-up operation by the security forces on both sides of the border is continuing and close co-operation is being maintained with the Garda, who have arrested a number of men earlier today.

In a separate terrorist attack at around 4.15 this morning, a bomb exploded at the permament vehicle checkpoint at Cloghogue on the main A1 road south of Newry, some three miles from the border with the Irish Republic. It is believed that the bomb was contained in a van which had earlier been hijacked by terrorists near Newry and was driven into the checkpoint. An elderly man had been forced by terrorists to drive this vehicle while his family were held hostage.

As a result of this attack, one soldier was killed and 11 soldiers and two RUC officers were slightly injured. The soldier killed was serving with the 2nd battalion Royal Irish Rangers. Fortunately, a shouted warning was able to be given, thus preventing further loss of life. The driver of the vehicle received a broken leg as a result of the explosion and is now in hospital. Homes, a church and a primary school were all damaged in the attack. A follow-up operation by the security forces is now under way.

In a further incident at about 7.45 this morning, terrorists made an unsuccessful bomb attack against Lisanelly barracks in Omagh. The terrorists had previously taken over a house in Gortin and assaulted the householder. They then placed an explosive device in his car, tied him to his seat, and forced him to drive the vehicle to Omagh. Fortunately, he was released by the sentry before the bomb partially detonated, and there were no casualties. The security forces are now carrying out a follow-up operation to make the bomb safe.

I am sure that the whole House will join me in utter condemnation of these appalling attacks. One civilian and six soldiers have been killed. A civilian is missing. A number of civilians and members of the security forces have been injured and one is very seriously ill. The security forces personnel were carrying out their proper duties in Northern Ireland for the safety of the whole community. Today's attacks have also seen the callous exploitation by the terrorists of members of the public in mounting these attacks. Not only has the IRA once again damaged and destroyed houses, schools and churches, leaving families injured, devastated and homeless; it has sunk to new levels of depravity by using people, whose families have been held hostage, as human bombs. It is hard to imagine anything more evil than tying a man into his car laden with explosives and then forcing him to drive to where the bomb was detonated.

The reaction of humane men and women the world over at crimes of this enormity is one of outrage, and justified anger. It is also, in the case of Northern Ireland, one of infinite sadness at this further and futile waste of human life. I can, however, assure the House that, horrible as these murders have been, they have not advanced the cause of those who perpetrated them by a single millimetre —indeed, they have set it back still further.

The security forces—to whom, today more than ever, I pay the warmest of tributes—will continue to defend the community and to bring terrorists to justice. They undertake this difficult and dangerous task on behalf of the whole community—and we owe an immense debt of gratitude to them.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): On behalf of the Opposition, I join the Secretary of State in extending our sympathy to the families of the victims and to all those whose lives have been so severely affected by the actions of the Provisional IRA and by the Ulster Freedom Fighters. As well as extending sympathy to the families of those murdered in the past 36 hours, the House will want to extend its sympathy to the families of Mr. Craig and Mr. McGuinness.

The murder of Mr. Aiken yesterday morning was an appalling overture to this morning's carnage. The IRA's choice of a children's hospital as a suitable venue for murder has sickened many people in Britain, Northern Ireland and particularly west Belfast. The House will wish to pay tribute to the efforts of both the unions and the management to ensure that no sections of the community will be deprived of the services of an internationally renowned children's hospital because of the activities of sectarian assassins.

I have heard—perhaps the Secretary of State can confirm it—that regrettably there has been another murder this afternoon. It was tit for tat for the murder of Mr. Aiken. To that unfortunate victim's family we also extend our sympathy.

This morning's atrocities also inspire us with horror. The death and destruction inflicted only highlights the

[Mr. Kevin McNamara]

political and moral bankruptcy of the IRA. As the Secretary of State has said, it is difficult to imagine anything more evil than the treatment meted out to the men forced to drive car bombs while their families were held hostage and did not know whether they would see their fathers and husbands again as they departed as human bombs.

If the IRA believes that such murders can further its cause, it is only deluding itself. It cannot offer anything positive for the future of Ireland—it offers only dead ends and graveyards. We hope that the security forces will soon bring the perpetrators of those evil deeds to justice. We welcome the co-operation of the Irish authorities in that respect.

The House will want to join me in thanking the Northern Ireland emergency services, the Housing Executive and social services staff for their efforts since the early hours of the morning to cope with the aftermath of the personal and environmental damage inflicted, particularly on Benview estate.

The Secretary of State and his advisers will no doubt want to review the security situation, particularly the policy of maintaining permanent vehicle checkpoints.

The House trusts that the Secretary of State will continue the fight against the paramilitaries on the basis that only the determined and persistent application of the rule of law can ultimately end the violence in Ireland.

Mr. Brooke: I am very grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the tone in which he has spoken. I share his condemnation of the events at the hospital for sick children yesterday. I can confirm that a further incident has occurred today and that the body of a taxi driver has been found in Dungannon. It is reasonable to assume that it is yet another tit-for-tat murder.

I share the hon. Gentleman's praise for the authorities who have worked to cope with the aftermath of last night's events. The lessons that could be learnt from such episodes will be learnt and, above all, the conduct of the security forces will continue, as always, under the rule of law.

Mr. Michael Mates (Hampshire, East): In reinforcing my right hon. Friend's determination and that of the security forces—rightly commended by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara)—to continue to do a difficult job, will he use all the efforts of his considerable propaganda machine to get the message across to citizens north and south in the island of Ireland that, by sheltering people who are prepared to stoop so low to commit ever more ghastly crimes, they are aiding, perhaps passively, the cause of the terrorists?

The best thing that citizens on both sides of the border can do is to tell the security forces where those murderers are, so that they can be brought to justice. Given the turn the IRA has taken in its depravity, my right hon. Friend should warn such citizens that they might well be used next as human bombs to be delivered to the security forces.

Mr. Brooke: I thank my hon. Friend for his tribute to the security forces. I confirm that there is a constant appeal to members of the public throughout the community—we also receive assistance from the republic—for help to bring such terrorists to justice.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence uses the words "propaganda machine", is that exactly a parliamentary term?

Mr. Speaker: I did not judge it to be out of order in this context.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): The Secretary of State has made a grave statement to the House this afternoon. He referred not only to the immediate incidents that occurred in the past 24 hours, but to earlier incidents that have occurred in the past few weeks.

In the past few weeks, there has been a regrettable upsurge in IRA activity across Northern Ireland and, unfortunately, that activity involved the deaths of two of my constituents. Constable Louis Robinson was killed on the border as he travelled back from holiday in the Republic of Ireland and Constable Samuel Todd was shot dead as he handled his dog on the streets of Belfast.

Right hon. and hon. Members on the Ulster Unionist Bench join the Secretary of State in expressing our sympathy to the families whose relatives have been killed and injured. In so doing, we speak for the entire Protestant community of Northern Ireland and at least 75 per cent. of the Roman Catholic community. Regrettably today, almost 25 per cent. of the Roman Catholic community vote for Provisional Sinn Fein, as in west Belfast.

We join the Secretary of State in condemning the latest low level of depravity exercised by the IRA earlier this morning, when its members tied the driver of a car to the time bomb that he was instructed to drive in the hope that he would be blown up into small bits. I hope that that did not happen. The IRA has reduced itself to a terrible low by such action.

There are three questions that I should like to ask the Secretary of State. The first relates to the prompt action and co-operation of the Garda Siochana in apprehending suspected terrorists in Donegal. Will that lead to anything? When the Government signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, they sold it to many hon. Members on the basis that it would bring about improved extradition. Five years later, we know to our regret that, successful as the Garda Siochana is in capturing wanted terrorists, they are never extradited by the authorities back to Northern Ireland. Tomorrow, when the Secretary of State meets the Dublin Government authorities, will he ensure that extradition is the No. 1 item on the agenda?

The second issue relates to border roads. I have already mentioned that one of my constituents was murdered on a border road coming back from the Republic of Ireland. My hon. Friend the Member for Upper Bann (Mr. Trimble) visited the republic last week and he was not allowed to use the roads: he had to fly to Dublin. I went to the republic on Friday and discovered that, even though I was accompanied by security forces, I was forbidden to use two of the main roads between Northern Ireland and the republic. Has the Secretary of State yet advised the Prime Minister that the British Government have surrendered authority over two of the main roads in Northern Ireland leading across the border into the republic?

Finally, I should like to ask the Secretary of State about dog handlers. My constituent was shot through the window of his stationary van. For more than a year, the small number of dog handlers that are employed in the

Royal Ulster Constabulary have requested bullet-proof glass in their vans. That request has been consistently refused on the ground of lack of finance. It would take so little money to provide bullet-proof glass in the few vans used by dog handlers—perhaps the life of my constituent could have been saved. Will the Secretary of State please address that problem?

Mr. Brooke: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his opening remarks, speaking as he does for those sitting on the Ulster Unionist Bench. I join him in extending sympathy to the families of his two constituents, of whom I am aware.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the apprehension of suspects by the Garda today and to extradition. I shall see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the republic tomorrow at a meeting of the Conference, and I guarantee that extradition will take up a large part of our discussion.

I note what the right hon. Gentleman said about security on particular roads. The security forces must necessarily make their own decisions about what is required to provide safe passage and security on those roads. I should be happy, however, to enter into a separate dialogue with the right hon. Gentleman on that matter.

His question about dog handlers and their cars is not strictly germane to today's statement, but I am grateful to him for raising that matter, which I shall pursue.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): I should like first to join in the expressions of sympathy to the relatives of the men killed in the outrages. They died to protect all the people in Northern Ireland, regardless of their political or religious faith. Is the Secretary of state aware that the men who commit such crimes are depraved? They revel in slaughter and are way beyond persuasion to show mercy and deaf to pleas for pity. They reject Christ's teaching about the sanctity of human life.

During the past 20 years, from the Dispatch Box, successive Secretaries of State have promised a security review after each atrocity. We have had those security reviews, expressions of sympathy, condolences, platitudes —everything—but the truth is that terrorists continue to kill innocent people in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. The people of Northern Ireland expect constitutional politicians to respond to the outrages by redoubling their efforts to make political advance in Northern Ireland. They also expect the Government——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but will he be kind enough to ask questions rather than make a speech that should be made on another occasion?

Mr. Kilfedder: I am putting it to the Secretary of State that the people of Northern Ireland, who have seen the Government send an armada to the Falkland Islands and forces to the Gulf, expect the Government to send sufficient forces to Northern Ireland and keep them there until this evil is eradicated.

Mr. Brooke: The same word "depravity" was included in my statement. Of course, it would be difficult for any Government, in an environment polluted by terrorists, to be able to guarantee total security to the citizens of this land. The defeat of terrorism involves more than purely the working of the security forces, central though they are to it. More people have been charged and convicted in relation to terrorist offences during the current year than in the previous one.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): Speaking on behalf, I hope, of all people in the north of Ireland who value life, irrespective of their political persuasions, I wish to condemn this and other murders, and to offer my sympathy to the bereaved. I ask anyone in the north of Ireland with any information whatsoever about those who perpetrated the recent acts to make it available to the police, so that those responsible may be brought to justice.

Early this morning, I stood at the scene in my constituency of the murder of one of the soldiers in Cloghogue. Once again, I saw the grisly remains of an IRA night of carnage.

The murders at Derry, Cloghogue and Belfast, and the potential murder at Omagh, were particularly cynical, cowardly and evil. They were cynical because they involved hijacking and kidnapping people, and taking their families as hostages. They were cowardly because, on those occasions, the IRA, rather than do its own dirty work, took innocent members of the public and made them drive its bombs to the scenes of murderous destruction. They were evil because, above all else, they added to the appalling violence that is tearing the heart and soul out of the fabric of Northern Irish life. Will the Secretary of State reinforce my view that those murders were evil, cowardly and cynical?

Mr. Brooke: I am particularly grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the vehemence of his condemnation. I know the extent to which his constituency in particular has been stricken by murder during the course of this year. I am sure that the House is grateful for the manner in which he has just spoken.

Mr. Henry Bellingham (Norfolk, North-West): I endorse the sentiments expressed by the Secretary of State, but is he satisfied with the co-operation that he has received from the Southern Irish Government? It certainly looks as if the excellent work of the Garda Siochana could not have come about were it not for the progress made under the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Will he comment generally on future co-operation with the Southern Irish Government on cross-border security matters?

Mr. Brooke: I join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to the Garda's actions today and the co-operation that we have received from it. Intensive investigations are in progress on both sides of the border, and I reported the arrest of a number of men by the Garda. I shall be seeing Mr. Collins, the Irish Foreign Minister, at a conference tomorrow, when we shall discuss the border issue and its consequences for security.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Does the Secretary of State not agree that the justification for the cowardly killings by the Provisional IRA over the years that it represents the aspirations of people in all of Ireland is disproved by the fact that its total vote is about 2 per cent. of the people of Ireland? What we hear from the elected representatives in the north is the true voice of the people of Ireland. All the Provisional IRA does is prevent any political action and, sadly, encourages tit-for-tat murders.

I shall ask a precise question. As someone who no longer has a detailed knowledge of the subject, I thought

[Mr. Merlyn Rees]

that the use of large agricultural nitrate bombs, topped up with small amounts of commercial explosive and commercial detonators, had declined but it seems to be increasing. Do we no longer know the origin of the commercial part of such devices by markings and scientific tests? Surely we could find out where the commercial parts for such bombs come from.

Mr. Brooke: I am most grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for drawing attention to the total lack of popular support in democratic terms enjoyed by the terrorists. As to his specific question about fertiliser, as far as we can ascertain, much of what is used is commercial, but of long standing.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): Is my right hon. Friend convinced that static security checkpoints are the best way to impose security on roads in Northern Ireland? Does he think that there is something to be said for a review of their success and the possibility of introducing mobile checkpoints, as suggested by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara)?

Mr. Brooke: There is a need to control movement across the border to interdict the movement of terrorists and terrorist munitions, to reassure the local community that maximum control is exercised over the border area and to provide protection to security force bases and installations. Clearly, as I said earlier, we shall review matters arising out of the recent incidents. The House is aware that about 1,000 mobile vehicle checkpoints are mounted every night in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): I also join in extending heartfelt sympathy on behalf of my constituents to the relatives of all those who have suffered bereavement because of the latest barbaric IRA bombings. My constituent, Cyril John Smith, was a young man serving with the Royal Irish Rangers. Like those in the King's Regiment, who courageously took on a role to protect the community and give service to all its sections, he was murdered. The lives of those people have been taken from them by evil, depraved men.

Will the Secretary of State undertake to ensure that those young men's lives will not have been sacrificed in vain? Will he deprive the IRA of its objective, and ensure that both politically and militarily the Government will bring an end to the carnage that we have suffered for 20 years? Will he further consider the reasonable justification for limited selective internment for those believed to be involved in terrorist activity? Since the IRA has declared war on our society, will he also give serious consideration to bringing in legislation to ensure that those who are convicted are held in prison for as long as this war of theirs is waged on our people?

Mr. Brooke: I join the hon. Gentleman in what he said about his constituent, to whom I pay a particular tribute for his contribution to the security forces, and in saying that the House is concerned that those lives should not have been spent in vain, that democracy continues to be defended and that the terrorism is brought to an end in Northern Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom.

I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that other judges will take the view that selective internment is not the most constructive way forward. I would not use the particular words used by the hon. Gentleman in his last remarks, but I am conscious that we are dealing with vicious criminals and that the sooner their activities cease the better for the whole of the kingdom.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I apologise to those hon. Members whom I have not been able to call, but we must move on.

SCOTTISH AFFAIRS

Ordered,

That the matter of Education in Scotland, being a matter relating exclusively to Scotland, be referred to the Scottish Grand Committee for its consideration.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Procedure

Mr. Speaker: We come now to the five motions on the Order paper.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet.

I suggest that the five motions be debated together. I have selected all the amendments in the name of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). I remind the House that all the outstanding Questions will be put at 7 o'clock.

Mr. Spearing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I apologise for rising when you were on your feet, but you will understand that I do so because of your suggestion that the motions be taken together. You will know that the five motions on the Order Paper, which must, by order of the House last Friday, be completed, if moved, by 7 pm, are on two separate and distinct subjects.

The first two motions refer to questions and a report from the Select Committee on Procedure and subsequent Standing Orders on which there may be some debate. The next three motions relate to the important topic of the scrutiny of EC legislation, for which there are substantial and significant proposals which have been arrived at after considerable debate, and to Standing Orders from the Leader of the House, to which there are amendments which, as you have mentioned, Mr. Speaker, you have kindly selected.

If those motions are taken together, as you suggest, Mr. Speaker, they would involve two separate topics. The second one is complex enough on its own and, in view of the time constraint rightly or wrongly agreed by the House, may we at least start by discussing the first two on their own?

Mr. Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman correctly mentioned, the motion to take them together was passed last Friday, and that being so I do not think that I have any authority to say that they should now be taken separately. I understand that the first two motions are not very controversial. The debate may therefore centre upon motions 3, 4 and 5, which are of great importance to the House.

Mr. Spearing: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful for your ruling. On cursory examination, the order of the House on Friday referred to all the motions together, but do I take it that they should and could not be separated, although they are separate motions on the Order Paper? That is surely a novelty of which the House should take note.

Mr. Speaker: There is no obligation on the Government to move the motions at 7 pm, but the order passed last Friday put all five motions together. The vote will be taken at 7 pm, but it would be up to the Leader of the House not to move any specific motion if he felt that there had been insufficient time to debate it.

6.3 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): I understand the point raised by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), but we should try to make headway along the lines which you, Mr. Speaker, foreshadowed in your original response. These two sets of recommendations emerged from considered proposals by the Procedure Committee. The first two, as you pointed out, have not been the subject of any controversy that I have been able to detect; the next three were the subject of a debate lasting some five hours before we rose and two of those three embody recommendations agreed with the Scrutiny Committee. There is one issue of substance to be discussed on that trio of motions, and that is embodied in the set of amendments standing in the name of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. On that basis, I shall proceed on the footing that the debate deals with oral questions and EC procedure.

I beg to move,

That this House agrees with the recommendations contained in the First Report of the Select Committee on Procedure of this Session (House of Commons Paper No. 379).

Mr. Spearing: Despite what I think was a ruling from Mr. Speaker, who has just departed, will the Leader of the House confirm that it would be possible for the Government to deal with motions 1 and 2 in one debate and to move motions 3, 4 and 5 if there was time later? Do I understand from what the Leader of the House has said that he is moving motions 1 to 5 at this moment?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As Mr. Speaker pointed out, the motions are moved one by one, but they are debated together and all five are now being debated. I have so far moved the first one and on that basis I am commencing the debate.

The first motion is one of two dealing with questions. We have less time than I would have hoped to deal with the matter, but I did deal with it at some length on a previous occasion, so I shall try to proceed expeditiously in the light of the time available.

The first two motions on oral questions deal essentially with the number of oral questions that appear on the Order Paper, the proportion of them reached and the method by which they are tabled. I content myself with saying that the Procedure Committee's recommendations are sound and sensible, and can be justified on their merits. They will give us substantial cost savings, as well as achieving a major simplification of the Order Paper. The one fact that I will produce is that the total cost of printing questions and answers last Session is estimated at £1·38 million. If adopted, the recommendations in the report could lead to savings of up to £750,000 in printing costs alone, so there is everything to be said in their favour.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Are we clear that questions must be personally handed into the Table Office by the Member concerned and that no colleague can do so, and that the whole scandal of syndication, for such it is, and handing in great wads of questions will come to an end?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: One of the central purposes of the recommendation is to tackle so-called syndication. The recommendations in paragraph 35 of the report are intended to achieve just that result. It says:

"oral questions should be tabled by a Member in person, or by another Member acting on his or her behalf . . . no Member should be permitted to table more than two oral questions per Minister (one for himself and one for another Member), subject to the existing rations for individual Members".

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

The recommendations are well considered and were widely circulated before the Committee reached its conclusion.

Mr. Andrew Hargreaves (Birmingham, Hall Green): Will my right hon. and learned Friend, either now or at some later stage, give us a breakdown of the £1·38 million to show how much each question costs?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall try to give the standard answer to that. It is always larger than one thinks, because it has gone up since last time.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Can my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the new Standing Orders relating to oral questions incorporate all the Procedure Committee's recommendations? I refer to the instruction that

"Notices of questions shall be given by Members in writing to the Table Office."

Does that mean that right hon. and hon. Members must turn up in person at the Table Office to hand in their questions?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As I understand it, the new Standing Orders embody the Committee's recommendations. Certain practical aspects of them need to be handled in the Table Office, and in commending them, as we do in one of the motions, we give our authority to the Table Office to proceed in that way.

The measures relating to European Standing Committees were debated on 28 June, and I explained then the ways in which the Government's response was intended to help bring our scrutiny procedures up to date. I indicated that, in the light of the debate, the Government would be drawing up detailed proposals to put before the House with the aim of operating the new arrangements from the start of the new Session.

The third motion on the Order Paper would repeal Standing Order No. 102 and establish three new Standing Committees. The fourth motion would amend Standing Order No. 127 in respect of the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committee, and the fifth motion is a resolution of the House to supersede that of 13 October 1980.

The motion relating to Standing Order No. 127 was agreed after discussion with the Scrutiny Committee, and I am grateful to its Chairman for its help. The measure offers a useful, albeit modest, extension of the Committee's terms of reference that I know it welcomes. The draft resolution was also agreed with the Scrutiny Committee and fully reflects recommendation 13 of the Procedure Committee's report. It embodies the Government's previous undertaking that the resolution would cover any proposal awaiting scrutiny as well as any recommended for debate.

I turn to the substantive proposals relating to European Standing Committees. The amendment to Standing Order No. 102 will establish three new Committees. The one outstanding point on which there is a significant difference of view is the proposal in paragraphs (1) and (2) that all documents recommended for debate will automatically stand referred to one of those Committees unless a motion is tabled to hold a debate on the Floor of the House.

The amendments that have been tabled would replace that arrangement with a variant of the present referral system, increasing the so-called 20-up rule to a 40-up rule. However, if, as we hope, the majority of debates will in future take place in Committee, it seems logical that a motion should only be tabled for the exception rather than the rule.

The new arrangements will allow more effective scrutiny in Committee, so it is crucial that they are allowed to get under way and be given a chance to work. It will be open to the Scrutiny Committee to recommend that a particular document be debated on the Floor of the House if it regards it as especially important, and the Government would naturally take any such recommendation into account. There would also be the normal consultations through the usual channels.

Against that background, I invite the House to agree to the Government's proposals. I am of course prepared to give a commitment that the new system of referral will be reviewed at the end of the first Session of operation, along with other aspects of the new arrangement.

I may add that the fourth amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Newham, South is a necessary technical amendment that the Government are glad to accept.

I hope that other details of the operation of the new Committees will be clear from our previous debate and from the proposals that the Government have tabled. In the light of the time available, and because there was broad agreement on most points in our earlier debate, I do not propose to go into those other aspects in detail—particularly bearing in mind our willingness to review the arrangements at the end of the next Session.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): The most crucial aspect of my right hon. and learned Friend's remarks is the procedure for referral, to allow a debate to take place on the Floor of the House. The arrangements that my right hon. and learned Friend announced appear to hand all power to the Government. The Government alone will make the decision—after some consultation through the usual channels, if the Opposition are lucky. I simply want to record my belief that such a scheme will not be acceptable to that minority who seek to question European documents—often without the necessary approval of members of their own Front Bench, yet with enormous approval from the country at large.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend's point fortifies itself, in a sense. He wants to ensure that representations made by the kind of minority with which he associates himself are given a proper hearing. We seek to ensure that views not normally heard at the end of the day's business, which would detain the House for a long time, may be advanced in the European Standing Committees at which any right hon. or hon. Member is entitled to speak. In that way, such representations will be considered at a better time of day by specialised Committees in which Ministers will be required to give evidence as well as speak to the proposals under consideration. The method of scrutiny will be more thorough and will incommode the House as a whole less frequently. However, it will still be possible to make representations for matters to be debated on the Floor of the House, as I described.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Why is my right hon. and learned Friend opposing a less rigorous means of enforcing proper procedures in the face of a vehement minority or even majority? To get 40 right hon. and hon. Members to stand in their places requires a degree of organisation and fleetness of foot that is difficult

to achieve. It is only suggested that such a thing should be made possible. It would not destroy the tenor of my right hon. and learned Friend's argument that such matters should usually be considered in Committee.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend reflects a point made by the Chairman of the Procedure Committee in our earlier debate who emphasised that, in the main, the same will happen, whatever the balance of the proposed arrangements, and that the majority of documents would anyway be considered in Standing Committee. We are only suggesting that, during the initial period, that should happen automatically, but that representations can be made if right hon. or hon. Members want to follow a different course.

Nevertheless, we hope to see the Committees operating normally and acceptably in the way that I have described. Clearly, that topic can be the subject of further discussion, as my hon. Friend's interventions indicated. Subject to that, I commend the other arrangements as reflecting the gist of the recommendations made by the Procedure Committee and endorsed in the last debate. My hon. Friends have both identified areas for discussion that the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) may care to develop. In other words, they have spoken to his amendment. I commend the motion to the House.

6.18 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): I can begin by wholly agreeing with the Leader of the House in his proposed changes for dealing with oral questions. I am sure that will be met with a sigh of relief—particularly by members of Opposition Front Benches who have had to organise against the fusillade organised by Government Whips in an attempt to pre-empt Question Time.

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): That is an outrageous suggestion.

Dr. Cunningham: I can tell the hon. Gentleman that I, as both a participant in and victim of that system, know very well how it operates—and I for one will not be sorry to see it come to an end.

As for the cost of parliamentary questions in general, I hope that hon. Members will reflect on the fact that, if they support the unanimous report of the Computer Sub-Committee, which will give us an on-line information system for Members, some of the need to table questions —particularly written—will disappear. I hope that that report will command support when it is brought before the House, because it will make the seeking and dissemination of information far more efficient and cost-effective.

As the House knows, I and the Government have some differences of view on the manner in which we deal with EC legislation. Those differences were set out at length —as was the Government's position—on 28 June this year. I shall briefly summarise my objections to what the Leader of the House is asking the House to agree. Despite my differences with the view of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, however, I hope that we can come to a decision this evening and not put it off yet again. We can then have a trial period.

One of the most important statements made by the Leader of the House today was also said by him on 28 June:

"So, for strictly practical and not for philosophical reasons, we propose to start by setting up three Committees and to review the matter at the end of the first Session."—[*Offical Report*, 28 June 1990; Vol. 175, c.528.]

I welcome the fact that that commitment to a review has been put on record again this evening.

My reservations concern, first, the practicability of three separate Committees. I should have preferred the idea, in the evidence submitted by my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson), of a European Grand Committee—but I am happy to have a trial. Secondly, I share the fairly widespread reservation about the House conceding a right to the Executive, whichever party happens to be in power. I favour the House strengthening its position vis-a-vis the Executive, not weakening it. Perhaps the Leader of the House can find room for a concession on this matter. I also hope that he will say a little more about how the review of the trial period will be carried out at the end of the first Session in which these proposals have been in practice.

6.22 pm

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): I shall be as brief as I can because of the shortage of time for the debate.

It is obvious that the influence and power of European Community regulations and laws over United Kingdom citizens have increased in the past, are increasing today and will increase much more in future. While this Parliament in Westminster can do little to stop that extension of power over our sovereignty, it is my view and that of the Procedure Committee that it is essential that Parliament should more fully consider, and that more Members should come to understand, debate and comment upon, the plethora of regulations being churned out by the Community before they are confirmed.

The motions on the Order Paper establish an entirely new procedure to ensure that this can be achieved. They do so by moving from debates late at night to consideration in proper business hours, in the morning in Committee. They ensure that not only the nominated members of Committees but any Member can attend a Committee and, if he can catch the Chair's eye, participate in the deliberations there. They provide that Ministers responsible for the regulations or the legislation being proposed by the Community may be cross-questioned in a way similar to what happens in a Select Committee before a motion that can be amended, debated and voted on by the Committee. And they will ensure that for a Session of Parliament a small band of Members will be appointed to a Committee who should be able to become expert in the subject referred to that European Standing Committee.

The consideration of documents referred to the European Standing Committee and the dates and times of these meetings will be announced by the Leader of the House during his weekly statement on proceedings and will be included in the party Whips. So everyone in the House is being given the opportunity and the encouragement not only to know what regulations are coming from Brussels but to take part in the consideration of those regulations and to ensure that the Minister in charge knows the views of interested Members before he returns to Brussels for the final decision on the regulation.

Although the Committee recommended that there should be five European Standing Committees—we rejected the idea of a Grand Committee because we believed that it would be permanently in session and we do

[Sir Peter Emery]

not believe that that would make sense—we were quite willing to see three appointed initially. I know that the Government will keep that under review, as they have given an undertaking to that effect.

In the subject reference to the Committees in motion No. 3 at the top of page 6588 on the Order Paper, finance and taxation have not been mentioned, yet they are the third largest of the subjects of regulations and documents passed by the Community. Supposedly, they would be taken by the third Committee, but as they feature in many of the regulations now and may well continue to do so in future, they should be noted as a subject for the third Committee. I stress that, because the Procedure Committee hopes that, as only a limited number of Members—10 in all—are appointed to each Committee, Members especially interested in the subjects covered by those Committees will apply to be appointed to them. So hon. Members who are interested in finance should realise that they should be particularly interested in the third Committee.

I believe that this is a major improvement, because, for the first time, a really informed core of Members will consider European legislation on which they have expertise. Under the present system, when a document is referred to Committee, that Committee provides a random selection—I was going to say a ragbag—of Members to constitute a Committee examining a subject in which they may have no interest and about which they may have little information.

Mr. Tim Smith: Does my hon. Friend know how the subject matters were allocated to the Standing Committees? Would it not have been more sensible to put finance, taxation, trade and industry together in one Committee—for the reasons that he has just given?

Sir Peter Emery: It might well have been. I can only tell my hon. Friend that the allocations were made as suggested in the resolution. It works out rather well, in view of the figures for the past two years: the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Department of the Environment—the AGE Committee—have been concerned with about 506 documents; the Departments of Trade and Industry and Transport—presumably the TIT Committee—with 318; and finance and taxation Departments—presumably the FAT Committee—with 321. So the subjects are fairly evenly spread.

It is not immediately obvious from the wording of motions Nos. 1 and 2 that the outcome of those motions will be to try to overcome the relatively new procedure for the syndication of questions and to cut down the number of—I was going to say useless—oral questions on the Order Paper which are never reached but which appear day after day.

The House should know that Mr. Speaker has the power, reinforced by motion No. 1, to introduce the new structure as outlined in the Procedure Committee's report. The most important effect of that will be that large bunches of questions will no longer be allowed to be handed in by a Whip or a Back-Bench party committee officer, or anyone else.

I have no doubt that ingenious organisations may still try to get around these new regulations—that always happens—which lay down that a Member or, if he cannot be present, a Member on his behalf can hand in a question to the Table Office, but I hope that the House will accept the opinion of the Procedure Committee that the syndication of questions is bad for Parliament, that it removes the initial intention behind questions and that it limits the power of the ordinary Member to have matters that concern him or his constituents dealt with at Question Time.

I understand the concern felt by a number of hon. Members, particularly those serving on the Scrutiny Committee, which has resulted in the tabling of the amendments. However, as we have so much from the Government at this stage, rather than delay the approval of these matters by yet another debate, I urge my hon. Friends to take the assurance given by the Leader of the House that this matter will be kept under review. In turn, I will give an assurance that the Procedure Committee will keep the matter under review so that, if it appears that the recommendation being made by the Scrutiny Committee, that matters should be taken on the Floor of the House, is not being carried out by the Government, we would so report to the Leader of the House.

Mr. Robert Hicks (Cornwall, South-East): I am a member of the Select Committee on European Legislation, which is also worried about what might be described as the external dimension. I understand why my hon. Friend's Committee has come to its conclusions, but the message that goes out from the House to the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, or whatever European authority it may be, may be downgraded as a consequence of our referring that issue to a Committee rather than taking it on the Floor of the House. Whether we are pro or anti-European, or however we may be judged as standing in the European context, we are all concerned about that.

Sir Peter Emery: I understand the point that my hon. Friend is making. One cannot deny, because there are no absolute facts that would allow us to deny, that that is possible. However, there is a counter-argument: that there has never been any suggestion that there was a different interpretation of the views of the House, either by a Minister when he goes to Brussels, or by Brussels itself, depending on whether the matter had been debated on the Floor of the House or referred to a Standing Committee. Therefore, I find it difficult to believe that that would be the case now.

I hope that the assurance that I give my hon. Friend —obviously I want to see co-operation between my Committee and the Scrutiny Committee—that if it should feel that its recommendation that matters should be debated on the Floor of the House is seen not to be followed through by the Government, we shall look at this and report after 12 months. I hope that this is of assistance both to the Government and to the Chairman of the Procedure Committee.

I thank the Leader of the House for his comments about the work of my Committee, but he is due much greater thanks for the fact that, for the first time since the days of Norman St. John-Stevas, we have a Leader of the House who is interested in modernising and making more effective the work of the House, and who is willing to do something about it. If he is not careful, the Leader of the House will establish a reputation as a great reformer.

6.33 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I apologise for the slight tone of acerbity with which I raised points of order at the beginning of the debate. When the business motion appeared on the Order Paper on Friday, one would have thought on a casual glance that, although we had a guillotine at 7 o'clock, we would notionally have two and a half hours of debate, and if there were a statement, perhaps two hours. However, a motion such as this is an open invitation to certain quarters to pile on the statements, and we are left not with one and a half or two and a half hours but one, for two subjects. That is not a good advertisement for the way in which we go about our business. Hence my concern at the beginning.

I pay tribute to the hard work of the Select Committee on Procedure and its report No. 622 of 1989, in which it went into the whole matter at great length and came up with some solutions, which we debated on 18 June. The exception to the agreement was the matter to which I shall come in a moment. I thank the Leader of the House for the way in which, with one exception, he has dealt with these matters.

As I said in that debate, the Select Committee has produced a special report, which was published the night before, HC512, in which we suggested that there should be a mutual agreement between the Select Committee on European Legislation and the Government on the terms of the proposed new Standing Order No. 127. The Leader of the House agreed with us, and that debate set a record in the number of recommendations accepted. I am glad to pay tribute to the Leader of the House, who has introduced Standing Order No. 127, under motion No. 4. There is mutual accord on that.

There is mutual accord on motion No. 5, which is important because it replaces a resolution of the House of October 1980, which, for the first time, set down the structure by which the House influences—I will not use any stronger word—the efforts, decisions and work of Ministers in the Council of Ministers. That report, in the name of the then Mr. St. John-Stevas, and the resolution attached to his name, are what we are now debating. The Committee has had regular correspondence, and I have had regular meetings, with successive Leaders of the House—the right hon. Members for Colchester, South and Maldon (Mr. Wakeham) and for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen). We thank them for their work, which is now updated and incorporated in the motion that we hope to pass today.

I now pass on rapidly, because time does not allow for any further comment on those matters, to the motion about which there is a certain amount of disagreement. The amendments to the proposed Standing Order No. 102 are the unanimous view of the Select Committee on European Legislation. That Committee has on it a spectrum of both the parties and of the approach taken by hon. Members to the European Community. We are a procedural and scrutiny Committee, and we discharge the responsibilities put on us by the House in respect of the conduct of the Executive, irrespective of the merits of the matter. That is one of the central processes of the House. I am glad to say that my colleagues go about their work in that manner, and that enables us to discharge our duty with reasonable efficacy. That gives point to the fact that we are presenting these amendments unanimously.

The proposed Standing Order No. 102 implements a good many of the proposals made by the Select Committee on Procedure, as we have heard. In particular, it sets up three Special Standing Committees with a procedure of questioning Ministers for an hour before debating the merits of any EEC proposals. There have been comments about how that will work, the number of members on each Committee and the welcome continuation of the practice of allowing hon. Members to go to the Committees to question and debate matters. There have been remarks about the small forum, but I shall go no further than point that out.

However, there has been a fundamental difference of opinion over the manner in which it is decided which documents go to Committee and which go to the Floor of the House. In the past, the convention was that, if it was suggested that a subject was more suitable for consideration by a Select Committee, because it was a technical matter or one about which special knowledge was required, we said so. The Government moved a motion on the Floor of the House at 3.30 pm and the House agreed to it. That represents the choice of the House over how to deal with its own business.

The new Standing Order that has been moved by the Leader of the House would change all that. He made no bones about it in our debate on 28 June. Everything will go upstairs, unless a motion moved on the Floor of the House by a Minister of the Crown says otherwise. That sticks in the Committee's craw.

In conclusion, I shall read the recommendation in the Select Committee's report of 1989-90, HC512:

> "The Committee therefore rejects the Government's view that automatic referral is necessary to ensure that the changes envisaged in the Procedure Committee's report are carried through. It recommends that the revised arrangements should continue to be based on the principle that the House itself makes the reference to the Standing Committee. In this context, the Government should feel free to table a motion of referral to a Special Standing Committee on European Community Documents in respect of all documents where it has not identified a clear argument against debate in such a forum."

In other words, unless there is a good argument for debate on the Floor of the House, upstairs it goes. No one would disagree with that, but that must be the House's decision, not that of the Government. The latter represents an intrusion of Executive power on the Floor of the House, power which has historically been resisted.

The Leader of the House kindly said that there will be a review after a year. During that year the Government will probably watch their Ps and Qs. The Procedure Committee has agreed to review the matter. If it works well, as I hope it will, why not enshrine it in Standing Orders? Our amendments would put it there. Even at this late stage, I hope that the Leader of the House will say that, for reasons of parliamentary scrutiny and the international reputation that our work on European Community legislation is gaining, it would be a great pity if the House lost that little bit of power. It has been noted abroad that we have that power, and it is greatly admired. I should be very sorry if this Leader of the House were to be responsible for its diminution.

6.42 pm

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I heartily endorse all that has been said by the Chairman of the Select Committee on European Legislation, the hon.

[Mr. Bowen Wells]

Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), in particular his tribute to my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House and my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) for the work that they have done on the issue.

Although I accept with gratitude my right hon. and learned Friend's undertaking that after a year he will review the referral of matters to Select Committees, I must point out that "temporary" is a difficult term. Something that is temporary tends to become very permanent. It is difficult to change Standing Orders of the House. It takes a long time to produce reports and to get action on them taken on the Floor of the House. I am therefore cynical about the word "temporary."

I believe that it would be a mistake. First, we should lose unanimity that could not easily be regained. Secondly, because the terms of reference of the Select Committee on European Legislation would be broadened, reports would be produced that the Committee could recommend should be debated on the Floor of the House. For example, before the Madrid meeting of the Council of Ministers at which decisions were to be taken on whether Britain should join the exchange rate mechanism and on whether there should be monetary union, along the lines of the Delors report, reports were published by the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, the Foreign Affairs Select Committee and the European Legislation Select Committee.

The Government and the Conservative party believed that debate on the Floor of the House immediately before the county council elections would reveal divisions in the Conservative party which, politically, they could do without. I fully respect that political reason, but it is a very bad reason for the House avoiding a debate on an important constitutional issue.

By means of this motion we should be handing to the Executive the ability to repeat an appalling decision that was politically motivated. As the terms of reference are to be widened, more issues should be debated on the Floor of the House. The European Council is now the principal policy-making body of the Community. It meets in secret; we have to guess what its agenda is. Nevertheless, we manage to do so. We need to be able to debate those matters on the Floor of the House, on the recommendation of the Select Committee on European Legislation. Whether or not those matters should be debated on the Floor of the House should not be decided by the political party that is in power.

I have noted that the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) is keen, while in opposition, on strengthening the procedures of the House of Commons, but I wonder whether, when he gets into government, he will be quite so keen.

Dr. Cunningham: I said whichever party formed the Executive.

Mr. Wells: Exactly. However, whichever party is in power is reluctant to give it up and hand it back to the Floor of the House of Commons. I hope, therefore, that we shall not agree to the motion. It gives to the Executive the power to decide whether debates shall take place on important issues. I hope that the Select Committee on European Legislation will bring more of those issues to the Floor of the House because of the broadening of its terms of reference. The motion would stultify that aim. That would be a great pity, since the Leader of the House has introduced a major reform which, with that exception, will serve the House well.

6.47 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): The 40-Member issue is relevant. I am sure that the Government will eventually concede the point, in order to please us all. The great majority of hon. Members do not have the slightest idea about the volume of European legislation. The only circumstances in which I envisage the 40-Member procedure being used is when all hon. Members receive a letter from the National Farmers Union and have to rise accordingly.

Is not there a danger that we are engaged in a conspiracy of silence to hide from the people of Britain what is happening? These are not minor regulations. They are fundamental measures that will change dramatically the laws of our country. It is not just one issue but several.

Yesterday we debated the exchange rate mechanism. Our trade figures with Germany are important. When I tabled a question a week ago I was told that I could obtain the information from the Library. All trade questions used to be published in *Hansard*, but during the past five months they have not been found there. They are transferred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and we are told that we can obtain the information from the Library.

There are three different formulae for determining what are trade figures. Hon. Members are therefore placed in difficulty. The same applies to the mountains of food. The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food told us at the Conservative party conference that the mountains of food had been wiped out because of the Government's reforms. Apparently, the mountains of food are increasing again because those reforms have not worked. Hon. Members cannot obtain information, however, about the size of the mountains. They are referred to a database in the House of Commons Library.

All European Community legislation used to be debated late at night because, we were told, most hon. Members would not be there; they did not want to listen to the debates. Not many hon. Members attended the debates and the Press Gallery was almost empty. But instead of having debates on the Floor of the House when hon. Members are beginning to pay some attention to European Community legislation, we intend to transfer consideration of that legislation to three Committees. The Committee members will be hand-picked. Hon. Members can go along and speak if they know what is coming up. However, we know that that will not happen.

We have to think of the public. I had a telephone message last night when I arrived home at 12.10 am. Somebody telephoned to say, "Mr. Taylor, I understand that the Government are banning the shooting of magpies and that you apparently have to obtain some licence. I just want to say that if you do not stop this, there will be another Eastbourne in Southend, East." The telephone went dead. I am sure that the call was from Rochford. That poor chap does not have the slightest idea that I can do nothing about whether we shoot magpies or need licences, as it is a decision of the EEC.

I had five letters this morning from nice ladies saying, "Dear Mr. Taylor, I understand that our laws to protect our cattle from being exported live are being stopped. Will

you please vote against it?" I had to write to those poor souls explaining that as a Member of Parliament I can do nothing about it. It will be decided by the Council of Ministers on a majority vote, irrespective of the views of Spanish fishermen or myself.

I am convinced that by referring these dramatic and important issues to a Standing Committee we are simply adding to the volume of silence. We are told by everyone that the Leader of the House is a great democrat. If he wants to ensure that we take these issues seriously, there is a simple answer. Instead of debating them after 10 o'clock at night and into the small hours or instead of referring them to a hand-picked Committee which will do its job and probably take the opportunity to visit Brussels and Japan at the same time, we could quite easily allow one day a week to discuss EEC issues. People would then hear about them and Ministers would be obliged to say what is going on. I do not think that it matters whether they are debated in Committee or on the Floor of the House or at any hour because they do not influence anything.

The Leader of the House's splendid motion No. 5 says that no Minister of the Crown can give agreement to any proposal that has not been scrutinised. That sounds fabulous. It sounds like a step forward in democracy. However, agreement is different from a common position, as the Leader of the House will be aware. Subsection (4) of the motion says that any Minister can agree to anything despite the scrutiny if he feels that there are special circumstances, and he must report those to the Committee. It is a load of codswallop. There is no democratic control on our laws because the courts, since interim relief, have the power to stop a United Kingdom law and say that it is dead. Even if 635 hon. Members voted against regulations, it would not influence the decision of the EEC one bit.

We do not need to look for more comforting scrutiny, which we all know is bogus and irrelevant. We need to tell the people of the United Kingdom what is going on. We should not give them propaganda but let them know the extent to which our democracy has faded away and, in my view, is disappearing. Hon. Members may think that that is dangerous because the public may wonder what is the point of voting in an election—whether it be for Conservatives, Labour or the Social and Liberal Democrats—when more and more decisions are being seized under article 100A of the EEC.

I am sure that the Leader of the House will say that I am unduly pessimistic and that Ministers take account of hon. Members' views. I am sure that they do, but he will be aware that in the EEC decisions are often made on a horse-trading basis. We say that we will support one country on a certain matter if we can have the support of others in other Committees. I am afraid—all hon. Members present are aware of this—that this is simply part of a long-term process of trying to deny information and deny people's right to know what is going on and to know how our sovereignty has disappeared shamefully.

Whether the Minister thinks that this is good or bad, whether one is pro-EEC or hates the EEC, whether one thinks great things are being achieved or rubbish is being achieved, our primary duty is to let the people of Britain know what on earth is going on. The only way to do that is not to pass on crucial changes affecting every person in Britain by referring them to pleasant sub-committees which will meet in the morning allowing the vast majority of hon. Members to relax. They will not have to wait up until 11 o'clock at night to hear what is going on. They can simply say, "Someone else is doing it and, if they do not do their job, it is not my fault."

In those circumstances, the motion we are considering in one hour—not five hours or 20 hours—will achieve nothing except that the people of Britain will know a little less about a subject on which they are not being informed.

6.54 pm

Mr. Andrew Hargreaves (Birmingham, Hall Green): My right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House wishes to reply soon, so I shall be brief. I take some comfort from the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) who expressed the importance of the Committees. However, I should like my right hon. and learned Friend to take on board one or two points.

I echo the great concern voiced by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) about the role of the Executive in this matter. I am also concerned that ordinary hon. Members will not be able to vote on the Standing Committees. It is fine that they should be able to listen and speak but they should be able to vote. If not, the value of the Committees will be downgraded and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) said, they will become irrelevant and people will not take them seriously. I urge my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House, even at this late stage, to take on board those points.

6.55 pm

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to hon. Members for having condensed their remarks effectively in the short time allowed to us.

I accept the point made by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) who would have liked us to have more time. I had not been planning to have so many statements this afternoon. The third statement was totally unexpected and we could not have done without it. I am grateful to hon. Members on both sides for the generosity of the tributes they have paid to me which are alarming in their scale. I am not sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) takes the same view, even on that humanitarian subject. However, as always, I listened with interest to what he said. I suspect that, to a large extent, it echoed his speech in the debate in June which lasted five hours. Therefore, it is wrong to say that these matters have not been considered at some length.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): May I ask about the word "legislation" in the Standing Order? Will my right hon. and learned Friend assure us that he will keep it under review? The point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) was that we wanted to look at the Madrid matters in advance of the debate. Would it be possible to consider that?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot answer that question now. However, there has been an agreed widening of the scope of the work that can be done by the Scrutiny Committee. We shall have to see how far that works out in practice.

The average printing cost per question is £38 and the preparation cost is £53 for a written question and £87 for an oral question. Therefore, there will be a substantial

[Sir Geoffrey Howe]

saving as a result of the recommendations which, I am glad to say, have commanded total support on both sides of the House.

We shall have to think about the best way of carrying out the review of the procedures once they have been in place for 12 months. It will be helpful to know that the Procedure Committee intends to have our performance under review during the 12 months ahead and I have no doubt that the Scrutiny Committee will continue to scrutinise it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) drew attention to an important point about the allocation of subjects. He is right to believe that the Treasury is included in the third group. It includes the Treasury—including Customs and Excise—the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office and the Departments of Health, Social Security, Employment, Energy and Education and Science. It will be helpful to have that set out clearly. They are allocated on the basis that the work will be roughly evenly distributed. That is provisional and we shall have to see how it works out in practice.

The key issue in the debate turned on the question of automaticity under Standing Order No. 102 and there is a clear divergence of views about that. I do not accept the point advanced by some hon. Members that the remission of the questions for study by the new Standing Committees implies any devaluation of the view that the House takes about scrutiny. They are special bodies and they will have new and extended procedures. That should be recognised.

There is bound to be the question of whether it is right for this matter to be decided on the proposals before us or on the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). We shall have to see how we get on, and hon. Members will certainly bear that in mind. On that basis, I commend the motion and the subsequent motions to the House.

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 233, Noes 21.

Division No. 333] **[7.00 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Cunningham, Dr John
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tris
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leighton, Ron
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madden, Max
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Meale, Alan
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robertson, George
Rooker, Jeff
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rowlands, Ted
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David

Trotter, Neville
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wareing, Robert N.
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Wilkinson, John
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Wray, Jimmy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Tim Boswell.

NOES

Beggs, Roy
Clay, Bob
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cryer, Bob
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Primarolo, Dawn
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Salmond, Alex
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. George Buckley and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House agrees with the recommendations contained in the First Report of the Select Committee on Procedure of this Session (House of Commons Paper No. 379).

It being after Seven o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *proceeded to put forthwith the Questions which he was directed to put at that hour by the Order [18 October].*

QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS, ETC.

Motion made and Question put,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session of Parliament Standing Order No. 17 (Questions to Members) and Standing Order No. 18 (Notices of motions, amendments and questions) be repealed and the following Standing Orders be made—

Time for taking questions

(1)—Questions shall be taken on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, after private business has been disposed of.

(2) No question shall be taken after half-past three o'clock, except questions which have not appeared on the paper but which are in Mr. Speaker's opinion of an urgent character and relate either to matters of public importance or to the arrangement of business.

(3) Any questions tabled for written answer on a day on which the House does not sit by reason of the continuance of a previous sitting shall be deemed to be questions for written answer on the next sitting day and shall appear on the Order Paper for that day.

Notices of questions, motions and amendments

(1)—Notices of questions shall be given by Members in writing to the Table Office.

(2) A notice of a question, or of an amendment to a motion standing on the Order Paper for which no day has been fixed or of the addition of a name in support of such a motion or amendment, which is given after half-past ten o'clock in the evening shall be treated for all purposes as if it were a notice handed in after the rising of the House.

(3) A Member shall indicate on the notice of any question whether it is for oral, written or priority written answer.

(4) Where a Member has indicated that a question is for priority written answer the Minister shall cause an answer to be given to the Member on the date for which notice has been given, provided that the requirement of notice shall be the same for such questions as that prescribed in this order for questions for oral answer.

(5) Notice of a question for oral answer may not be given on a day earlier than ten sitting days before the day for answer, provided that, where that earliest day would otherwise fall on a Friday, the earliest day on which such notice may be given will instead be the previous sitting day.

(6) Notice of any question for oral answer must appear at latest on the notice paper circulated two days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before that on which an answer is desired.

(7) When it is proposed that the House shall adjourn for a period of less than four days, any day during that period (other than a Saturday or Sunday) shall be counted as a sitting day for the purpose of calculating the period in paragraph (5) of this order.

(8) When notice shall have been given of a Motion for the adjournment of the House for more than three days Mr. Speaker may cause to have printed and circulated with the Vote a memorandum superseding the provisions of paragraphs (5) and (6) of this order and instead setting out the earliest day on which notice of questions for oral answer may be given for each of the first ten sitting days after that adjournment, provided that each such day shall as far as practicable fall on the same day of the week as that on which the question is to be answered and shall not be fewer than fourteen days before the day for answer; and also setting out the latest day for notice of questions for oral answer on each of the first two sitting days following that adjournment provided that each such day shall not be fewer than two days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the day for answer. —*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

The House divided: Ayes 218, Noes 2.

Division No. 334] **[7.13 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cormack, Patrick
Cryer, Bob
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*

Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madden, Max
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Nellist, Dave
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Portillo, Michael
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rooker, Jeff
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheerman, Barry
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Greg Knight and
Mr. Neil Hamilton.

NOES

Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Graham, Thomas

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mr. George Buckley.

Question accordingly agreed to.

EUROPEAN STANDING COMMITTEES

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session of Parliament—

A. Standing Order No. 102 (Standing Committees on European Community Documents) be repealed, and the following Standing Order be made:

European Standing Committees

(1) There shall be three Standing Committees, called European Standing Committees, to which shall stand referred for consideration on Motion, unless the House otherwise orders, such European Community Documents as defined in Standing Order No. 127 (Select Committee on European Legislation) as may be recommended by the Select Committee on European Legislation for further consideration.

(2) If a Motion that specified European Community Documents as aforesaid shall not stand referred to a European Standing Committee is made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business, the Question thereon shall be put forthwith.

(3) Each European Standing Committee shall consist of ten Members nominated for the duration of a Session by the Committee of Selection; and in nominating such Members, the Committee of Selection shall—

(i) have regard to the qualifications of the Members nominated and to the composition of the House; and

(ii) have power to discharge Members from time to time, and to appoint others in substitution.

(4) The quorum of a European Standing Committee shall be two, excluding the Chairman.

(5) Any Member, though not nominated to a European Standing Committee, may take part in the Committee's proceedings, but such Member shall not make any Motion, vote or be counted in the quorum; provided that a Minister of the Crown who is a Member of this House but not nominated to the Committee may make a Motion as provided in paragraph (7) and (8) below; and the Government may appoint the precedence of Notices of Motion to be considered in each Committee.

(6) The several European Standing Committees, and the principal subject matter of the European Community Documents to be referred to each, shall be as set out below; and in making recommendations for further consideration, the Select Committee on European Legislation shall specify the Committee to which in its opinion the Documents ought to be referred; and subject to paragraph (2) of this Order, the Documents shall be referred to that Committee accordingly.

European Standing Committees	*Principal subject matter*
	Matters within the responsibility of the following Departments—
A	Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Environment; and Forestry Commission (and analogous responsibilities of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices)
B	Trade and Industry; Transport (and analogous responsibilities of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices)
C	Other Departments.

(7) The Chairman may permit a Minister of the Crown to make a statement and to answer questions thereon put by Members, in respect of each Motion relative to a European Community Document or Documents referred to a European Standing Committee of which a Minister shall have given notice; but no question shall be taken after the expiry of a period of one hour from the commencement of the said statement.

(8) Following the conclusion of the proceedings under the previous paragraph, the Motion referred to therein may be made, to which Amendments may be moved; and, if proceedings thereon have not been previously concluded, the Chairman shall interrupt the consideration of such Motion and Amendments when the Committee shall have sat for a period of two and a half hours, and shall then put forwith successively:

(a) the Question on any Amendment already proposed from the Chair; and

(b) the main Question (or the main Question, as amended).

The Committee shall thereupon report to the House any Resolution to which it has come, without any further Question being put.

(9) If any Motion is made in the House in relation to any European Community Document in respect of which a Resolution has been reported to the House in accordance with paragraph (8) of this Order, Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put successively—

(a) the Question on any Amendment selected by him which may be moved;
(b) the main Question (or the main Question, as amended);

and proceedings in pursuance of this paragraph, though opposed, may be decided after the expiration of the time for opposed business.

(10) With modifications provided in this Order, the following Standing Orders shall apply to European Standing Committees:

No. 85 (Chairmen of standing committees);
No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees);
No. 89 (Procedure in standing committees); and

B. the following consequential Amendments to Standing Orders be made:

in Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business),
line 15, after 'documents' insert '(other than in pursuance of paragraph (9) of Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees))'.
line 37, leave out from 'Orders' to end of line 46 and insert 'No. 89 (Procedure in standing committees) and No. 102 (European Standing Committees) "European Community Documents" shall be as defined in Standing Order No. 127 (Select Committee on European Legislation)'.

in Standing Order No. 84 (Constitution of standing committees),
leave out from the beginning of line 8 to 'measures'in line 9;

in Standing Order No. 86 (Nomination of standing committees),
line 3, leave out 'and';
line 5, at end, insert 'and
(d) a European Standing Committee';
line 10, leave out from 'instruments' to 'or' in line 12;

in Standing Order No. 87, line 6, after 'amendment' insert 'other than a motion or an amendment in a European Standing Committee under Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees)';

in Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees), line 2, after 'been' insert 'or stands'

in Standing Order No. 89 (Procedure in standing committees), line 2, after 'Committee,' insert 'and Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees)';
leave out from beginning of line 11 to 'shall' in line 13, and insert, 'of a motion relative to a European Community Document or Documents or an amendment thereto given under Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees).
line 25, at end insert 'or (in the case of European Standing Committees) by paragraph (4) of Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees)'.
—*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

Amendment proposed to the Question: Leave out paragraphs (1) and (2) and insert—

'(1) There shall be three standing committees, called European Standing Committees, for the consideration of European Community documents (as defined in Standing Order No. 127 (Select Committee on European Legislation)), referred to them.

(2) Where notice has been given of a motion relating to a European Community document, a motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business, that the said document be referred to such a committee, and the Question thereupon shall be put forthwith; and if, on the Question thereupon shall be put forthwith; and if, on the Question being put, not fewer than forty Members rise in their places and signify their objection thereto, Mr. Speaker shall declare that the noes have it.'.—*[Mr. Spearing.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 49, Noes 138.

Division No. 335] **[7.24 pm**

AYES

Allen, Graham
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Cash, William
Clay, Bob
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Dalyell, Tam
Dixon, Don
Flynn, Paul
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Graham, Thomas
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Irvine, Michael
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Leighton, Ron
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Nellist, Dave
Neubert, Michael
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Raffan, Keith
Salmond, Alex
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Jimmy Hood.

NOES

Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beggs, Roy
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Page, Richard
Paice, James

Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Wheeler, Sir John
Wilkinson, John
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Irvine Patnick and
Mr. Tim Boswell.

Amendment accordingly negatived.

Amendment made to the Question: No. 4, as a further consequential Amendment to Standing Order No. 84 (Constitution of standing committees), line 1 at the beginning insert:

'Subject to the provisions of paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees)'.—*[Mr. Spearing.]*

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put,

That with effect from the beginning of the next Session of Parliament Standing Order No. 127 (Select Committee on European Legislation) be amended by leaving out paragraph (1) and inserting:

(1) There shall be a select committee, to be called the Select Committee on European Legislation, to examine European Community Documents and—

(a) to report its opinion on the legal and political importance of each such document and, where it considers appropriate, to report also on the reasons for its opinion and on any matters of principle, policy or law which may be affected;

(b) to make recommendations for the further consideration of any such document pursuant to Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees); and

(c) to consider any issue arising upon any such document or group of documents.

The expression 'European Community Documents' means—

(i) any proposal under the Community Treaties for legislation by the Council of Ministers;

(ii) any document which is published for submission to the European Council or the Council of Ministers;

(iii) any document (not falling within (ii) above) which is published by one Community institution for or with a view to submission to another Community institution and which does not relate exclusively to consideration of any proposal for legislation;

(iv) any other document relating to European Community matters deposited in the House by a Minister of the Crown.—*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

The House divided: Ayes 170, Noes 2.

Division No. 336] **[7.35 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beggs, Roy
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Dixon, Don
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hind, Kenneth
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Illsley, Eric
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mellor, David
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Portillo, Michael
Primarolo, Dawn
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spearing, Nigel
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Steen, Anthony
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Tracey, Richard
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Baker and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Patchett, Terry
Skinner, Dennis

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Peter L. Pike.

Question accordingly agreed to.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put,

That in the opinion of this House:—

(1) No Minister of the Crown should give agreement in the Council of Ministers to any proposal for European Community legislation—

(a) which is still subject to scrutiny (that is, on which the Select Committee on European Legislation has not completed its scrutiny) or

(b) which is awaiting consideration by the House (that is, which has been recommended by the Select Committee for consideration pursuant to Standing Order No. 102 (European Standing Committees) but in respect of which the House has not come to a Resolution, either on a Resolution reported by a European Standing Committee or otherwise);

(2) In this Resolution, any reference to agreement to a proposal includes, in the case of a proposal on which the Council acts in co-operation with the European Parliament, agreement to a common position.

(3) The Minister concerned may, however, give agreement:—

(a) to a proposal which is still subject to scrutiny if he considers that it is confidential, routine or trivial or is substantially the same as a proposal on which scrutiny has been completed;

(b) to a proposal which is awaiting consideration by the House if the Select Committee has indicated that agreement need not be withheld pending consideration.

(4) The Minister concerned may also give agreement to a proposal which is still subject to scrutiny or awaiting consideration by the House if he decides that for special reasons agreement should be given; but he should explain his reasons—

(i) in every such case, to the Select Committee at the first opportunity after reaching his decision; and

(ii) in the case of a proposal awaiting consideration by the House, to the House at the first opportunity after giving agreement.

(5) In relation to any proposal which requires adoption by unanimity, abstention shall, for the purposes of paragraph (4), be treated as giving agreement.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud) *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I wish to draw your attention to motion No. 5, paragraph (5) of which states:

"abstention shall, for the purposes of paragraph (4), be treated as giving agreement."

Is there any precedent in the history of British Parliaments for abstention being treated as agreement?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I should not go so far as to say that there was a precedent, but I can inform the hon. Gentleman that it is certainly not a matter for the Chair.

The House having divided: Ayes 165, Noes 8.

Division No. 337] **[7.46 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beggs, Roy
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dixon, Don
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fishburn, John Dudley
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hind, Kenneth
Home Robertson, John
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leighton, Ron
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mellor, David
Michael, Alun
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Raffan, Keith
Redwood, John
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sillars, Jim
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Neil Hamilton and
Mr. Timothy Kirkhope.

NOES

Clay, Bob	Skinner, Dennis
Corbyn, Jeremy	Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Cousins, Jim	
Cryer, Bob	**Tellers for the Noes:**
Knapman, Roger	**Mr. Eric Illsley and**
Nellist, Dave	**Mr. Bill Michie.**

Question accordingly agreed to.

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill

[By Order]

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Question [15 October], That the Lords amendment be now considered.

Clause 6

AS TO TRANSFER OF RIGHTS

Which amendment was: in page 4, lines 9 to 17, leave out clause 6.

Question again proposed, That the Lords amendment be now considered.

7.57 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. You may recall that the Bill has been the subject of some controversy and, indeed, difficulty. When it was last considered an amendment was moved. The House considered an amendment which did not refer to anything. As a consequence of the belated discovery of that fact during the debate, the proposer withdrew the amendment because clearly the House could not debate something which was not there. Could you agree to allow us to start from the beginning? We had two and a quarter hours of debate in a vacuum as it were. It seems to me that it would be better to agree for the purposes of time that the debate was about to begin now because on the last occasion it was about, literally, nothing.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In the first instance, the motion to which the right hon. Gentleman—I should say hon. Gentleman; I am giving him titles that he does not have—referred was not withdrawn. The debate was adjourned. The hon. Gentleman knows that the powers of the Chair do not include a power to make that debate null and void. No occupant of the Chair has that power. Therefore, this is a resumed debate, with which we must now continue. If I remember correctly—I remember the debate well—Mr. Harry Barnes had the Floor.

Mr. Michael Neubert (Romford): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I remain somewhat perplexed about the position of the printed Bill that we are about to discuss. You will recall that the original Bill that was deposited was dated 16 November 1988. The later Bill, which I have in print, was dated 23 November 1989. The two Bills now available in the Vote Office are dated, respectively, 28 February 1990 and 25 May 1990. Should we come to debate clause 6 and the amendment to it, it is not clear to me which of the two Bills we are discussing. That clause is in the Bill dated 28 February 1990, but it does not appear in the one dated 25 May 1990.

I would consider it odd if it was within our procedures to discuss an outdated edition of a printed Bill, but even if that was so, is it not a contempt of the House that the Bill should have been printed in anticipation of the deletion of clause 6 even before the House had considered that matter?

Madam Deputy Speaker: One Bill is the Commons' Bill and one Bill is the Lords'. The Bill before me is the correct one. The Vote Office, being efficient as ever, has both the Bills and all that hon. Gentlemen have to do is ask for the correct one.

I would be generous enough to offer my copy to the hon. Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert), but, as we are debating it, I think that I should have it by the Chair.

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. In addition to the two Bills to which reference has been made we have received a statement on behalf of the promoters in support of the consideration of the Lords amendment. Paragraph 3 of that statement says:

"Clause 6 of the Bill dealt with the power to transfer market rights conferred by the Bill. In view of the decision to make the amendment referred to above, clause 6 became otiose and was struck out at Committee Stage in the House of Lords."

I challenge that argument. When I made inquiries as to when the amendment was made, I was informed that when the Bill left the Opposed Private Bill Committee in the House of Lords it was in the same condition as it was when it left the House of Commons. We are now told that that Committee made the amendment. The report of that Committee should be made available, but, having asked for it, I have been told that it is unavailable.

If we are told that an amendment was made, we are entitled to see the business before the Committee when that amendment was made. I seek your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker, about how to obtain the report of those Committee proceedings so that we know exactly why the amendment was made. I have been unable to obtain that information and, therefore, I request that this business be adjourned until we receive it. Yet again we are approaching a debate without the evidence needed to consider the amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I cannot go behind decisions that were taken in the Lords. The question before us is perfectly in order, as is all the documentation. Points of order are taking time out of a resumed debate. We have already spent more than two hours on the procedural motion. The matters that hon. Gentlemen are seeking to raise now could be raised in the general debate when I should be happy to listen to them. I call Mr. Barnes.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I am afraid that I must start by raising a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We adjourned the debate on 15 October until today to get ourselves out of a great difficulty—we were debating something that did not exist. Many clever speeches were made, and I take my hat off to those hon. Members who were able to talk for two and a quarter hours about material which did not exist but which was loosely linked to the Bill. The amendment that had been moved, however, related to nothing.

I believe that we should start again from scratch and that the promoters should move that the amendment be considered. We should then be able to debate the items correctly. I put my case in a letter to Mr. Speaker and no doubt it was considered before this debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I know that the hon. Gentleman approached Mr. Speaker about this matter, but the Chair has no authority to make null and void and erase a debate which was proper and had taken place. We must now continue that resumed debate. The Bills and all the papers are available to the House this time.

Mr. Barnes: In that case I now need to argue why we should vote against the amendment being considered.

The main reason not to consider the amendment is to give Redbridge council time to put its house in order, especially as the Bill is a procedural mess. That would give the council an opportunity to consider the role of the parliamentary agents, Sharpe Pritchard.

In the previous debate on this matter the hon. Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) said:

"Redbridge's parliamentary agents are Sharpe Pritchard who are well known to hon. Members."—[*Official Report*, 15 October 1990; Vol. 177, c. 994.]

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I know that you have heard several points of order already, but I have another point of order that is extremely important to the Chair and to the House.

When we previously debated the Bill a number of Conservative Members who are deeply involved in this matter spoke and, therefore, under the normal rules of procedure, they would be disallowed from speaking today. However, they were speaking about a clause that was not in the Bill. In effect, now that we know about clause 6, they have not taken part in the proceedings.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): Good one.

Mr. Skinner: For the purposes of proper procedure, and as those hon. Members have a vested interest in this matter, those who spoke about a clause which was not in the Bill should now have the right to speak to clause 6. If not, those hon. Members and, in particular, their constituents, will be disfranchised in this debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has made an extremely good point. It is most ingenious, but, unfortunately, at this stage I cannot change our practice to change the rules of debate. Hon. Members who have spoken before may intervene, but I cannot change the practice now to allow them to speak. I must say, however, that the hon. Gentleman raised a most ingenious point of order—one of the best I have heard in my time in the Chair.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. We know that there is a procedure in the House whereby an hon. Member can ask the permission of the House to speak again in a debate. Sometimes Ministers exercise that right when they are introducing new Bills. In those circumstances, if Conservative Members who took part in the previous debate on the non-clause asked permission to speak again, would that be allowed? I know that someone might object, but that is another story.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I cannot anticipate that, but, as the hon. Gentleman rightly says, it is for the House to determine the answer.

Mr. Cryer: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) has great validity and I endorse its sentiments. In view of that, would you accept a manuscript amendment to the Standing Orders—a procedure that is widely followed in the House?

Madam Deputy Speaker: That was a very good try on the hon. Gentleman's part, but I am not going to wear it this time.

Mr. Neubert: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. If it is not open to you under the

[Mr. Neubert]

Standing Orders to make such special arrangements in the special circumstances of the business being adjourned on Monday 15 October, would you be prepared, if asked to judge the adequacy of the time given to the debate, to make allowances for the fact that a good deal of our time during the previous debate was spent debating a matter that was out of order? We were asked to discuss a clause that did not appear in the Bill and much of the debate was taken up with points of order about just that.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I see that this evening our time is also being taken up with points of order. The hon. Gentleman must now leave the matter to the discretion of the Chair.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): On the ruling that you have just made, Madam Deputy Speaker, you said that if we ask for the permission of the House to speak again, it will be up to the House to decide yea or nay. I take it that if there were to be a division of opinion, there would also be a Division of the House on whether that Member could speak.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No, no—one voice only is our normal practice. It is the practice of the House that if one voice is raised in opposition, so be it. It is not up to the Chair.

Mr. Barnes: I thought that the point of order from my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) about the disfranchisement of the hon. Members who spoke in the previous debate was important. That was why I included it in my letter to Mr. Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover said it with much more style and panache than could be contained in my letter.

The point that I was making was that we should vote against the amendment because Redbridge council is in something of a mess over the measure. I was quoting from the hon. Member for Romford, who said:

"Redbridge's parliamentary agents are Sharpe Pritchard who are well known to hon. Members. Their no doubt expensive services enjoy a high reputation in the House."

However, they may not enjoy such a high reputation following the procedures in which we have been involved. A great mistake had been made when the debate had to be adjourned on 15 October.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend agree that the debate was not adjourned in the sense of an ordinary conclusion, but came to an end in unusual circumstances because the Bill was withdrawn? The debate had to come to an end because the sponsor had to withdraw the Bill and left the House with nothing to debate. That emphasises the importance of the procedural points that we are making.

Mr. Barnes: The measure was, in practice and de facto, withdrawn, but unfortunately the sponsor moved an adjournment, so formerly we were in that position. I wrote to Mr. Speaker in an attempt to claim that, despite how the words appeared on paper at the end of the debate, the reality was that the officials and, to a large extent, the Chair were in a considerable mess about what was taking place. I was asked by Mr. Deputy Speaker who was in the Chair to allow the sponsor to get us out of that mess, which he did by moving the adjournment. Now, we have been hoist by the petard of the adjournment having been moved. But in reality it was a convenient means of killing off the debate. That is why I felt that we should start the whole thing again and enfranchise the hon. Members who had previously spoken, but Madam Deputy Speaker's ruling was different, so I must pursue the debate.

I was quoting from the hon. Member for Romford in the debate of 15 October, when he talked about the expensive services of Sharpe Pritchard and said that the firm would be well known to hon. Members. He continued:

"Proceedings on the Bill have been under way for nearly two years if one dates them from the printing of the Bill on 16 November 1988. Redbridge residents must have been paying a packet all this time."—[*Official Report*, 15 October 1990; Vol. 177, c. 994.]

They certainly have been paying a packet and, presumably, have had to pay an extra packet in having the Bill reprinted to make it available for us today. They also have the problem of all the mess that was created on 15 October when the parliamentary agents were present.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have just been up to the Private Bill Office and seen the only copy of the report of the Lords Committee stage. While I clearly did not have time to go through all five days' proceedings, it is, I am informed, practice for House of Lords Committees to announce their findings at the end of the Committee stage. At the end of the Committee stage of this Bill all that is on record is that the Bill should proceed. There is no mention of clause 6 being taken out. It seems that you, Madam Deputy Speaker, may have been misinformed. Clearly, the House cannot debate a House of Lords amendment that has not been made.

8.15 pm

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is something which the Chair cannot go into now. The matter before the House —the procedural motion that we are debating—is perfectly in order.

Mr. Skinner: My point of order is different, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Redbridge London Borough Council Bill was first introduced by the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne); when we debated it last week the hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) spoke on behalf of the promoters. The hon. Member for Ilford, South introduced the Bill, and the hon. Member for Ilford, North was allowed by the Chair to stop the proceedings. If someone who is not promoting the Bill in the House—such as the hon. Member for Ilford, North, who was not at the beginning—is allowed to stop it, it should be right and proper for any other Member, whether Opposition or Conservative, to be able to say, "Let us adjourn again." If the hon. Member for Ilford, North can do that, as he did on the last occasion, why cannot we do it now and get on to something else?

Madam Deputy Speaker: It would be in order for the Chair to decide whether that motion was acceptable.

Mr. Skinner: I shall move it then.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It would not be acceptable.

Mr. Eric Illsley (Barnsley, Central): Further to the matter that has been under discussion, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The second and third paragraphs of the statement put out on behalf of the Bill's promoters refer to a decision made in another place to make an amendment that led to clause 6 becoming otiose and being struck out at Committee stage in the House of Lords. If clause 6 became otiose, an amendment could not appear to leave out clause 6 in the Bill. How can we have a statement saying that the clause is no longer relevant, is otiose and should be struck out, and yet we are discussing an amendment to leave out clause 6? Surely, logically, the decision to leave out clause 6 has been arrived at in another place and we are simply being asked to justify or rubber-stamp a mistake made in another place because the amendment was not properly constructed. The statement contradicts the Bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: We are not talking about that. The House has been asked to determine for itself whether, when we reach the amendment, we should decide to omit it from the Bill.

Mr. Illsley: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I do not know whether there can be a further point of order, but the hon. Gentleman appears to want to delay the debate.

Mr. Illsley: How can we determine what was in the minds of their Lordships in leaving out clause 6? We are being asked to determine whether clause 6 should stand on its own in our opinion, but we cannot see the reasoning behind the decision by their Lordships, the promoters or whoever to leave out clause 6.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House determines for itself whether amendments should be made and clauses left out or withdrawn. Those are matters that the House determines during the course of debate.

Mr. Skinner: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

You were not in the Chair when we discussed the matter last week, but we found that, although there are 1,100 people qualified to sit in the House of Lords, not one of them spoke on the issue. Therefore, not only is the hon. Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) right about the matter, but it went through the House of Lords like a dose of Epsom salts. It was not moved by the person who first moved it in this House because the sponsor—the man who is commonly known on these Benches as the man with the monocle, Erich von Stroheim II—was not here to do it. It really is a cock-up of tremendous magnitude.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is not raising a point of order; he is raising perfectly legitimate points of debate and, perhaps, substance. If we can proceed with the debate, I shall be delighted to call him.

Mr. Barnes: On 15 October my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover said that our debate was like something out of Monty Python. Further proof of that is the fact that I might end up making the longest speech that I have ever made while saying nothing because there have been so many interventions and points of order.

Mr. Cryer: My hon. Friend will know that when a Bill comes from the other place it is handed by a gentleman in a wig to the Serjeant at Arms who then holds it—balances it—and gives it to an usher who carries it round the No Lobby in order to give it to somebody who then gives it to one of the Clerks. In all that handling, some sheet of paper with clause 6 on it may have dropped out. Has my hon. Friend investigated that possibility to see whether the missing clause is on a piece of paper in an odd corner somewhere?

Mr. Barnes: I am afraid that I understand nothing about procedural mysteries and details. I am just the hon. Member who walked in here like a little boy lost, picked up the Bill and saw that the emperor had no clothes and that we were discussing nothing. When I said that, the debate was stopped. If I had made some investigations I might have been able to discover some other great procedural anomalies between here and the other place, but I am afraid that I have not.

Mr. O'Brien: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I feel strongly about this. The report of the Third Reading debate in the other place on 14 June says:

"Redbridge London Borough Council Bill. Read a third time, and passed, and returned to the Commons with an amendment."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 14 June 1990; Vol. 520, c. 414.]

But nowhere is there any record of an amendment. It is only referred to. So how can this House consider an amendment from the other place that has not been made? Nowhere is there a record of an amendment being made by the other place to the Bill to the effect that clause 6 should be erased. How can this House consider an amendment that has not been made? May we have some guidance, because the procedure that we are following tonight seems very strange?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Chair is not responsible for the deliberations of the other place. The amendment that I have before me tonight has come from the other place, and therefore our proceedings tonight are in order.

Mr. O'Brien: Further to my point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Who made the amendment in the other place? No Member of the other place is recorded as making such an amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As I say, the Chair is not responsible for deliberations in the other place. There is no judgment that the Chair can pass on that. The amendment has come from the other place and I am assured by the authorities of the House that it is perfectly in order.

Mr. Neubert: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) said that the Bill was given its Third Reading in the other place on 14 June. You will recall that I drew to your attention a copy of the Bill printed in May this year without that clause. On first glance, that would seem to imply that the amendment was proposed and enacted in Committee in the other place. Yet my hon. Friend the Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) assures us that, according to the record, that is not so. I think that we are owed an explanation.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I cannot assure my hon. Friend or the House that there was no such amendment in Committee in the other place because I did not have a chance to read all five volumes of the Committee's proceedings. But I am assured by the Private Bill Office that the usual procedure in the other place is to make recommendations on a Bill at the end, and I assure the House that at the end no such amendment was recorded.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman and the House can be assured that the Private Bill Office is correct in presenting the Lords amendment. It is in order.

Mr. Nellist: On a different point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. You will be aware, as most hon. Members are, that the other place has a strange, but presumably on many occasions useful, procedure by which the House adjourns during pleasure. It is a quaint and rather nice phrase. Will you, Madam Deputy Speaker, accept a motion from the Floor that our proceedings be adjourned for a similar period, which I understand is about an hour, so that the Clerks of this House can contact the Clerks of the other place to discover whether the points made by Conservative Members are correct? If they are, it would save a lot of embarrassment all round if the matter were put right before something wrong was done tonight.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. Hon. Members are making a good try in raising points of order, but our proceedings are in order, as is the documentation before us, or it would not be here.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think that it would be right to say that the Chair at all times protects Members of the House and the records of the House. As I understand it, after the Committee proceedings in the other place a private Bill is then placed on the Table of what is called the Lord Chancellor's counsel, which may or may not be comprised of Members of the other place but who are lawyers. They then amend the private Bill without any record of the proceedings being made available to hon. Members which would enable them to discover why such amendments were made. That is what happened in the case of the Associated British Ports (No. 2) Bill. Amendments to that were made by the Lord Chancellor's counsel and there were no records of that. Are there any records of such procedures in the other place at which we could look so that we could discover why the clause was removed from the Bill?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Chair has many responsibilities and much authority, but it does not extend to the other place.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is a serious matter. According to the Order Paper we are considering that the Lords amendment to the Redbridge London Borough Council Bill be now considered. We have had two documents from the Vote Office, one of which says that in the parliamentary Session 1989-90 the Lords amendment is, in effect, to leave out clause 6. It is stapled to another document which had been issued by Sharpe Pritchard, parliamentary agents.

There must be some limit to the extent to which an outside body can insert an amendment which is to be considered by Parliament without any authority other than their claim that it is a Lords amendment. There is none of the other documentation that is usually available to the House of Commons to verify that it is a Lords amendment. We have only the word of the parliamentary agents. Frankly, that is not something which, in my experience and I am sure in yours, Madam Deputy Speaker, the House has ever taken as proof that the amendment was considered by the other place.

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is a procedure that has been going on for many years——

Mr. Cryer: It is wrong.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It may well be wrong, but it is not for the Chair to amend that procedure at this stage. I simply tell hon. Members that this is a procedure which has been accepted by the House for a long time.

Mr. Barnes: I was discussing Sharpe Pritchard, parliamentary agents, who have also been mentioned in many points of order, and suggesting that Redbridge borough council should have an opportunity to get itself new parliamentary agents. Given the money that Sharpe Pritchard made out of this and the inept and incompetent way in which it handled the matter, especially in connection with the debate on 15 October, the company should be known as "Sharp Practice" rather than Sharpe Pritchard.

Mr. Cryer: Sharpe Pritchard may not be at fault, because, although the usual practice has been described, it is not the usual practice for parliamentary agents to put forward amendments as being made in the other place when there is no evidence that such amendments were ever made. All parliamentary agents are meant to do is to transmit information about decisions that have been made in this House or another place. If parliamentary agents transmit information about uncorroborated amendments made in another place, it means that they can insert their own decisions into the proceedings of this House, which must be unprecedented. Perhaps my hon. Friend will dwell on how the blame should be apportioned. Presumably Sharpe Pritchard had evidence of the amendment being made, so I wonder whether it provided any of that documentation to my hon. Friend to justify its action.

8.30 pm

Mr. Barnes: It would have been helpful if the documentation from Sharpe Pritchard had included such evidence. If it at least referred to the relevant parliamentary papers, right hon. and hon. Members could then check in the Library whether everything was in order. Sharpe Pritchard's payments should presumably be based on such arrangements. If Sharpe Pritchard are not to blame but someone in Parliament, then that too should be a subject for examination.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend acknowledge the value of photocopies in clarifying our procedure? The two sheets from Sharpe Pritchard are photocopies. Given that the Bill was withdrawn on a previous occasion, one wonders why Sharpe Pritchard did not go to the trouble of photocopying a document from the other place which would allow us to decide beyond peradventure, as the lawyers expensively say, whether the Lords made the decision in question. Perhaps, however, Sharpe Pritchard cannot locate such a document, in which case it appears that decisions are made not by the geriatric wing in the Lords or even by this House, but by paid agents. That undermines the constitution.

Mr. Barnes: I agree that here are serious constitutional implications.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Your predecessor in the Chair ruled that these proceedings are in order because an amendment was sent

from another place, notwithstanding the fact that there is no evidence available to right hon. and hon. Members that such an amendment was made. So far as I have been able to ascertain today, no such amendment was made in Committee or on Third Reading. We are therefore not clear at what stage it was made. Let us suppose that a mistake has been made in another place. What would be the consequence if this House voted for an amendment from another place which had never been properly made?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I assure the hon. Gentleman and the whole House that the Chair is indivisible. I have been listening to the proceedings, and it seems a pity that right hon. and hon. Members are spending time on points of order which are perfectly legitimate points in making the argument that the Lords amendment should not be considered. I think that it would be better if the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes), who has been frequently interrupted, now had my protection and was allowed to continue his speech.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I accept that you listened to the earlier proceedings and have taken account of everything that happened, and from your point of view it is just as well that you did so as we might otherwise be on the second round, and we do not want to subject you to that.

This House is portrayed as the mother of Parliaments and the best of its kind in the world. I do not agree, but that is neither here nor there. The Prime Minister goes trotting off to eastern European countries saying, "Why don't you follow our model?" I am not kidding. Should anyone follow a model in which 1,100 people in the House of Lords, who never open their mouths but just take the money and run, send an amendment to this House, only for us to find that it has not been included in the Bill? My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East had to draw attention to that fact, and the Bill's sponsor is not even present—he has gone on a fact-finding trip somewhere and got his mate to move it, but that hon. Gentleman refuses to talk and will not tell us what has happened to the clause. At 9.15 pm he comes to the Chamber and says, "Sorry, we can't find the clause—you've been debating fresh air, so we'll withdraw it."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We have been round that course umpteen times. The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East should be permitted to continue his speech.

Mr. Barnes: I was making the point that there is something odd about Sharpe Pritchard's activities, so it would be advantageous to Redbridge council to vote for consideration of this measure at a later stage because that would give the council time to find fresh parliamentary agents.

Mr. Illsley: My hon. Friend made the point that Sharpe Pritchard made a mistake. My hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) mentioned the Lord Chancellor's counsel. The promoters must have access to more information than right hon. and hon. Members do or they could not have included the statement that clause 6 was considered otiose and had been struck from the Bill. How could the promoters so confidently make that statement when the information was not available to right hon. and hon. Members? No one has sought to explain to us why there are so many confusing issues surrounding clause 6.

Mr. Barnes: It would not surprise me if Sharpe Pritchard as the agents and promoters know more about what is going on than we do. We are very short on information about the procedures that have been adopted, and Sharpe Pritchard has not seen fit to provide us with sufficient information to reach a reasonable judgment. The information that hon. Members have been able to dig out throws doubt on whether the amendment has been properly passed by due procedure in another place.

Mr. Illsley: It is clear that the promoters know more than we do because they confidently stated that clause 6 was struck out because it was considered otiose, so why has none of the Bill's supporters come to the House today to explain the promoters' confident statement about clause 6 and to explain who was responsible for striking it out?

Mr. Barnes: It is true that the parliamentary agents should attempt to explain the procedures that have been followed, but if Sharpe Pritchard has not done so there is a duty on the sponsor, who is represented today by the hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall), as the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) is in Uruguay. Nevertheless, the hon. Member for Ilford, South should still be able to communicate with the hon. Member for Ilford, North, as should the parliamentary agents, so that the hon. Gentleman can explain to the House the procedures that have been observed.

On 15 October, the hon. Member for Ilford, North introduced this measure. I will read out his entire speech, because it was short:

> "I beg to move, That the amendment be now considered. Hon. Members may wonder why I rise to speak to the Bill. It is because my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) is with an IPU delegation in Uruguay. He sends his apologies for not being able to be here. I shall say nothing more about the Bill because it has been debated in both Houses and in Committee."—[*Official Report*, 15 October 1990; Vol. 177, c. 983.]

Like other hon. Members, I do not believe that it has been debated in the House of Lords. In any case, that was the whole explanation that we have had, together with a small statement from the parliamentary agents which came out the second time around.

We are completely in the dark, and it is right that points of order about procedural improprieties should be raised and considered. We are not protecting Redbridge, although it is beginning to be involved—we are protecting parliamentary procedures and processes, and the constitution.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The crux of the matter that we have now been debating for more than 45 minutes is a simple point that could be easily resolved. Was the amendment made in the House of Lords? If so, was it made in Committee notwithstanding its apparent absence from the record? Was it made in some other way to which we are not privy? Or was it made on Third Reading? The agents are sitting listening to this debate and my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North is present, so it would be an extremely easy matter to give this information to the House. As it has not been given, however, we are entitled to assume that the amendment was not properly made, in which case the debate should not continue because we are debating an amendment that was never made, so the debate has no standing.

Mr. Barnes: I certainly feel that the hon. Member for Ilford, North is obliged to explain the whole process to us

[Mr. Barnes]

and to fill in the blanks in our understanding. He might want to do that in a series of interventions or he might want to wait until after my brief speech. I will happily give way to him if he wants to explain matters more fully.

I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) has refused on occasion to allow a measure through on the nod unless the promoters got up and explained in detail what it contained. That led on one occasion—the Adelphi Estate Bill—to a veritable Monty Python show. The Bill was presented without explanation, until my hon. Friend forced some explanation of it. I am sure that a video replay of that occasion could be provided for the House.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As you have been following proceedings with your usual care and attention, you will recall my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) asking about hon. Members who have already spoken in the last debate, which turned out to be a non-debate. Madam Deputy Speaker was asked whether they should not be able to speak again. The hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) may be intimidated by this procedural difficulty, but I think that your colleague in the Chair made it clear that if such hon. Members sought the leave of the House, they could speak again unless there was an objection. Can you confirm that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is an expert in parliamentary procedure, but he did not get it quite right. The last debate was in order; it was adjourned, so we resumed it this evening. Certainly, if any hon. Member who has already spoken wants to speak again he will need the leave of the House to do so. The hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) would not need the leave of the House if he wished to speak again, but I have noticed that a number of hon. Members have been encouraging him to do so. It is difficult for him to do so, however, when an hon. Member is still on his feet.

Mr. Barnes: I am quite prepared to give way to the hon. Gentleman if he wants to clarify matters, or if he wants to move the adjournment so that he can pull together all the threads of this awkward situation and present us with the details that we require. He seems not to want to take up my offer——

Mr. Barron: Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the Lord Chancellor's counsel in another place became involved before the Bill had had its Third Reading, so that was when there was an opportunity to object to amendments made without debate. The hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) should know those procedures, as he is here to promote the Bill tonight.

Mr. Barnes: Taking over as the sponsor of the Bill, the hon. Member for Ilford, North must be aware of what the debates have covered so far. He could have drawn on that to explain the general position and then allowed questions about the procedural oddities——

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory pace of this procedure, and given the many difficulties which you and your colleagues in the Chair have noticed, would it be in order to adjourn the debate until the Bill's sponsor returns from Uruguay? That seems the sensible thing to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That would not be in order. The debate is perfectly in order and we should get on with it. We really do not want delaying tactics.

Mr. Barnes: I know that hon. Members are keenly following the thread of my speech, the points of which all follow on logically from each other. So far I have said that we should vote against considering the amendment. The only way to avert a major constitutional crisis and save both the face of Sharpe Pritchard and the procedures of the House is to vote against this measure. That would give Redbridge council the chance to get new parliamentary agents, because Sharpe Pritchard must be to blame for what happened on 15 October, when we had to debate without the correct documentation and even without copies of the Bill itself.

On 15 October the hon. Member for Romford also mentioned the role of public relations consultants:

> "Redbridge is also being advised by a well-known firm of public relations consultants . . . the consultants are being paid £50,000, plus £4,000 a month for expenses".—[*Official Report*, 15 October 1990; Vol. 177, c. 995.]

Those public relations consultants are doing a fine job. So far, the publicity that they have generated has been about the Bill being killed off on 15 October and about its being resurrected today, when we have revealed the huge difficulties associated with it. This is a proper debate, which has involved almost every hon. Member in the Chamber, apart from the sponsor, all of whom have shown that there are many different procedural problems. Although I have made only two points so far, we have covered a great deal of ground within those two points because of the points of order and intervention.

Mr. Illsley: I am interested to hear what my hon. Friend has to say. Did he suggest that the public relations company was prolonging proceedings on the Bill so as to extend its retainer and its fee?

Mr. Barnes: I do not know what the role of public relations consultants is, but presumably it is to sell the notion of the Redbridge Bill and make it popular. Therefore, they should have handled things in a different way. I do not know what their relationship is with Sharpe Pritchard, but as public relations consultants they should have handed lots of information and explanations to hon. Members, especially those who are liable to be in the Chamber to debate the Bill. Such information would make Members of Parliament more likely to accept what was there because it would seem that a fair job was being done. However, that has not happened and the public relations on the Bill have been disastrous.

Mr. Allen McKay: My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) pointed out to the Chair that, as the sponsor of the Bill is in Uruaguay and we have a stand-in, it would be sensible to adjourn the debate until the sponsor returns. My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) is a generous person. Despite the fact that, judging by the sheaves of paper in his hand, he could go on for another hour and 10 minutes, I suggest that he cuts short his speech so as to allow the stand-in to explain the situation before we vote on the Bill.

Mr. Barnes: If the hon. Member for Ilford, North told us that he would speak fully to put us in the picture and explain what has happened, which would be a considerable contribution, although we should still need to cross-examine him, I should be willing to end my speech. I would do what I imagined that I had come here to do, which is to make a few brief points. I am sure that other hon. Members would assist me by allowing me to finish my speech quickly so as to enable the hon. Member to enlighten us. If no great enlightenment came from his speech, I might be allowed a second bite of the cherry if the House gave me leave to speak again.

The hon. Member for Ilford, North gives us no sign that he wishes to join the debate, so I shall continue with my speech and my reasons why we should vote against the amendment. Should we do so, we would give Redbridge council the chance to come to its senses and reorganise itself. I understand that it is now two years since the council first made the decision to pursue this matter.

Mr. O'Brien: The Redbridge council decided to promote the Bill in 1980, and began the consultative exercise. No one has explained to this House, nor to the House of Lords, why clause 6 was included to start with, so my hon. Friend has every right to ask the sponsor to explain both that and why it is now to be taken out.

Mr. Barnes: That seems eminently sensible. I am more than willing to give way to the hon. Member for Ilford, North. I feel a bit like a yo-yo, jumping up and down as all sorts of interventions have been made by various Members—except the one hon. Member who could clarify the situation for us and help us to overcome the problems that we face. If he does not do so, we shall believe that the problem is insurmountable and we shall vote against the Bill.

Mr. Skinner: After all these hours during the passage of the Bill, we are having one hell of a job getting the sponsor to say anything. Could it be, as we have suggested before, that because the Tories have a majority of 150 these private Bill merchants think that they can just slip Bills through the House of Commons because not all the Tories need to be kept here? They will be got here at the time prescribed by the Whips. The Whips will tell them when to come along and vote on the closure. The sponsor does not speak because the last thing that he wants is for people to understand the Bill. He is interested in getting the closure by getting the troops into the Lobby, out of the dining rooms and the 16 bars. They walk in and the shop stewards —the Whips—are on the door. If they ask what they are voting for, the Whips say, "Never mind about that, get into the Aye Lobby", or the No Lobby, as the case may be. That shows up this Parliament for what it is.

The private Bill procedure is being used in a scandalous fashion by the Tory Government. There is no better example of that than the proceedings on this Bill. The sponsor refuses to tell us why clause 6 was there in the first place or why it is now being taken out. They do not care because they will be using the big block vote to hustle the Bill through—all those people will come rushing out of the woodwork to be told by the Whips how to vote.

Mr. Barnes: I am aware of the procedures adopted to ensure that private Bills that the Government support get through, especially as I have recently had experience on the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, which we were discussing on Monday. The power of the Whips descended not merely into the House but into the Committee so that the Government could control the situation. I will not go too far down that road because we are discussing the Redbridge Bill, although the other matters link in because similar procedures are followed.

We have now been told that the Redbridge Bill has been around for 10 years, although it was drafted only a couple of years ago. The decision to make this move was taken with a majority of one on the council, and since that time there have been changes in the make-up of the council, which is presumably facing an election now. What does the council think about the Lords amendment? We have no information on that, although we have an hon. Member who can correct me if what I say is incorrect, and give details about the position.

Redbridge borough council has been faced during the last two years with a whole host of changes which have affected its position. There is the uniform business rate. There is also the poll tax. There have been other changes in local government finance. The council's financial position has changed as well as its political make-up. Next year, however, the position will have changed again because after the next election there will be a Labour Government, so within a year there will be new financial arrangements for local government. The people of Redbridge, as well as many members of Redbridge borough council, do not want the Bill.

9 pm

Mr. Neubert: I shall seek to test the spirit of the proceedings by requesting permission to intervene for a second time in the debate. In case I am denied that opportunity, I will refer to the authority given for the promotion of the Bill within Redbridge borough council. Since a week ago last Monday, I have established the precise voting figures in Redbridge borough council when the Bill was first mooted for promotion. Of the 63 Redbridge borough councillors, nine were not present at the relevant meeting, 12 abstained in the vote on whether to promote the Bill, 10 voted against its promotion and 32 voted for it.

The Local Government Act 1972 requires, in section 239(2), that

> "A resolution of a local authority to promote or oppose a Bill under subsection (1) above shall be—
>
> (a) passed by a majority of the whole number of the members of the authority at a meeting of the authority held after the requisite notice of the meeting and of its purpose has been given".

The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) will have quickly made his calculations and will now realise that the Bill was given the barest minimum level of support—a majority of just half a councillor, if that is possible, or perhaps a very short councillor. Lest the hon. Gentleman think that that happened on just one evening, I should point out to him that the voting figures were identical the following year when the matter was put to the vote a second time.

Mr. Barnes: That information is invaluable. It reveals that Redbridge obtained the power to promote the Bill by only one vote. Had one other person abstained or voted against promotion of the Bill, Redbridge would not have obtained overall support for it in the council chamber and

[Mr. Barnes]

would not have been able to proceed with it. The council would have had to consider other methods of extending Redbridge's market facilities.

I understand that the Food Act 1984 contains licensing provisions that the council could have used. It would have been possible for the borough council to follow a different route from the expensive one that it chose to follow. I picked up that point from the speech made by the hon. Member for Romford on 15 October.

The Bill is likely to have knock-on effects. The markets would be oversaturated—a point made by the Market Traders Association, whose headquarters are in Barnsley. The position is the same in this context as it is with the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill. There was much opposition to that Bill, which led to problems in Committee. The procedures involved in battling against that measure were long drawn out. A promise was made at the Conservative party conference that an enabling Act would be introduced under which all the ports could be privatised.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I had been under the impression throughout the proceedings that the hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) did not intend to speak in the debate, because he could not, but he has certainly been gallivanting about this evening. He has spoken to the parliamentary agents and he is now engaged in little huddled conversations. My hon. Friend and other hon. Members are trying to obtain information from him about the Bill, especially about clause 6, but he refuses to speak in the debate and he prefers to talk to other people. Why is he not imparting the information?

While I am on my feet I have something else to say. Some of the Ministers have been coming in here. I have seen the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Financial Secretary and a Minister from the Home Office. They have walked in, gone to see the Chief Whip or one of the Whips and asked what time the vote will be, saying, "I am at a dinner." The game stinks to high heaven. They are just trying to find out when the vote will be so that they can come in at a time agreed by the Whips. This is a private Bill and they are not supposed to be involved in it. Yet the Whips have told them what time to come. It is high time the Chair took a hand in these affairs. This is supposed to be a private Bill, but the Government's footprints are all over it. Any moment now we shall see the Prime Minister come trotting down from her ivory tower.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman is an experienced parliamentarian and he knows that the Chair has nothing to do with these matters. The hon. Gentleman has not raised a point of order, but now that there is an interruption I remind the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) that he is beginning to stray from the motion before the House, which is that the Lords amendment be now considered.

Mr. Skinner: I spy strangers.

Mr. Vivian Bendall (Ilford, North) *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 141, Noes 41.

Division No. 338] **[9.6 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Amess, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Fallon, Michael
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mellor, David
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Jacques Arnold and
Mr. James Arbuthnot.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas

Cohen, Harry
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fraser, John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Neubert, Michael
O'Brien, William
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Ruddock, Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Terry Patchett and
Sir Nicholas Bonsor.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put accordingly, That the Lords amendment be now considered:—

The House divided: Ayes 139, Noes 30.

Division No. 339] **[9.19 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Amess, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Fallon, Michael
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mellor, David
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P. *(Chester)*
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Jacques Arnold and
Mr. James Arbuthnot.

NOES

Allen, Graham
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Buckley, George J.
Budgen, Nicholas
Cohen, Harry
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Don
Golding, Mrs Llin
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Leighton, Ron
Lightbown, David
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
O'Brien, William
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Ruddock, Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Neubert and
Mr. Terry Patchett.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment accordingly considered.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): I spy strangers. *[Interruption.]* I spy strangers.

Notice being taken that strangers were present, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, *pursuant to Standing Order No. 143 (Withdrawal of strangers from House), put forthwith the Question*, That strangers do withdraw:—

The House divided: Ayes 1, Noes 137.

Division No. 340] **[9.30 pm**

AYES

Gregory, Conal

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mr. Alan Meale.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Beggs, Roy
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cohen, Harry
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cryer, Bob

Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Fallon, Michael
Fearn, Ronald
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Gordon, Mildred
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morley, Elliot
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Portillo, Michael
Primarolo, Dawn
Redwood, John
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Salmond, Alex
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Skinner, Dennis
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Nicholas Baker.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question again proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Bendall: I beg to move.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Genuine concern has been expressed at this amendment and it is a discourtesy to the House for the sponsor, albeit standing in for someone else, to seek to move the amendment as he has. He has full responsibility for promoting the Bill and he has a duty to provide the House with information about the origin, source and, most importantly, the verification of the amendment. As you will be aware, there is no evidence that this amendment was ever considered by the House of Lords. We are entitled to something more than the shortest possible sentence muttered by the sponsor of the Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) has moved the Lords amendment and he is perfectly within his rights to do so.

Mr. Neubert: We must now proceed to discuss the proposed Lords amendment to delete clause 6. Before I do so, however, I must say how surprised I am to find myself ranged against so many former colleagues in government and other hon. Friends. They have given this Bill intermittent support throughout its proceedings, no doubt in the belief that they are spurring us on to greater competition, whereas the Bill seeks to create a new market monopoly within the London borough of Redbridge.

Little progress has been made in respect of greater competition and I find it difficult to accept that Romford should be singled out for special treatment when there are so many other charter markets in the country and the Government are not prepared to take action to reform the system. That argument must be left to one side, however, and we must consider clause 6, which deals with the transfer of rights. That clause, now that we have it in print in the Bill, states:

"Any person entitled or authorised by virtue of this Act to hold a market may transfer or dispose of all or part of his rights to another and that other shall have and may exercise to the extent authorised by the Council all or any of the powers which the Council have in relation to markets established by them under section 50 of the Act of 1984 other than any power to make byelaws but shall be subject to all the restrictions, liabilities and obligations in respect thereof to which the Council are subject:"

That part of clause 6 was in the original Bill as deposited in this House, but a Committee of the House added the further line,

"provided that no such transfer or disposal of rights shall take effect without the consent in writing of the Council."

Since the debate on 15 October we have had the benefit of a statement issued by the promoters' agents, who were asked repeatedly during our proceedings on 15 October to explain the Lords amendment, the authority for which is still in some doubt. We are still unclear as to why it has come before us tonight despite repeated exchanges attempting to elicit that information.

The statement on behalf of the promoters answers the question, and, like all good examinees, the promoters answer the question on one side of one piece of paper. The statement says:

"The Bill is promoted by the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge ('the Council'). It would authorise the Council to establish a market on a site near the town centre of Ilford."

It does not make the point that the market will be fully protected by law and have a monopoly in the London borough of Redbridge so that by supporting the Bill Members of Parliament are seeking to create a new market monopoly in the London borough of Redbridge.

9.45 pm

Paragraph 2 of the statement continues:

"In the opposed Bill Committee in the House of Commons, amendments were made in consequence of the Petition of the London Borough of Havering. One of these amendments was to delete the power for the Council to authorise others to establish a market."

Paragraph 3 states:

"Clause 6 of the Bill dealt with the power to transfer market rights conferred by the Bill. In view of the decision to make the amendment referred to above, clause 6 became otiose and was struck out at Committee stage in the House of Lords. That is the only amendment for consideration."

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. Can he enlighten the House as to the consequences of removing the two clauses? I do not understand whether, as a result of that, the council will have the right to transfer its rights to hold a market.

Mr. Neubert: Before I respond to my hon. Friend, let me say that the statement that I read out at least takes the place of the explanation that we were owed by the sponsor, my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall), who has stolidly sought not to contribute to proceedings other than by formally moving the amendment a minute or so ago. The statement has clarified the position, but we need to read and comment on the statement and examine it more closely.

I am reassured to find that the statement confirms my speculation on 15 October, which appears in column 995 of *Hansard* for that day, that the reason for the proposed deletion was in relation to the previous clause 3(2), which was amended by a Committee of this House. It sought to give Redbridge the right to hold other markets, and it has now been removed.

The history of the clause which it is now proposed to delete is that it was originally included, added to in Committee, its removal was sought, in part, on Report on 27 February in the House and, after Third Reading, it went to the Lords. The proposed deletion comes before us for examination tonight as a result of our recent decision in the Lobby.

The clause refers to transfer of rights. We must examine what these rights are to know what the clause is about. They seem to arise under section 50 of the Food Act 1984. Under that Act, a market is sought in the London borough of Redbridge. Section 50, in part III of the Act, gives power to the local authority to set up a market and gives some of the rights that may be transferred under clause 6. Section 50 states:

"(1) The council of a district may—

(a) establish a market within their district;

(b) acquire by agreement (but not otherwise), either by purchase or on lease, the whole or any part of an existing market undertaking within their district".

Redbridge council proposes a new market in relation to substantial commercial development, so it is seeking powers to establish such a market under the Act.

The powers and rights attached to the Act and proposed for transfer in the clause include, under section 51, the power to sell a market undertaking to a local authority. That would not arise in this case because the owner of the market undertaking is a local authority, the London borough of Redbridge, the Bill's promoter.

Market days and hours are prescribed in section 52, which says:

"A market authority may appoint the days on which, and the hours during which, markets are to be held."

Presumably that is one right that can be transferred. We had a great deal of debate earlier on the number of days on which such a market would be held because in Romford the market is held on three days a week and the Bill would give Redbridge the opportunity to hold a market on six days a week.

Another right that is conferred by the Food Act relates to charges. Section 53 says:

"A market authority may demand in respect of the market, and in respect of the weighing and measuring of articles and vehicles, such charges as they may from time to time determine."

It goes on to deal with the provision of a weighing machine for weighing cattle, sheep or swine. Presumably that will not be relevant to Redbridge's market which we understand will not be a market for livestock.

Section 53(3)*(a)* says that the authority

"shall keep exhibited in conspicuous places in the market place, and in any market house, tables stating in large and legibly printed characters the several charges payable under this Part".

If they were relevant, that would be one of the obligations mentioned in clause 6 as also transferring to another owner. Section 53(3)*(b)* says that the authority

"shall keep so much of the tables as relates to charges payable in respect of the weighing of vehicles, or, as the case may be, in respect of the weighing of animals, conspicuously exhibited at every weighing machine provided by them in connection with the market for the purpose."

Those are considerable rights that are to be transferred to the alternative owner, if it is not to be the London borough of Redbridge. Time is prescribed for the payment of those charges and presumably that is another right that is transferred.

Section 55 gives powers to the market owner to recover charges either summarily as a civil debt, or in any court of competent jurisdiction, if it should go that far, and to levy a charge by distress. Section 56 prohibits sales in market hours. Section 57 describes the weighing machines and scales. Section 58 describes the weighing of articles, and section 59 deals with information for the market officer.

Finally, section 60 deals with byelaws and says:

"A local authority who maintain a market, whether or not they are a market authority within the meaning of this Act, may make byelaws—

(a) for regulating the use of the market place, and the buildings, stalls, pens and standings in that market place;

(b) for preventing nuisances or obstructions in the market place, or in the immediate approaches to it;

(c) for regulating porters and carriers resorting to the market, and fixing the charges to be made for carrying articles from the market within the district."

I hope that that is a sufficiently comprehensive summary of the rights and powers that would accrue to Redbridge under this Act, should the Bill reach the statute book, as owners of the new market to be established at Ilford. I am not sure whether the transfer of rights relates to another owner or operator of the market or to the individual stallholders.

We had an interesting debate on clause 6 on Report on 27 February when my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) moved an amendment to it. He much regrets that he cannot be here tonight, but he has been active throughout the Bill's proceedings. My hon. Friend's amendment and the debate that followed it proceeded on the basis that clause 6 concerned the transfer of individual stallholders' rights. Let me explain why I believe that to be the case. My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe), another stalwart opponent of the Bill, unfortunately cannot be here. She is in the Cambridge Union tonight debating abortion. We know how sincere she is in her commitment to that cause. Only the issue of life itself would prevent her from being here to see her opposition to the Bill through to the end. On 27 February, my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone, speaking to clause 6, said:

"The clause implies that there will be something unique about markets in future. If someone wishes to set up shop, he can do so in the knowledge that he can dispose of that shop —a greengrocer's or hairdresser's shop or whatever—so long

[Mr. Neubert]

as there is no change of use. All is well—he can go ahead and sell the business. That will have quite an effect on his decision to set up business in the first place and on how he assesses his competitiveness."

There is no indication there that we were talking about one local authority or another or an institution, but about a shopkeeper, an individual business man or woman.

That reading of the clause is confirmed by the sponsor, whose absence in Uruguay we regret. Intervening to answer the point of my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone, he said:

"First, it is normal for a landlord to have a right to approve a change of tenant. That is a normal procedure and is therefore quite normal in this case. On the question of whether people should have an automatic right, the London borough of Havering and most other councils which control markets find it desirable to be able to stipulate whether they approve of the person to whom the market trader intends to pass on his stall."

That is a very real issue in the world of open air markets, because the rights of individual stallholders not only to prosecute their own business but to pass it on when the time comes to members of their family is crucial.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South added:

"They do not wish to do so for reasons of nepotism or anything of that sort but simply to ensure that the trader who takes over is honest and reliable and will provide a reasonable service to the community. That is a perfectly reasonable thing for the public to expect. That is why the council would wish to be involved in that process."

That point particularly relates to the last two lines of the clause, which stipulate that no transfer should take place other than with the consent of the council, which in this case is the London borough of Redbridge.

That theme was taken up by my hon. Friend the Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell), who asked this of my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone:

"Does she accept that the circumstances of a market are slightly different from those of a row of shops? One knows that simply from practical experience. Market traders are close up against one another. They can move stall to stall and, indeed, may be seen doing so. Property can, as it were, move sideways. In contrast, shops are normally separate lock-up establishments in a defined space and much easier to defend."—*[Official Report, 27 February 1990; Vol. 168, c. 208-11]*

All that suggests—

Mr. Bendall *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put, *but Mr. Deputy Speaker withheld his assent and declined then to put that Question.*

Mr. Neubert: All that suggests that right hon. and hon. Members were under the impression on 27 February that the rights in question related to the rights of the individual stallholder, but I am not sure that that is the case. I wonder whether it is not the case instead that the rights and obligations that flow from clause 6 are to be transferred not in relation to individual stallholders but rather to the persons or institution who operate the market.

The Committee, to which the House must be indebted, reported that it was not prepared to allow the original clause 3—to which clause 6 is linked—to stand, because it provided not only for a monopoly market to be established in Ilford but for other markets that it would be within the power of the London borough of Redbridge to grant to other operators.

It was because of the transfer of those rights to those operators that clause 6 was necessary. I should be grateful for clarification on this from the sponsor of the Bill. I should have welcomed a contribution from the Under-Secretary, too, since he has a similar market in his constituency which might be threatened by the potential precedent of this Bill. I should be grateful for an explanation from him or from the sponsor about whether the transfer of rights comes down to stallholders——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That the debate be resumed tomorrow.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Motion made, and Question put,

That, at this day's sitting, the Motion relating to the London Underground Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Kirkhope.]*

The House divided: Ayes 153, Noes 29.

Division No. 341] **[10 pm**

AYES

Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowis, John
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Emery, Sir Peter
Fearn, Ronald
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard

Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Portillo, Michael
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Wilkinson, John
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tim Boswell and
Mr. Timothy Wood.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Cohen, Harry
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Don
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Lamond, James
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Meale, Alan
Morgan, Rhodri
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. George Buckley.

Question accordingly agreed to.

London Underground Bill

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the Promoters of the London Underground Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

That all Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words "under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)" were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

10.12 pm

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): May I explain, in support of the motion, the purpose of the Bill? The Jubilee line extension would be the first major extension of London Underground since the Jubilee line was opened about 10 years ago. It would extend the Jubilee line from Green Park to Stratford. That would create the opportunity to provide direct underground connections for established communities in two areas: south of the river in Bermondsey and Southwark, and between Stratford and Canning Town. It would also assist the redevelopment of three areas: around Canada water, on the Isle of Dogs and on the north Greenwich peninsula where the Greenwich gas works used to be.

There appears to be some confusion about the route between Canary wharf and Canning Town. I confirm that the route that the promoters intend to put before the Committee is the alignment through the north Greenwich peninsula. That is the route proposed in the additional provision for which the Department has given permission. It would thus bring public rail transport to some parts of the area for the first time.

The debate is on the single procedural question whether the Bill should be allowed to continue into the next Session. I hope that it will. The promoters would not have enough time between now and 20 November, the deadline for depositing private Bills, to prepare a new book of reference, all the fresh plans and the other documentation that is necessary to produce a new Bill incorporating all the amendments in the additional provision.

[Mr. Robert G. Hughes]

I am aware that not all the decisions so far taken about the Bill are to everyone's liking and, if the Bill is allowed to continue, the Committee will no doubt be asked to consider many areas as part of its consideration of the petitions lodged against it. On the stations at Southwark and Bermondsey, I greatly welcome the decision announced yesterday by my hon. Friend the Minister to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). I congratulate the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey on his tenacity and the campaign he has fought to ensure that the line, which will inevitably go through his constituency, will have two fine stations to serve his constituents.

The Committee has been instructed already by the House to consider two further matters. The House will know that the works required to reconstruct the existing station at Westminster to provide for the Jubilee line extension were discussed at length during the proceedings in the Services Committee and on Second Reading, which took five hours on 12 and 24 July. The Westminster issue will be discussed again in Committee as a result of the instruction in the name of the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell).

The second instruction, in the name of the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and other hon. Members representing east London constituencies, requires the Committee to consider the effects of the railway on regeneration and employment in docklands and the lower Lee valley. I hope that the House will agree that the Committee is the best place for discussion on that to continue, as it is on almost every other matter that could be brought to our attention. There will be two more opportunities to discuss the Bill on the Floor of the House, and if right hon. and hon. Members choose, they can seek to catch the Chair's eye on those occasions.

I believe that the Jubilee line extension can make a major contribution to the improvement of rail transport in areas of London not currently well served. It will contribute to the regeneration of areas of London in need of assistance. It can do that only if it is allowed to continue in the next Session. There is no alternative method of proceeding. Therefore, I urge hon. Members on both sides to support the carry-over motion.

10.17 pm

Miss Kate Hoey (Vauxhall): I have no intention of trying to prevent the Bill going on to its next stage, at which we are all aware that many petitioners will bring forward objections. I wish to use this opportunity to place on record some of the views of my constituents, their concerns about the extension of the Jubilee line and the effect that it will have on the Waterloo area, and to issue a warning—not a threat—that there will have to be a substantial change in what is planned at Waterloo before the Bill is given an easy passage in Committee.

The majority of petitioners from my constituency will not be satisfied with anything less than a real attempt to overcome the problem affecting Jubilee gardens—a precious open-space site by the riverside and a public amenity which has been used for many years for all kinds of events. That site will be threatened during the building of the extension because the Bill seeks powers to take over a section of Jubilee gardens as a temporary work site from which all the running and platform tunnels between Green Park and Waterloo will be excavated. The site would also include a temporary access shaft and a jetty for the loading of excavated tunnel spoil on to barges for removal.

I am pleased that London Underground has satisfied us that the riverside walk will be kept open, but more than a third of Jubilee gardens is threatened. The irony is that there is no need for London Underground to use that part of Jubilee gardens. I am sure that it has considered other sites in London and Westminster. Jubilee gardens is simply the easiest because there is nothing built on it, but what seems the easiest and cheapest solution may not be in the best interests not only of the people who live in the immediate environment but of the people of London as a whole.

There is a better site within Jubilee gardens that London Underground would prefer to use. It is not covered in grass and is being used not by the public but as a car park. It is closer to the river and would be cheaper. London Underground has not suggested that site because it is part of the development plans of the County Hall Development Group. London Underground did not feel able to say that it wanted to use that site or to ask the House to give it permission to do so.

All the people in the area believe that that was misguided and that London Underground is proposing an expensive solution when a cheaper one is available. The only problem was that it would have upset the county hall developers. Yet it seems not to matter that the proposed solution will upset the people of Waterloo and of London as a whole.

There is still an opportunity for Department of Transport Ministers and the Secretary of State for the Environment to put their heads together and work out a solution. As the County Hall Development Group has gone bankrupt, it is strange that the Secretary of State for the Environment is continuing to consider planning permission. The London Residuary Body, which did not give evidence to the public inquiry, is being allowed to carry on with the development when there are perfectly satisfactory alternatives for the use of county hall. I am sure that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) will mention the London charitable trust, which has some good and exciting plans for the development of county hall.

The Minister should get together with the Secretary of State for the Environment and tell anyone who comes forward with a new plan for county hall that he will consider their plan only as part of any planning permission. I hope that the Secretary of State will follow the recommendations of the public inquiry and the inspector and say that the development is not on. The inspector did not want the development to proceed, but was overruled by the Secretary of State, who has given the developers until 7 November to table amendments.

I hope that the Secretary of State will tell the developers that he will consider development only if, as part of that development, they say, "We shall not use this part of county hall until the Jubilee line is finished"—in other words, that planning permission will not be granted for the car park site at county hall, which the developers want to make into a landscape garden for private flats and part of a hotel, unless the Secretary of State is minded to grant it. The Secretary of State should say, "It must be a condition of the planning permission that that part of the site is to be used by London Underground to develop the Jubilee line."

That would satisfy London Underground. It would also satisfy people in the Waterloo area, who fear that Jubilee gardens will be lost to public use for at least six to eight years. The county hall development could still go ahead without the use of that part of the site. That seems an obvious and simple solution. I have not been in this place for very long, but I have discovered that often it is precisely the obvious and simple solutions which, for some reason or other, we cannot adopt. I therefore ask the Minister to explain why that cannot be done. I know that London Underground has written to the Secretary of State suggesting that it should be considered if anything should happen to the County Hall Development Group planning application, which I remind hon. Members yet again is already defunct.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): County hall could solve a lot of the problems faced by the New Building Sub-Committee. It would help us greatly if we could acquire that building for accommodation purposes. Can my hon. Friend explain in detail her statement that the development group is defunct?

Miss Hoey: I thank my hon. Friend for allowing me to elaborate. County hall is sitting empty across the river. There are many rooms in that building. I am sure that all the hon. Members present have been to see county hall at some stage. The development group envisaged turning the building into an elaborate hotel. I think that the Government's plan was that people could come in from France on the channel tunnel fast rail link and stay at a super-duper hotel at Waterloo while having private treatment at St. Thomas's hospital just round the corner, which the Government want to allow to opt out of the national health service. That is one scenario, anyway.

My hon. Friend is absolutely right that county hall is sitting empty. The development group has gone bankrupt. Unfortunately, however, there was a joint planning application between that development group and the "ultra-democratic" London Residuary Body—the body set up to take over and look after all the responsibilities of the GLC and the ILEA. I know that my hon. Friend comes from a long way away from London, and that is why I am going into a certain amount of detail. County hall has been in London's use as a public building for a very long time. Labour Members believe, and I know that my colleagues in the other opposition parties also believe, that the building should be maintained for public use by Londoners.

Now that the development group has gone bankrupt, there is no plan and any new developer may not want exactly what the County Hall Development Group had in mind. We now have the opportunity to save and speed up the extension of the Jubilee line while satisfying those who do not want Jubilee gardens to be threatened. However, the gardens are not threatened only by the Jubilee line extension. Had that been the only threat, we could probably have lived with it and London Underground could have used a part of the area which would not involve taking out too much of the green space, but the gardens are also threatened by the development of county hall and by the south bank development.

Jubilee gardens is being whittled away. I share hon. Members' concern about the problems that will arise in the immediate area of the Palace from the extension of the Jubilee line, but many of the staff and Members of this place walk over Waterloo bridge at lunch time and use Jubilee gardens as a place of respite, to escape the noise, and so on, that we face.

I hope that I have made my point as simply as I intended. There is a solution to the Jubilee gardens problem. The Secretaries of State for Transport and for the Environment must talk, and they must get together with London Underground. It must be made clear to the Secretary of State for the Environment that he must not consider any proposals for county hall unless they allow the London Underground developers to use the area that I have suggested for their work on the line. There will still be problems, but they will not be so serious. The people living around Waterloo are not against the Jubilee line as such, although they may think that it is not the best line for London. We do not want to have to slow down the work, or stop it altogether, but we do want to save Jubilee gardens for Londoners—and there is another way.

10.30 pm

Dr. John G. Blackburn (Dudley, West): First, let me pay warm and generous tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes), who introduced the motion; secondly, let me with equal sincerity—as the House would expect of me—commend the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell), who for some years has been the Chairman of the New Building Sub-Committee. I have had the privilege of serving on that Sub-Committee, and —although I do not represent a constituency in the metropolis—I believe that the work in which I have been engaged allows me to make some valid points.

I feel that I must confine my comments to the procedural motion. I accept without question what my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West said about the benefits that the line will bring, and the provisos outlined so clearly by the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey); but I am particularly concerned about the implications for Westminster.

As hon. Members will know, for many years—I am prepared to be quoted on 11 years—there has been a fierce struggle to obtain a new building for us. The building has now been selected and, albeit late in the day, has almost been completed. It is at Westminster station. Many hon. Members use the station; I use it twice a day, and I know how much the public need an improved service. That is one of the blessings that would result from the Bill.

I am a believer in the honourable occupation of compromise, and my work on the Sub-Committee and the discussions with London Underground suggest to me that we are rapidly approaching the point of compromise—good, sound, acceptable compromise. That would be a blessing for the House, especially in regard to the raft that would cover the line and thus give the House an opportunity to proceed with phase 2 of the Bridge street development. The motion is important to every hon. Member who seeks accommodation that is worthy of those who are elected to this place.

I was filled with anger when I examined the original proposals of London Underground. The concept of depositing soil in Parliament square was a violation of all that was sacred to me. That proposal is now almost historical, however. Quiet and sober consideration of the work that has gone into the scheme generally by London Underground, the parliamentary draftsmen and the New rBuilding Sub-Committee, which has worked with great

[Dr. John G. Blackburn]

industry and enthusiasm to improve the lot of hon. Members, will lead to the judgment that a great deal will be placed in jeopardy unless the carry-over motion is agreed to. I hope that the House will approve it.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall has exercised her sovereign right to represent her constituents. I understand that many will petition against the Bill and that there will be difficulties in Committee, but if the motion is agreed to there will be two opportunities on the Floor of the House to consider the petitions and submissions that are presented to us. The rights of those who wish to make their feelings known will be denied unless consideration of the Bill is allowed to continue next Session.

There is much at stake and this is a momentous occasion in the life of London, the city that we love. It is a momentous occasion also for London Underground. It is vital that the House should allow the Bill to proceed and for energetic and enthusiastic debate to take place in Committee. I wish jealously to safeguard the right of the House to debate it on two further occasions.

If the House approves the procedural motion, it will achieve a great deal for the people of London. This is an historic moment, and perhaps more important than the return of the Bill to the House. I give my wholehearted support to the motion.

10.39 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Some hon. Members may regret the fact that we are having this debate and I offer them my apologies because I objected when this motion could have gone through on the nod last week. However, this evening I am, happily, able to be much more positive, because, thanks to the Minister's intervention yesterday, to which the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) referred, my principal objection to the Bill as it stood has now been dealt with.

The Bill eventually secured its Second Reading on the basis that there would be a range of stations. The hon. Member for Harrow, West has already referred to that. However, uncertainty had arisen about two of the new stations—not the interchange ones. Coincidentally—at least I hope that it was coincidental—both are in my constituency. Parenthetically, I should add that it is fairly rare to have a constituency with a two-part name and to find that new stations are to be named after each of the parts. I am grateful for that. Much work was done over the summer to try to make sure that the two stations would be a firm part of the Bill—that they were not just on the map, but that they would be built.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Harrow, West for his generous comments a few minutes ago. I have no doubt that if the result of our two-round contest in 1983 had been slightly different and he had become the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey instead of more belatedly becoming the hon. Member for Harrow, West, he would have fought equaliy as tenaciously for the stations. I have no doubt that that is the right position for any hon. Member representing the constituency.

The result is that we now have the Minister's assurance, for which I am grateful. I should like to say to him and his officials, to London Underground, and to the members and officers of my local authority, Southwark, that the result that we have achieved, of being able to provide the information to satisfy the Minister and the Treasury that the Southwark and Bermondsey stations are justified, has been a tribute to our sensible and positive co-operation.

I hope nonetheless that the Minister will be able to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to deal with one point arising from his written answer in yesterday's *Hansard* because there has been some ambiguity attaching to a report of his announcement in one edition of yesterday's *Evening Standard*. A sentence towards the end of the answer states:

"The Government are therefore prepared to approve construction of both stations provided the cost of the project as a whole can be held within agreed cost limits."—[*Official Report*, 23 October 1990; Vol. 178, c. 97.]

I hope that I am correct in my understanding that the stations of Southwark and Bermondsey stand or fall with Parliament's agreement to the line as a whole and with the construction of the line as a whole. The article in the *Evening Standard* suggested—it was the only press article that I have seen that contained such a suggestion—that the announcement was conditional and required further Treasury endorsement. It is important that we have it on record—this is what I understand and certainly what the Minister's answer implies—that approval has been given, that the money is there, and that the people of Southwark and Bermondsey can now know that they are part of the plan.

However, I do have one quibble about the statement made by London Underground, as promoters, in relation to tonight's debate. The promotional statement sets out three major benefits—a direct connection to the west end and to west and north-west London, connection at Waterloo, serving the commuter suburbs to the west and south-west of London, and a connection at London Bridge, serving the commuter network to the south and south-east of London. I do not dissent from that, but I hope that London Underground now agrees—this has been agreed by the Minister, and all hon. Members who represent London constituencies have argued the point in previous debates—that if the underground line extension is to be justified there must also be some benefit to the people in the communities along the line. It should not just be a line to provide connections for people coming from outside London or the suburbs of London. That is a completely inadequate justification for this proposal.

I do not say that there is no validity in commuter links or that there is no need for the line to be connected properly to Canary wharf. However, happily, as a result of the instruction tabled by the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) and others of us on Second Reading, the line must be as the Committee is now instructed to make it. It must be integral to the regeneration of local communities and industries. If it is not, the line will be simply a commuter drain. If it is, it will become an important part of the public transport infrastructure in London.

I hope—the Secretary of State was kind enough to refer to this in his reply to me in transport questions on Monday—that increasingly we shall see an extension of public transport in south-east London. The Secretary of State recognised that we have been badly served over many years. The area is still a white hole on the map. At last, thanks to the announcement this week, there are now marks on the map of south-east London where there will be provision of public transport. There needs to be more. The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), who speaks from the Labour Front Bench, the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Ms. Hoey) and others of us, as well as colleagues who represent constituencies north of the river, have all been sympathetic to that need.

I hope that this will be only the first of several new proposals, and the Minister will know that we hope that hot on the heels of the extension of the Jubilee line will come the extension of the east London line north and south of the river and other provisions.

I wish now to flag up a few specific matters which I know will be dealt with in Committee. I welcome the fact that we shall debate them, but I wish to register that there are matters to be resolved if the general environment of Londoners, particularly those who live along the line, is to be improved, not disadvantaged.

I endorse what the hon. Member for Vauxhall said about the need to rethink the siting of the work in and around Jubilee gardens. I have no doubt, as the representative of the other part of Waterloo, that one could find a way of preserving that green space. Jubilee gardens is the only significant green space along the south of the river. There is a car park immediately next to it, which is far less valuable as an amenity, and I hope that everything will be done to make that, and not the gardens, the work site.

Along the line—I shall limit myself to the parts that affect Southwark—where there are station sites or work

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

sites London Underground will need to address obvious environmental concerns. I shall simply list them. The traffic implications will have to be considered. In many areas the implications are enormous, including to the west at Union street and Ewer street. I hope that it will be possible to create temporary sidings at Ewer street so that spoil can be removed and materials can be brought in by rail, not by road. That would be far more advantageous. The road network in that part of north Southwark is horrendously congested already. I hope that we shall not add to the congestion.

It appears that there are alternatives to the Druid street site which are away from major roads and junctions. One is in Maltby street and another is on the old Sarsons vinegar factory site. There will be a lot of construction in the area. Phase 2 of the Hay's wharf site is probably about to be developed. Guy's hospital is having a phase 3 development. We cannot add more construction and congestion to that area without great disruption to minor and major arterial roads.

Further along there is a site called Ben Smith Way, which is to be used for construction, although not of a station. There is substantial anxiety in the neighbouring community, particularly about traffic movements. It is a tightly knit residential community. There is an area of sheltered dwellings for old people. There is great anxiety that we reduce lorry movements and that previous difficulties in enforcing controls on construction traffic are not repeated. We must also have a proper system of accountability whereby people's complaints can be dealt with efficiently as and when any environmental nuisance is caused.

The House will be aware that the roads into south-east London, Jamaica road and Lower road are horrendously blocked during peak hours and traffic is stationary. We cannot afford to add to that congestion both in the interests of my constituents, who must cope with the fumes and the noise, and everyone who uses those major routes. Engineering works and new traffic signals will be required to ease congestion. We should also provide the shortest possible routes for lorries.

I hope that an underpass will be provided under Jamaica road, a very busy road, when the Bermondsey station is open. I do not suggest that that underpass should be open when the station is closed as that might be unsafe for people to pass through at night, but when the station is open there should be a safe alternative route underneath the road.

One of the greatest concerns has been voiced by my constituents in the far eastern end of the constituency at Surrey docks, before the proposed line goes under river to Canary wharf. The Minister will be aware that a late change has been proposed for the Canada Water station site. It now intrudes into the Canada estate instead of being located away from it. The estate is a traditional one with a high density and high-rise blocks. For the past 10 years it has been subject to much building work. The residents have now been informed that work on the new station will also spill over on to the estate. I hope that there is an engineering alternative to that unacceptable proposal. Another six years of disruption to that community would be too high a price for those residents to bear.

The other great fear about this new station site is that car users planning to travel to central London will park close to the station. The Canada estate and the streets round it face the prospect of many drivers seeking to find a space. I hope that we shall be able effectively to limit that additional car presence around the estate.

Just before the line goes under the river another works site has been proposed at Durands wharf—on another green space. I do not want to be unpopular with my colleagues north of the river, but is it necessary for this new park to be used as a major work site? Surely there is an engineering alternative that could use the river or a site on the other side of the river—one which is not so important in environmental terms as Durands wharf.

I look forward to the successful progress of the Bill. Perhaps it will be a race against the date of the general election, but I hope that the Bill clears the House by next autumn. I hope that in the meantime the Committee can resolve all the important environmental issues to the satisfaction of the people of Southwark.

I hope that the least noisy trains will be used. I understand that consideration is being given to reducing the decibel limit from 40 to 35 decibels, as practised in the United States. I understand that the best quality resilient track is now available. I hope that that track and quieter trains are used because the least noise the better.

We must also ensure that the provision of an underground system does not lead to additional motor traffic along the route. Local authorities must be able to exercise planning controls and the private transport user must be subject to transport controls. If that happens we shall have a line of great environmental benefit to the area. I hope that that will be the achievement of the Bill which, if the procedural motion is approved, will be carried over for further debate into the next Session of Parliament.

I am grateful for the constructive attitudes that have been displayed by so many people so far. I believe that we are in sight of an extremely succesful addition to the London public transport network. I welcome that and I hope that the motion is approved tonight.

10.53 pm

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Roger Freeman): The Government strongly support the principles behind the Bill, and therefore support the carry-over motion. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes), who spoke succinctly, eloquently and persuasively.

The House will know from the earlier Second Reading debate that the Government have a substantial interest in the objectives of the Bill and strongly support it. In previous debates, I have given the extent of public money that is committed to this line.

It might be for the convenience of the House if I briefly deal with two points that were debated by the House in July, before the summer recess, and have been touched on already by hon. Members. The first is the provision of stations at Southwark and Bermondsey, which has been a matter of particular concern to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). I always have absolute admiration for the way in which he can produce so many penultimate points in any speech he makes. On 24 July, I told the House that it was the Government's policy that stations should be built at Southwark and

Bermondsey. I also said that further analytical work was to be carried out to confirm that the case for those stations was positive.

As the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey has already expressed a wish to know, I am sure that the House will also want to know the outcome of that work. The appraisal showed that, on current costing, the economic case for the stations was positive and as strong as that for the line itself provided that, in Southwark's case, direct passenger access was provided between it and British Rail's Waterloo East station. That will entail additional cost of £8 million, which will not be provided out of the existing provision for the line, but will be from incremental funds provided by the Department of Transport.

Therefore, the Government are prepared to approve construction of both stations, provided that the cost of the project as a whole can be held within agreed cost limits. The hon. Gentleman asked me what was meant by that statement. I told him when he came to see me two days ago that nothing sinister was implied. The Government mean by that statement that, as with any project, if costs of the entire line—including but not specifically Southwark and Bermondsey stations—and of tunnelling and engineering work, begin to exceed the real terms provision made by the Government for the line's construction, the Government, any Government, would have to reconsider what parts of the line could be built—indeed, whether the line itself could be built—within the available funds.

My statement should not be taken to read that, simply because I am confirming Southwark and Bermondsey now, if there were problems in the financial provision for the line, those two stations would be the first parts to be dropped. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take that assurance in the spirit in which it is offered. Therefore, there is no question of London Transport or the Government seeking to withdraw provision for Southwark and Bermondsey stations from the Bill. I am mystified by the article in the *Evening Standard*—no further conditions have to be met with regard to the Treasury. The article was inaccurate.

Secondly, I gave the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) an assurance that the Government would give serious consideration to the recommendation of the New Building Sub-Committee that the concrete raft which will form the foundation for phase 2 of the new parliamentary building should be paid for in its entirety by the London Underground. But for this, the London Underground has already given all the undertakings sought of it, as acknowledged in the third report of the Services Committee. I said that I believed that that outstanding issue must be addressed in the autumn, and, I hoped, before any Select Committee considered the Bill.

I am therefore pleased to inform the House tonight that the Government are prepared for London Underground to undertake to provide and pay for a raft over the entire site if and when the funding for the phase 2 building has been approved. However, I am sure that the House will understand that, as that undertaking requires expenditure other than strictly required for the purposes of the railway, the Select Committee will have to consider whether additional express powers need to be given to the underground to enable it lawfully to give and discharge this undertaking.

It is only reasonable that that offer, made by the Government with the full concurrence, understanding and agreement of London Underground, is conditional upon the building above the raft going ahead. I am sure that the hon. Member for Ogmore will see the logic behind that. We have tried to respond in a constructive and prompt fashion to his request.

I know that the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), who may seek to speak in the debate, has raised with me the issue of access for disabled people, and doubtless she will wish to return to the subject. London Underground is studying the issue of access to the Jubilee line extension by disabled people, and taking the matter seriously. I understand that it has decided that lifts should be provided to facilitate access to stations. It has appointed consultants to consider the implications and to evaluate the risks of allowing wheelchair users on the extension. But it must have paramount regard to its safety obligations for all passengers and staff, as well as to considerations of reasonable practicability and cost.

If the hon. Lady, whom I know is deeply and specifically interested in the subject, would like to pursue the subject with the Department of Transport after tonight's debate, I should be happy to meet her and answer any specific questions through Parliament.

There are 95 petitions against the Bill, and it awaits examination by a Select Committee. It would be right that the Bill should be allowed to continue so that the House can reach a conclusion on the expediency of the Bill and its detailed provisions. If the motion is carried, the House will have further opportunities to consider the arguments for and against the Bill.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey hoped that the Bill would attain Royal Assent by autumn next year. I hope that he is right. I share his sentiments, so that, with Royal Assent, but only after proper and detailed consideration of all the points that have been and will be raised, Londoners, particularly those in south-east London, in the docklands area and east London, will benefit from this major extension to London's underground.

11 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): As others have said, this is a technical carry-over motion. The Minister has clearly given his strong support to the extension of the Jubilee line and I regret that that forces me to take the time of the House to question whether the Government's commitment to London Underground is as strong as he suggests.

Today we have news of a leaked memo from the managing director of London Underground Ltd. to all the Underground managers which calls into question the Government's commitment to providing Londoners with an affordable, accessible and efficient underground system.

London Transport's business plan is now in disarray. It is heading for a loss of between £35 million and £40 million, and the leaked memo catalogues the stark reality of trying to run an underground system within the straitjacket of Government financial constraints. It calls into question future capital programmes.

Members are here tonight debating the carry-over motion and, if it is successful and the Bill goes to Committee, other hon. Members may spend up to 12 months debating its merits. But we cannot be wholly confident of the future extension of the line and of London Underground.

[Ms. Joan Ruddock]

On Monday, I tackled the Secretary of State about the £40 million loss. In his facetious reply, he gave no acknowledgement of the difficulties that have been outlined in today's memo. Many of the directives in the memo are relevant to tonight's consideration of the carry-over motion. On capital projects, it says:

"Projects approved but not committed to contract will not go ahead in this financial year. All projects under way will be assessed to determine savings."

On staffing, it says:

"Reductions in overtime and recruitment are required."

The consequences of that are outlined in the memo as unplanned closures of stations and station booking halls and restrictions and reductions in services.

We are told that the Victoria line will continue to be six trains short for the rest of this financial year. The Jubilee line is to be three trains short for the rest of this financial year. Station cleaning is to be reduced and there is to be a reduction in engineering. When the London public appreciate that those engineers whose time is to be reduced are those dealing with signals, they will be only to conscious of what that means to the delivery of services. More trains will be stuck in tunnels for longer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I have to be careful not to allow this to turn into a general debate on London Underground, and I hope that the hon. Lady will now direct her remarks more directly to the motion before the House.

Ms. Ruddock: I am conscious of what you say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I have limited my remarks. There is much more that I could say on the issue, but I do believe that, in considering a major investment of this kind, and debating a motion about continuing with it, we should feel some confidence about the Government's commitment to extending the underground system, yet they are already failing to fund it appropriately.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): My hon. Friend's remarks are relevant because, if the Government's commitment and that of London Regional Transport is to the completion of the line as outlined in the Bill, is there not likely to be a knock-on effect—or knock-back effect—in many of the operating areas that my hon. Friend outlined—unless, of course, the report to which she referred is a fabrication? Also, obtaining powers to construct a line places no obligation on the promoters to complete it. The Thames or so-called River line was abandoned, so if it was necessary to keep within financial constraints, the promoters might construct a line from Green park to Canary wharf and then take it no further.

Ms. Ruddock: My hon. Friend makes his case admirably. There can be no doubt that the report, which we believe to be utterly authentic, undermines our confidence in the Government's support for London Underground Ltd.

Despite that report and the gloomy prospects of continuing misery for those who use the existing tube lines, we will support the carry-over motion—not least because we expect a change of Government before construction of the new line begins, and thus a change of attitude towards public transport as a whole.

Mr. Freeman: I remind the House that, under this Government, investment in London Underground is some two and half times greater than it was under the stewardship of the Greater London council. The hon. Lady can confirm that, in giving consent to the depositing of the Jubilee Bill and indicating their strong support for its principles, it follows that financial provision has been made for the entire line. It is not a matter of approving the project in principle and not providing the necessary resources to make it happen.

Ms. Ruddock: The Minister may give that assurance, but, despite the approval that he and the House gave London Transport's business plan, we all know that its budgets and financial targets are so severely awry that measures of the kind that I have outlined must be taken. That will mean a reduction in what are already poor services to Londoners.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): I have seen the report to which the hon. Lady referred, but I do not think that it was necessarily leaked; rather, I believe that it is generally circulating. That report is a criticism not of the Government's commitment to London Underground but of some of the management's operating practices, and is also partly the consequence of less being realised from assets such as land than London Underground anticipated. The hon. Lady should also make it clear that entirely exempt from those proposals is anything to do with safety. Clearly, expenditure on safety aspects will go ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is both taking too long and going wide of the motion. I said earlier that this is not the occasion for a general debate about London Underground.

Ms. Ruddock: The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) claims that safety expenditure will be safeguarded, but morale is being deeply eroded, and that contributes to the level of safety and care provided by managers and staff. The report reflects nothing less than a very serious situation.

Inevitably, the Government's response to the needs of London's travelling public has been piecemeal. The extension of the Jubilee line is among those piecemeal measures, albeit an expensive one, in that every authority in London—including the Conservative-controlled London Boroughs Association—has repeatedly requested a strategic plan.

The extension of the Jubilee line should of course be part of an overall plan for the whole of the capital, one which is necessary if we are not to end up in a state of terminal paralysis. But as the Government persist in this approach, it is our duty as an Opposition to try to get the best possible result from any proposals that come before us.

Many reservations and questions were raised on Second Reading. I am happy to acknowledge that some of the problems have been satisfactorily resolved. Most importantly, the case for new stations in Bermondsey and Southwark has been accepted. As a south London Member, I am acutely aware of the inadequacies of public transport south of the river and of the sterling efforts made by the boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham in lobbying London Transport for new infrastructure.

I very much welcome the commitment given by the Minister in answer to the question asked by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). I remind the Minister, however, of the view strongly held by me, my colleagues in south London and the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich, that the proposed extension to the Docklands light railway must be an essential part of any planned increase in public transport south of the river. I hope that he will allow a Bill to be deposited on that, too, in November.

Will the Minister confirm what has been said by the sponsor of the Bill tonight—that the line and the alignment through the Greenwich peninsula is certain, and that talk of reconsideration is not warranted? Will he also confirm that a route to the royals is being safeguarded in case it is subsequently possible to extend the line further?

Finally, as the Minister said, on Second Reading I expressed our acute disappointment at London Underground's apparent unwillingness to make the new section of line fully wheelchair-accessible. I acknowledge what the Minister has said tonight about the assurances that there will be lifts and stations, and that further consideration is being given to making the line fully wheelchair-accessible. I shall certainly take up his offer to meet him and to pursue that point, because we believe that all extensions of lines and all new underground lines should indeed be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Despite these objections and the reservations that we still have, we are happy to give support to the carry-over motion. We hope that in Committee the further problems will be satisfactorily resolved.

11.12 pm

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): I shall not delay the House unduly at this late hour. I have no wish to repeat the arguments put to the Government and the House on July 12 and 24, because on those occasions the members of the New Building Sub-Committee made their objections known forcefully, and the Government have responded as the Committee would have expected.

I refer first to the report by the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) on the new parliamentary building phase 2 and the Jubilee line proposals that we debated some time ago. Paragraph 44 described the undertakings that the Committee requested from London Underground as follows:

> "(i) that London Underground should agree to implement Option F, and that all costs incurred as part of the London Underground works in connection with Option F should be borne by London Underground itself;
>
> (ii) that London Underground should agree to pay for the concrete raft; and
>
> (iii) that London Underground should accept all the recommendations aimed at minimising environmental impact put forward by the independent consultants in the Environmental Impact Assessment inasmuch as they relate to Westminster Station and Parliament Square."

I shall concentrate on the last paragraph.

I was pleased by what the Minister said about the raft. I understand, as I am sure that all members of the New Building Sub-Committee will understand, that before any concrete proposals are made by the Government or London Underground for payment for the raft that is to be built there will have to be guaranteed funding for the building to be erected above the raft.

There could be a change in Government before the final decision is made. I am sure that after the work that has been put in by my Committee no Government would attempt to stop the development, which is well overdue. If the public could see the conditions in which some hon. Members, who represent up to 80,000 constituents, have to work, they would be horrified. Some hon. Members have to work six or seven to a room. They have to do a tremendous amount of work in a confined space—for example, in the Cloisters. If an outside firm made its staff work in such conditions, it would be breaking the law, but the law does not apply to the Palace of Westminster, so hon. Members have to tolerate deplorable conditions brought about because Governments have not been prepared to pay to provide proper accommodation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey) spoke about county hall, which is only five minutes walk away and has massive committee rooms, plenty of office accommodation for staff, secretaries and even Ministers. Whatever Government we have over the next couple of years, whether the present Government or an incoming Labour Government, should look closely at what should be done with county hall. It should be taken over to provide reasonable accommodation for hon. Members. One of the main reasons why I was prepared to take the Chair of the New Building Sub-Committee was my interest in accommodation and my concern at the fact that hon. Members have not had the necessary standard of accommodation.

This is all relevant to the extension of the Jubilee line, because had it not been for this development by London Underground, phase 2 of the new parliamentary building would be well advanced. In all probability, plans would have been accepted, Government finance would have been granted, and we should have been in the process of building phase 2. Many interests and organisations are demanding accommodation. Women Members of Parliament are asking for creches and child care facilities, other Members would like a gymnasium, a swimming pool or squash courts, but the main priority of every Member of Parliament is office accommodation.

I pay tribute to the hard work put in by the members of the New Building Sub-Committee on the development of phase 1 and the planning and discussion of phase 2. I am grateful for the remarks made by the hon. Member for Dudley, West (Dr. Blackburn) on this. I assure the House that all members of the Committee have unanimously supported the Committee's decisions in discussions with the Minister and other bodies so as to ensure that phase 1 is completed.

The report states that Members of Parliament will soon have accommodation in phase 1. I believe that the Minister has been persuaded to accept one of the three proposals regarding the building and financing of the raft by London Underground because of the persuasiveness of the Opposition Deputy Chief Whip, my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), who is a member of the Committee and has continually argued for that proposal.

I am glad that the Opposition Front Bench supports the carry-over motion. The sooner the Bill leaves its Committee stage, the sooner we shall be able to appoint architects to design phase 2 which will provide additional accommodation for Members.

I hope that, with your permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister will be able to reply to a point that I wish to put to him. I am worried about access to the House of

[Mr. Ray Powell]

Commons because of the new development in Parliament square. I hope that the Minister will say something about the proposals presented to him on 12 and 24 July regarding Parliament square. Traffic will be disrupted for about six years. It cannot be right and proper for traffic to be disrupted for such a long period. It is an environmental issue.

As time is short, I intend to bring my remarks to a close. I hope, however, that the Minister will be allowed to speak again.

Mr. Freeman: I am sure that I shall not have a chance to catch your eye again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make a substantive contribution, but by way of an intervention may I point out that it is not for me, as a Transport Minister, to comment on specific details. That is a task for the Select Committee. However, I understand the concern about Parliament square. After the Select Committee has carefully considered the proposals for the boarding up of Parliament square, the Department will work closely with London Underground and London Regional Transport to ensure that the disruption is minimised. However, the answers to the hon. Gentleman's questions must be provided by the promoters when the Select Committee considers the Bill.

Mr. Powell: I am grateful to the Minister. Those appointed to serve on the Bill will read his remarks and ensure that hon. Members, through the Serjeant at Arms, have access to the House. I can imagine how much disruption would be caused if the road were raised. I am sure that all hon. Members would be glad of an assurance from the Minister that he, as well as the Select Committee, will bear the matter in mind. I am sure that the members of the New Building Sub-Committee will be looking to ensure that the observations that they have made in their reports are well and truly observed.

11.25 pm

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): Some generous tributes have been paid to the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) and his eloquence. I happily join in them. However, I must enter one small caveat. He suggested in his opening remarks that there was no need for any discussion this evening. I do not agree. There are many matters that should be ventilated, especially because of the entirely unsatisfactory private Bill procedure under which these matters are dealt with. This is one of the few opportunities for ordinary Members of Parliament to have a say in what we all understand to be an important matter.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: I should like to make it clear that, whatever the hon. Gentleman may have understood from my remarks, I welcome the debate. The points being put forward are serious and need to be considered. I am listening to them and I know that the promoters are listening and will take account of all the points made by hon. Members.

Mr. Leighton: I am pleased to hear that.

I received in my mail today—as I am sure did other hon. Members—a statement on behalf of the promoters in support of the carry-over motion. It says that since the Bill was deposited last November, London Regional Transport has been given leave to proceed with an "additional provision" which would alter the Bill's proposals in three ways. The first is changes to the station arrangements at Westminster, the second is a change at London Bridge station and the third is an alteration in the route. I draw attention to that alteration in the route which will take the line by way of the Blackwall peninsula at Greenwich. That is a major change taking the line from the north side to the south side of the river. Presumably the people on the north side of the river have an opinion about that. People undertook development there and some development is in prospect on the understanding that the Jubilee line was going to run there. Now, all of a sudden, it has been snatched away. What consultation was there with interests north of the river?

I am pleased that the statement from the promoters also refers to the instruction we gave on Second Reading on the need for the regeneration of local communities and industries. Of course, there are no local communities or industries on the Greenwich peninsula.

The change concerning what happens to the line when it leaves Canary wharf is a major one and I have heard no proper explanation for it. The additional provisions for the Bill lodged by the promoters will take the route from Canary wharf under the Thames into the Greenwich peninsula, where a new station is proposed. From that station, the proposed route again crosses under the Thames and goes up to Stratford. Some questions should be asked about that and I hope that we can hear some sensible comments tonight.

Cost is not irrelevant or unimportant. We heard what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) about the information that she received recently. We have heard the Minister's references to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). He had an assurance that he would get his stations only if there was enough money. It was not a cast-iron or, to vary the metaphor, copper-bottomed guarantee. In view of what my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford said, if it will cost much more to tunnel under the Thames twice perhaps the guarantees given to the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey are not quite so firm.

The route will be considerably longer than originally proposed. Not only will that be much more expensive, but two additional Thames crossings will have to be tunnelled, perhaps in difficult conditions. I do not know what expert opinion we have on how difficult it will be to do that tunnelling, but I should like to know what it will cost and who will pay. Is there any cost to the taxpayer, or will it be paid for by private interests? Parliament wants answers to those questions.

The railway is being paid for very oddly, with subventions from developers and I think that British Gas put up some money. The private Bill procedure for the expenditure of vast sums of public money is unsatisfactory. I ask these questions to see whether we can get some answers.

British Urban Development was set up from 11 major firms in the construction industry. Its purpose was to carry out redevelopment in the inner cities. The Prime Minister, in particular, looked very kindly on it and it was created virtually with her patronage. It was going to do great work in the inner cities, but unfortunately it is being scaled down because of dwindling Government support, the recession and the downturn in the property market. My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey) mentioned county

hall. I think that that group was to develop county hall but has now gone bankrupt. As there is so much risk in this line of business but insufficient incentives for firms, they are contracting out of this development.

British Urban Development and British Gas are still paying at least lip service to the development at the Greenwich peninsula. A proposal has been made to develop housing and some small industry. I want to know a bit more about that and how firm it is. I hope that I am not being too insensitive if I say that many of the 11 firms are well known for contributing to the Conservative party. They certainly have much clout and have been able to change the route and take the line under the Thames twice to that site. I think that British Gas has offered £25 million. Is that why the development is being proposed? If we pass the motion, the Select Committee that will consider this will want to ask whether £25 million was available from people on the other side of the river. Is the route of the line to be decided by some sort of auction, with developers offering different sums of money?

We want to know whether the developers of the Greenwich peninsula will deliver. What guarantees are there that they will? My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) and I heard much talk about development in the royal docks. The area was taken out of the the control of the local authorities and put under the control of the London Docklands development corporation—an allegedly dynamic body that was supposed to develop the afea. That was 11 years ago, and not a single brick has been laid. If that project has failed, what guarantees are there in respect of the Greenwich peninsula? Is the development viable, and is it fundable, bearing in mind the fact that we are talking about a derelict contaminated gasworks site. Are we sure that the development will take place?

The original route through the Leamouth area on the northern side was decided because of the support that it would give to the regeneration of docklands. It forms a vital part of the transport infrastructure planned by the LDDC for the area. I have not heard the LDDC say anything about the matter. What is the development corporation's view? Or is it inhibited because the Government are its paymasters? Perhaps it is not allowed to have a view. Many of those who have spoken to me believe that the reason for the original decision—which the promoters now want to alter—to run the tracks of the Jubilee line through the Leamouth area, supporting the regeneration of docklands and the east side of London, was sound, and that it constituted a vital element in the success of the regeneration.

Let us consider the development in the Leamouth area and the vast number of people who will be working there. If the Jubilee line does not run through the area, other forms of public transport will be needed, because the private motor car will not be sufficient to move the staff around. The docklands light railway will not be enough; we all know that. Presumably, therefore, those people will be transported by bus, and that will clog up the roads.

Transport will also be needed on the Greenwich peninsula. I have heard a number of ideas about what could be done there, one of which involved the provision of a light railway, linking Westcombe park British Rail line with the peninsula. The DLR should also be extended from Island Gardens on the Isle of Dogs, via Greenwich, to Lewisham.

In Newham, we want the royal docks to be developed. Ah! I see the Minister for Industry standing at the Bar of the House, wearing a white tie. I have half a mind to order a cup of coffee from the hon. Gentleman, but perhaps that would not be appropriate.

The Minister for Industry (Mr. Douglas Hogg): With pleasure, Sir.

Mr. Leighton: Two sugars, please. The service in this place is wonderful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the hon. Gentleman's dress is a splendid example of the sort of uniform that might attract foreign visitors to county hall if ever it were developed as a hotel.

In Newham, we want the Jubilee line extended to the royal docks. That will cost a lot of money, and I have asked about this because I want to know whether the money will be available. Two years ago, we were told that the route would be safeguarded. But as far as I know, after two years of talk, nothing has been done to safeguard it. When will that route be safeguarded?

The step plate junction is a subject close to the heart of my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South. It is the facility that will be necessary to extend the Jubilee line to the royal docks. There are a number of question marks hanging over the project's technical feasibility and the availability of funds. Is the money available—if not, when will it be available—for the step plate junction?

May we have an assurance that the engineering works will be committed? I am advised that they cannot be carried out once the trains are running; I may be wrong, but I should like to be reassured about the junction. On the original route, the junction would have a gentle 45-degree curve, which could be accommodated. The other proposed route—coming up from the south, from the Greenwich peninsula—would, however, involve a 135-degree curve. I am advised by some people that that would be impossible to implement.

When the Jubilee line is extended, which I hope that it will be in the future—perhaps under another Government—it will, ideally, cross the river at north Woolwich and go to Thamesmead.

I have, I trust, raised one or two legitimate questions. They are difficult to deal with under the private Bill procedure, but I hope nevertheless to receive some clear and specific answers.

11.40 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On Second Reading, I gave the Bill qualified support. I therefore, of necessity, support tonight's motion.

When I questioned my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) about the will to complete, the Minister gave me an assurance for which I thank him. Perhaps my thought was a little unworthy—in relation to trains stopping only at Canary wharf, that is—but, as the Minister knows, the promoters are not obliged to complete any works for which an Act is provided. In any event, the Minister has cleared the matter up by giving me a Government assurance that the necessary funds will be available.

This is the season of carry-over motions, and we have some congestion on the private Bill railway. Comments have been made about private Bill procedure, which I think are best dealt with by way of example. We all know that the major delay is caused by a clash between national

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

energy policy and the little matter of 50,000 miners' jobs. That, of course, is part of the reason for our being here, night after night, until rather late, but I shall not deal with that now.

What I do wish to discuss, however, is an alternative procedure which might make a carry-over motion unnecessary in this instance. It has been suggested that railway Bills should be treated like proposals relating to motorways and referred to a public inquiry. Judging from the detailed comments about open spaces that we heard earlier, some hon. Members may consider that a good idea. What I favour, however, is an examination by a Joint Committee of both Houses—preferably before Second Reading—which would assure itself that any appropriate preliminary steps had been taken before a private Bill came to the House. Had such a procedure been adopted earlier, private legislation involving the channel tunnel, King's Cross and, indeed, the matters that we are discussing now would in my view have been dealt with much more expeditiously.

I am opposed to leaving the final decision with the Secretary of State rather than the House. The issues raised by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), for instance, should not be dealt with by means of an ordinary planning inquiry, in which event the decision would lie with the Minister; here, it lies with the House, and with a Committee appointed by the House to look into the merits of the case. I think that that system should be retained—albeit with some form of ring fencing outside—to ensure that all the preliminary procedures, including consultation with landowners and boroughs, have been undertaken before Second Reading.

I wish to emphasise the importance of three broad issues which were dealt with on Second Reading. The regeneration of docklands and the lower Lee valley has been mentioned by many hon. Members. Inquiries have been made about the security of the step plate junction, and I am puzzled how the matter has arisen. The junction consists of concentric expanding rings in the tunnel—it was the design for the tunnel under the Thames, or near it, on the north bank in Canning Town and it was always in the plan. I understand that the design has been incorporated in the variation order, and I see that there are signs of agreement with that in the Chamber. A typical rumour has circulated and it is right that inquiries have been made, but there may be some misapprehension about the safeguarding of the route. As I understand it, that safeguarding will lie in the junction, which can be constructed only prior to the initiation of trains. The scheme will permit a branch through the royal docks, should that be found necessary in future, and that makes sense. Had there been sufficient and proper time to take the line over an existing or proposed bridge, or through a tunnel, into Thamesmead or Woolwich, that would have been a good strategic planning stroke to come from a future Bill.

I referred on Second Reading to the Westminster/Charing cross problem, and I mention it again for the consideration of the Select Committee. Should the interchange with the District line be at St. James's park as the Committee wanted, at Westminster where the promoters want it, or at Temple which I have suggested as an alternative? If the interchange were at Temple, there would be the facility of continuing with the present route via Charing cross or Trafalgar square, which are relatively near.

The curve of the line—curves have been mentioned in respect of Canning Town—at Green park would need to be transposed to a curve through Temple, or there would have to be a similar one. I am not convinced that that could be achieved. I have no doubt that the Committee will consider the matter, and I hope that the promoters will be preparing a variation order—they will if they are wise—in the event that the Committee finds that there is a better way of serving the general needs of London and getting rid of all the problems at Parliament square.

I make no apology for raising the subject of regeneration again. It is an example of the value of the parliamentary Bill procedure as a long-stop for anything that may come earlier. On Second Reading, the hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) talked about one of his constituents, a Mr. Downey, who has a business in my constituency. Indeed, the hon. Gentleman, who represents one of the Buckhurst Hill areas, devoted his speech to the just needs of Mr. Downey and his business. Mr. Downey owns a small engineering business by a filling station in Canning Town. It is one of the remnant industries of east London, and stems directly from the shipbuilding and ship-repairing tradition which, alas, is all but extinct in the area now. I believe that in 1906 a Dreadnought was built on the site close to where Mr. Downey has his workshops.

Compensation is causing some difficulty. I pay tribute to the work of some of the officials, some of whom may even be listening to what I have to say, in trying to find Mr. Downey alternative accommodation. The fact that he has two disparate businesses may make their job difficult. I understand, however, that it will be difficult for Mr. Downey even to continue with his engineering business, which has a relatively full order book. That is something which I believe the House will not tolerate. Will the Committee tolerate it, bearing in mind the instruction that the House has already issued?

Mr. Downey is a gentleman of private enterprise. He is engaged in a business that would gladden the hearts of Conservative Members and one of which I approve because it is concerned with engineering and tangible things. It leads to items being made that people want, and it is conducted on good private enterprise lines which Conservative Members constantly applaud.

The private Bill procedure is meant to ensure that people get proper compensation. Because of the importance of regeneration, the LDDC and the instruction, such people should be permitted and enabled to carry on their productive businesses. My constituents should be enabled to continue their employment in a traditional east London industry and, if necessary, to carry out training and have apprentices so that if demand for Mr. Downey's fabrications increases, his industry can continue to meet it. At the moment, however, there is no guarantee of that.

I have been invited to be involved in the search for a solution but, as both myself—the Member representing the constituency in which the business is located—and the hon. Member representing Mr. Downey's constituency, who is present in the Chamber today, have pointed out, hon. Members should not have to spend any more time on mediation. I am glad and proud that Parliament can consider the fate of individual businesses and, in the

traditional phrase, "the details of Mrs. Smith's pension" on the Adjournment. That is absolutely right and cases such as this are why we want to retain the private Bill procedure. However, once the House has given an instruction, and once the idea of proper compensation, enshrined for centuries, is embedded in the legislation, I believe that the promoters and others concerned should be enabled to get on with it.

I conclude where I began, considering the value of at least part of the private Bill procedure for railways. We can see what is happening at the moment with the procedure for roads. Not very far from the end of the Jubilee line at Oxleas Wood, the former Secretary of State for the Environment approved a road and not a tunnel. We are talking about a tunnel for a railway. At a stroke of his pen —in perhaps just 15 seconds' work—the Secretary of State ruled that the inspectors' report on Oxleas Wood would be completely disregarded and decided that there should not be a tunnel there. No Secretary of State in the future—I do not care what party he belongs to—or future Administration in 20, 30 or 50 years' time should be given such a power in relation to tunnels for railways.

That is why I end where I began. Although we want the private Bill procedure to be improved, I believe that the case of Mr. Downey and the former Secretary of State's decision over Oxleas Wood prove that we should only modify our procedures and not hand the power of the House and its Committees to some personage who will be seated at a desk opposite the House in Whitehall.

11.52 pm

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: With the permission of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall seek to answer some of the important points that have been made, and to do so as briefly as possible. The promoters are extremely grateful for all the points that have been made, and careful note has been made of the important views expressed by those hon. Members who represent constituencies that will be affected by the line.

I shall not go into all the arguments that have been made about procedure, especially the private Bill procedure, because that is a complicated matter that is outside the scope of this debate.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey) referred to the problem with Jubilee gardens. I well understand the point that she is making on behalf of her constituents. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) also made the point that Jubilee gardens is the only green space in the area and that there will be enormous problems if building has to be carried out there. However, as the hon. Lady also said, she and the people she represents are not against the line. She knows that, if the line is built, there will have to be some digging. She and the promoters are at one in seeking to have the building site located on the car park if possible. I shall not stray into the political areas of discussing how possible that may or may not be or should or should not be. Nevertheless, they are at one and LUL will be seeking to locate the building site on the car park.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dudley, West (Dr. Blackburn) hit the nail on the head in many regards, but especially when he said that improvements for hon. Members, and the new building that everyone desires, are in danger if the motion is not passed. That is the context in which we should put both his remarks and the valuable speech about the new building of the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell).

I was tempted by the hon. Member for Ogmore when he talked about the prospect that county hall could be used for offices. I used to have an office in county hall which was about the same size as that enjoyed by the Prime Minister at the back of the Chair in this building. If it meant that I could have that office back, I should be in favour of moving into county hall.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Until there was a Division.

Mr. Hughes: Until there was a Division, as my hon. Friend says.

The Committee of the hon. Member for Ogmore has made a valuable contribution on the new building and the traffic in Parliament square. It is fair to say that the close working relationship that has built up between the PSA and London Underground has ironed out many of the problems that were raised by the hon. Member for Ogmore on Second Reading. Of course, problems remain to be ironed out, but I hope that the promoters will examine the problems outlined by the hon. Gentleman and other hon. Members today and that further improvements can be made before the building work starts.

I thank the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey for his kind words. He talked about the cost of the project. He asked whether the stations were linked to the project or to the cost of the project. The hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Leighton) also made that point. It is clear from everything that I have read and from what my hon. Friend the Minister said that the stations of Southwark and Bermondsey are linked to the project going ahead. There is not much point in having the stations if one does not have the line. There is no suggestion that the line would go ahead without the stations. That is important. I think that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey was satisfied on that point.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey also said that the line should serve communities and help to regenerate them. He said that it should not be merely for commuting into the rest of London. The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) also made that point. That objective is clear, as I said in my introduction to the debate.

The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) made a speech that was interesting but not necessarily germane to a carry-over motion. I take to heart her point about wheelchair accessibility, and I hope that the promoters take it to heart too. We must work towards making people in wheelchairs real members of our society, with the rights that they deserve. We need to do some work on that. That was not in my brief, but I thought that I would say it.

Ms. Ruddock: I remind the hon. Gentleman that I also requested an assurance on safeguarding a route to the royals. Will he come to that point?

Mr. Hughes: I was coming to that specific point.

As the hon. Member for Newham, South said—in a sense in response to his hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-East—the safeguard for the route to the royals is the fact that the step plates are integral to the

[Mr. Hughes]

building of the line. That has been clearly stated by the promoters. Without the step plates, the new line cannot be built to the royals. That is the guarantee. Guaranteeing the specific route is a matter for the Government, and no doubt that will have to be pursued. However, it may not need to be pursued because the step plates are guaranteed.

The case of Mr. Downey was raised by the hon. Member for Newham, South. There has been some correspondence——

Mr. Leighton: I am counting the hon. Gentleman's remarks and wondering whether he is responding in order in which the speeches were made. After replying to my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) he leapt over me to my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). Does he intend to come back to me by some sort of step plate? How is he arranging his speech?

Mr. Hughes: Rather like the pudding after the meal, I am saving my reply to the hon. Gentleman until last.

There has been correspondence between London Underground and my hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Arbuthnot) on Mr. Downey. The local authority and LUL are doing everything possible to find a new site. I know that my hon. Friend will not let Mr. Downey's case go by default and he will ensure that his constituent is satisfied before the Bill proceeds to the statute book.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-East asked the important question about whether the line should go north or south of the river. The east London rail study identified two possible alignments between Canary wharf and Canning Town—via either the Greenwich peninsula or the Brunswick foreshore. The pressure of the November deadline on LRT to deposit a Bill last year made it necessary for it to reach a decision to plan on the basis of the shorter and cheaper alignment via Brunswick. The Bill was deposited on that basis.

Subsequently further discussions were held with property developers and landowners, whose interests would be affected by both alignments, to ascertain whether they would be prepared to meet the additional costs of providing a station and changing the route as necessary. Each of the interested groups offered to contribute, but the financial case for proceeding with the Greenwich alignment is more robust and offers additional benefits as it opens up the area to public transport.

In contrast, Brunswick will be effectively served by the Beckton extension of the docklands light railway. Accordingly, the Government authorised the deposit of an additional provision to change the alignment to go via Greenwich—LRT is committed to promoting the Bill as amended by that additional provision. LRT is convinced that the better route in terms of maximum use by passengers is that via the Greenwich peninsula. That decision, however, in common with many other matters that we have discussed, should be discussed in Committee.

Without the motion, there will be no line, at least for the foreseeable future. If we approve the motion, we shall get the line that Londoners desperately need.

Mr. Leighton: Am I right to understand that there was some kind of auction and discussions with property developers and landowners and that sums of money were offered? I believe that the hon. Gentleman said that the case for one route was more robust than that for the other. I do not know what that means.

We already know that, in the long term, the docklands light railway will not be adequate for the traffic it must carry. The Committee should point the spotlight on this matter and examine it most carefully. It should discover how much the various offers were worth. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman can tell us the answer, because, as he said earlier, that might not be in his brief. Does he know what was offered by whom?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Briefly, please

Mr. Leighton: Perhaps we cannot deal with the matter here because of unsatisfactory procedures, but it is something that must be dealt with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes) might reply.

Mr. Hughes: The crux of the argument advanced by the hon. Member for Newham, North-East is that this matter should be discussed in Committee.

On Second Reading, people asked why this particular route had been chosen, given the announcement about the east-west route. The answer lies in cost-benefit analysis. LRT believes that that analysis proves that the Greenwich peninsula is a better route than the other, which happens to be cheaper. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that the Committee should discuss the matter.

Without the carry-over motion, the Committee cannot discuss any matter, and London will be deprived of a desperately needed railway.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the London Underground Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

Ordered,

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

Ordered,

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

Ordered,

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

Ordered,

That all Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

Ordered,

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

Ordered,

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words "under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)" were omitted;

Ordered,

"That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

Central and Eastern Europe (EC Aid)

12.4 am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 7720/90, relating to the extension of the provisions of Council regulation No. 3906/89 to Czechoslovakia, GDR, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania; and supports the Government's view that the provision of co-ordinated economic aid to those countries by the European Community will promote economic and political reform in those countries and foster a closer relationship with the Community.

Last Friday the House debated the EC consequences of German unity. Although that debate was not without its complexity—no less than 26 pieces of draft EC legislation lay on the Table for the House's consideration—it was lubricated by the fact that the former German Democratic Republic is acceding immediately to the Community as a part of the Federal Republic. The considerable costs of bringing the GDR up to the standards of the Community will be largely met by the Federal Republic of Germany. Even though substantial social and economic strains will result, they will undoubtedly be eased by the wealth of western Germany and its commitment to the cause of German unity. No such sponsor exists for the other newly emerged democracies of eastern Europe, and they will need our support both bilaterally and through the Community.

For Conservative Members and the majority of Opposition Members, the return of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and, we hope eventually, Romania to democracy and free enterprise is a matter for unalloyed rejoicing. For some Opposition Members the matter is not so clear cut.

Last Friday the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) leapt to the defence of the Trabant motor car—an heroic act that 18 million former East Germans are no longer prepared to perform. The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) even praised the full employment policies of the GDR. At one stage I was surprised that none of the Members who sit below the Gangway rose to praise the policies of law and order that used to pertain under Herr Honecker.

The regulation which we are debating this evening gives effect to the extension of the Community's aid to the other countries of central and eastern Europe in addition to the original recipients, Poland and Hungary. I was grateful for the Scrutiny Committee's agreement that our acceptance of the Commission's proposal did not need to await its deliberations. By agreeing to this regulation in July the Government were able to send a positive signal about their commitment to supporting political and economic reform in eastern Europe.

I should like to outline first the criteria used by the Community in deciding to which countries to give aid. Secondly, I shall touch on the range of measures that have so far been taken. Thirdly, I shall consider some of the projects that have been financed by EC funds. Finally, I shall comment on the future of EC relations with eastern and central Europe.

I shall begin with the criteria. The Community's aid policy is based on an assessment of each country's progress in implementing political and economic reform. We measure that commitment according to five criteria: the

[Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones]

establishment of a market economy; a pluralist democracy; free and fair elections; the recognition of human rights; and the rule of law. The freedom of the media is a further barometer of the extent of political liberty in any country.

We retain, alas, some doubts about Romania's commitment to democracy following the unhappy events of June this year. Romania, although covered by the regulation, will receive EC economic aid only when Ministers are satisfied that the above criteria have been met. We look forward to its early inclusion.

The programme of aid available to Poland and Hungary developed at the end of last year comprised four basic elements—measures to boost trade with the Community, lending facilities, project aid for spending in the priority areas of environment, agriculture, training and industry, and food aid where that was required.

A further important role will be performed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development which we hope will begin operations in the spring from its London headquarters.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): What will happen after 1 January when non-transferable roubles become difficult and have to give way to hard dollars? That will hit countries such as Poland and Bulgaria extremely hard. Will the bank do something about that?

Mr. Garel-Jones: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that eastern Europe faces problems in financial management, accountancy and so on. Through our know-how fund and the TEMPUS programmes of the Community we shall be attempting, through conferences, seminars and direct advice, to give assistance to eastern Europe on the many problems that will arise from moving rather abruptly from a command economy to a market economy.

The EC's aid measures are being extended on a case-by-case basis to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania, although I stress again that no disbursements will be made to Romania until she has met the requirements that I outlined to the House in my earlier remarks.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): Does my hon. Friend intend to refer to Yugoslavia and the abuses of human rights there? It is hardly moving towards a free and fair democratic system, particularly in the Kosovo region. Will he also define Yugoslavia should Slovenia and others begin to break away and form their own nations?

Mr. Garel-Jones: I am sure that my hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not attempt this evening to define Yugoslavia—a matter which is causing some difficulty even for Yugoslavs. I agree that Yugoslavia has some way to go before it attains the criteria that I have just outlined.

In particular the PHARE—Poland Hungary aid for reconstruction of the economy—regulation now covers all the above countries for project aid, although, as I have just explained, there are no disbursements yet for Romania.

The original budget for 1990 of 300 million ecu, which is about £210 million, was extended to 500 million ecu, or £350 million, for all six countries, and 850 million ecu, or £595 million, has been earmarked for 1991. It might be helpful if I highlighted some of the projects implemented using that money. Some 25 million ecu, or about £18 million, has gone to the TEMPUS student mobility scheme for the current academic year. That programme will bring about 600 students from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia to EC universities.

The United Kingdom has proved to be a particularly attractive destination for TEMPUS students, and we expect approximately 200 to arrive in this country this autumn. We have made a significant contribution to the improvement of Polish agriculture, to help Poland feed itself this winter. Environmental aid has accounted for some 20 per cent. of the overall budget, with further amounts going to small businesses and the improvement of statistics.

Finally, I come to the perspectives for the future. The priority areas for 1991 will remain the same as for the first year of the PHARE programme. We asked the Commission to provide a detailed indicative breakdown by country and sector of the likely expenditure pattern, but that is not yet available. In the meantime, the Commission is making rapid progress on the relationship that we hope will develop between the Community and eastern European countries in the coming years.

Mr. Dalyell: When does the Foreign Office expect the report of the OECD combined with the World bank and the European bank on which some British academics, such as Professor Sir Paul Hare of Heriot-Watt university, are presently working?

Mr. Garel-Jones: I cannot answer that question immediately, but the report will have a significant bearing on the subsequent action taken by the Community and others. I may return to that point when I wind up, if I am fortunate enough to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Association agreements with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia which the British Government proposed at the Strasbourg European Council in December 1989 could be in operation as early as 1 January 1992. They are likely to contain provisions for economic assistance, which will need to be closely co-ordinated with the priorities of the PHARE programme.

All the countries that we are discussing this evening have shown moral and on occasions even physical courage in opting for democracy and the market. However, we know—and they know, too—that they will need another kind of courage to meet the challenges of the market place. There will certainly be redundancies, and shortages, too. There will be failures, which will be reflected in a free press.

The Community programmes of which the House is taking note tonight will help to meet those challenges, but the bottom line in the market economy is, and will remain, the individual and collective effort of the people themselves. We have no doubt that the peoples of eastern Europe will show the same courage in rising to those challenges as they have shown in gaining their freedom.

12.15 am

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): I go along with much of the Minister's peroration, because we all have expectations of the bravery and initiative already shown by the peoples of eastern and central Europe, which have allowed them to triumph over the corrupt dictatorships that they overwhelmed and will be directed now at the enormous economic problems which confront them.

Nevertheless, brave words and rhetoric from the Minister at the Dispatch Box will not open the doors that those peoples need to open now. The debate is the starting point for a much wider one on how the West—the European Community, Britain and other countries—can unite in creating the climate of optimism that will allow eastern and central Europe to overcome the short-term problems that are a consequence of rising oil prices caused by the Gulf crisis and the unique difficulties inherent in moving from command to mixed economies.

The documents before the House concern the technical nature of expanding Community help through various programmes that the Minister outlined, and we endorse the position that the Government and the Community have adopted in that respect. Later, my hon. Friends will, if they catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, comment on particular aspects of those programmes.

I want to comment generally on the problems facing the countries of eastern and central Europe and to relate them to our own efforts, so that we may view them alongside those being made on a multilateral basis by the Community as a whole.

We wholeheartedly agree with the Government's public statements and actions in the Community, in emphasising that there is no sense in throwing money at the immensely complex problems of economic restructuring. There can certainly be no question of adding to the debt problems of eastern Europe in the way that has happened in Africa and south and central America, which has exacerbated those countries' difficulties. A debt mountain is no way for a country to get out of its problems.

If the assistance that we provide is to be of long-term benefit, it must be targeted on areas in which this country and the Community as a whole are best placed to provide the know-how which is absent from command economies, but vital to the development of mixed and market-based models. That is a feature of the programmes that we are endorsing in this debate, but it is also an important point about the way in which the British Government have approached this problem and this challenge.

The know-how funds that the Government set up were in principle an excellent idea, and I was pleased to serve on the unique—for the British Government—advisory board set up to oversee the funds for eastern Europe. This is an area in which Britain has much to offer the people of central and eastern Europe, and potentially much to gain from the partnership that it represents with them. In spite of 11 years of this Government, this country still has a significant contribution to make in banking, insurance and financial services. In these areas we have an experience and expertise that can be of real value to the emerging market economies of eastern Europe. We also possess expertise in the scientific, agricultural and cultural fields. If these economies are up and running as quickly and as strongly as possible, it is bound to be of real value to Britain and the rest of the European Community that we do what we are doing today.

We also have a special asset which can be to our advantage as well as to that of the central and eastern European countries—the parenthood of the English language. English is clearly the pre-eminent language in the worlds of business and industry, and eastern and central Europeans have not been slow to recognise that. Furthermore, there is a real desire in eastern Europe—more so than has become the case in many other countries—to learn the British rather than the American or any other form of the language. And for once we already have the institutions in place to capitalise on this remarkable pro-British attitude, which is rare enough these days but heart-warmingly strong in countries such as Czechoslovakia. That warmth of feeling towards this country was amply illustrated by the approach to the Prime Minister as she regally wandered through the streets of Prague and Budapest not so long ago, but it has not, I fear, been reciprocated since then by a similar generosity of approach on her part.

I was interested to read in last Sunday's *The Independent on Sunday* a description of the problems facing those who seek to promote the English language. It pointed out that a certain Czech playwright has made an offer soon to restore the Prague palace, from which the British Council was ejected in 1949, to the British Council. That Czech playwright was, of course, Vaclav Havel, now President of Czechoslovakia but for so long a dissident for whom many hon. Members on both sides of the House campaigned and waged aggressive battles with the ambassador of the then Czechoslovak Peoples Republic. Havel has said that he has a major sentimental attachment to the English language and to the British Council, but as the article perceptively points out,

"Havel's presidential fleet is made up of BMWs. The unquestionable economic power of the region is Germany".

If we have that attachment, that link, that valuable connection, it is a shame that other countries are in there and have made so much progress before us.

The BBC World Service has long been cherished as a precious resource in eastern and central Europe. In the days of totalitarianism, it was a source of reliable information when there were precious few others. Now, it is a central access point to the English language and British culture, which is still in demand there. In the British Council, praised by Vaclav Havel, we have in place the ideal instrument with which to extend the crucial process of promoting the British culture in these vital markets.

In order to continue the excellent work done over many years by the BBC, the British Council and many other British organisations overseas, we must ensure that we make the necessary funds available. The half-hearted efforts of the Government are not good enough, especially when compared with the priority given to this by our partners and competitors. For example, the French have just allocated 200 million French francs—over £20 million—to training people to teach French in eastern Europe. They are setting up imaginative and useful scholarship, broadcasting and exchange schemes across the new Europe.

The French are going to all this effort partly because they know that we have a head start through the English language but also because they know, given the attitude of the present British Government, that it will not take them very long to catch up with us. I plead with the Minister—I am sure that he is sympathetic because he is a long-standing friend of the British Council and of its teaching operations in Spain—to ensure that in central and eastern Europe the money required to carry out our commitments to English language teaching will be guaranteed for the future. That will be the most important leverage that we shall have in those countries.

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): Bismarck said that the most significant happening of his lifetime was that America turned out to be an English-speaking country.

[Mr. Donald Thompson]

Had it been a German-speaking country, the history of this century might have been very different. I reinforce what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Robertson: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's support. I know that a lot of what I say about English language teaching and the World Service is not a partisan point of view because it is shared by many hon. Members. The difficulty is that, although the Minister and his Department are sympathetic and know what the advantages are, and what can be done with them, they are being outflanked by the Treasury, where the ears listening are not sympathetic to the pleas of the advantage that can come to Britain. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will add his voice to the strong voices saying that this is the time for Britain to take hold of its advantage and to pay out the money so that future generations will reap the benefit of the minimal expenditure involved.

Even in culture, the German equivalent of the British Council, the Goethe Institute, has recently opened new offices in Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, Cracow, Budapest, Bratislava and Sofia. About 10 million people in the region are learning German. I see these figures as rather more than coincidentally linked to the fact that German foreign cultural spending now stands at more than £1 billion. If we compare that and the growth in its cultural expenditure with the United Kingdom commitment, we begin to get a picture of where we are heading.

While the Germans are spending nearly £1 billion on restructuring, the Government, I regret to say, initially offered £50 million of know-how funds for Poland and £25 million for Hungary. Both offers were spread over five years. They also offered an unspecified amount, and it remains unspecified, to the other countries of eastern and central Europe when the offer was extended to them. The fact is that for the financial year to April 1991 there is a strict limit of £15 million on know-how expenditure for all the countries of eastern and central Europe.

I ask hon. Members to contrast that with one other statistic. The Government will be spending this year £20 million on the television advertising of electricity privatisation alone. That has to be contrasted with the total of £15 million that Britain is to spend on know-how for all the countries of eastern and central Europe. All the money for the six months to April 1991 is committed. Demand has increased but no more money is available until April 1991. There is no guarantee that after April 1991 additional money will be forthcoming. I am sure that I am not the only hon. Member who is less than 100 per cent. confident that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will get all the money that it needs during the autumn public spending round. We can only hope beyond hope that the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs is not tinged with the same generosity in offering money as his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke), the Secretary of State for Health.

The problem that the know-how funds face is compounded by the fact that while the Government are not very good at planning policy, or at government, they lead the field in disingenuous hype and self-promotion. By hyping the know-how funds, the Government were too successful. I made a speech last month to the Royal Institute of International Affairs in which I made that point. I said that penetration was good, that interest had been aroused, that commitments had been made and the Ministers went to all these countries publicising them. But we shall be judged by what we do, not by what we say. If the plug is pulled now, as appears to be the case, in order to satisfy obsessional Treasury small print, disappointment will turn to anger. Disappointments and delays are lost opportunities for mutual benefit.

To parade brave central and eastern European leaders at the Conservative party conference and across our television screens during party political broadcasts is no substitute for giving them the help and the know-how that their economies need. To take the place of those broadcasts there will be a catalogue of broken promises and unfulfilled expectations.

As a result of my contacts and the work that I do here, I know many of the people in the countries concerned. I have listened to their pleas and to their worries and concerns. I place on record their demoralisation.

Both I and the Minister know precisely what is at stake. This should not be a party political matter. I did not believe that it was when I joined the know-how fund's advisory board. We are talking about a unique opportunity for Britain—either alone or, with more value, through the European Community—to grasp the enormous opportunities offered by the democratisation of central and eastern Europe.

I draw the attention of the House to an article in *The European Business Journal* written by Mr. Ralph Land, a member of the Government's advisory board on the know-how fund and general manager of Rank Xerox's eastern Europe export operations. In his fine article he said:

"There is some evidence that those companies that have persisted in the East European market have succeeded in developing profitable business and most of them are looking at the future with some degree of encouragement even while the short-term outlook may be less encouraging. What is now happening in East Europe and the USSR is unprecedented. While the outlook is uncertain there must be a real possibility that these changes will provide the West with unprecedented business opportunities in one of the world's last under-developed markets."

If we squander the chances when the breaks are available to us, it will not be our doomed Government who suffer but future generations of Britons who deserve far better than that.

12.35 am

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): I welcome unequivocally the subject of the debate, which is the proposed regulation that extends the Community's economic aid to all of Germany, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and, with some reservations, Romania, in addition to Poland and Hungary who have received it hitherto. I welcome also the removal of the limit on the level of finance available under the previous regulations. It enables the Community to give humanitarian assistance and much more to the beneficiary countries.

The document cannot be considered in a vacuum. It is linked within the foundation and location of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development with a capital of 10 billion ecu, working alongside the European investment bank. Other financial institutions will continue to play their part.

This is the first opportunity I have had to welcome my hon. Friend the Minister to his new position. However, I

must tell him that we are not doing enough. By "we", I mean not just this country but all the countries of the developed western world. I have mentioned before and should like to reiterate the suggestion of the establishment of an all-embracing Strasbourg plan. Such a plan would add focus and direction to what the European Community can do and would embrace the actions of other institutions and nations. I believe that it is only under such an umbrella and with such identifiable motivation that whatever help is given in whatever form will be planned and carried out to best effect.

That is all the more important because such help will take many forms, including grants, soft loans, interest rate subsidies and preferential access to western markets, mostly free of customs duties and other taxes, as it is for other countries receiving help from the European Community under the Lomé convention. It will take the form of direct investment and know-how funds such as the £15 million contributed by the United Kingdom this year. I share the concern expressed by the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) about the amounts we are providing, but we should not lack pride in what the know-how funds are already achieving.

Such a Strasbourg plan should be designed on the principles which underlie the recommendations we are considering now—encouraging self-help and creating stable conditions in which free institutions can survive. After the exhilaration of liberation in eastern and central Europe, those countries face the challenge of living free. They face it after development at a most extraordinary speed. It has been said that the revolution in Poland, where Solidarity first confronted Communist rule a decade ago, took 10 years. In Hungary, the changes initiated by liberals in the party itself took 10 months. In East Germany, demonstrators were on the streets for 10 weeks before Honecker's bogus state collapsed. Czechoslovakia's hardliners held out for only about 10 days, and in Romania it was virtually all over in the first 10 hours after the crowds booed Ceausescu. However, the bloody counter-revolution lasted longer and things still have not settled down there.

The Strasbourg plan should help those countries to tackle the problems they face. It should be a political effort, couched in economic terms, and a foreign policy initiative, the main objective of which should be to help to create viable and stable national economies in central and eastern Europe. Those economies must be strong enough to resist political or economic subversion, and therefore able to contribute to the harmonious development of economic activities in Europe, to which the European Community is so correctly committed.

To achieve that, like the Marshall plan 40 years ago, the Strasbourg plan must be of massive dimensions. The Marshall plan cost $12,000 million over four years. That represented 1·2 per cent. of the United States's gross national product in that period. As a guideline, applying the same percentage to the gross domestic product of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries would demand funding of about £400,000 million for the next four years. That is quite a challenge, but it is also an enormous opportunity.

I remind the House of the success of the imaginative levels of funding under the Marshall plan. It increased the national gross domestic product of recipient nations by 15 to 20 per cent., rates of investment by 30 per cent., industrial production by more than 30 per cent. and agricultural production by almost 15 per cent., although I believe that the Strasbourg plan should far exceed that proportion. It increased export trade by 66 per cent.; imports increased by 20 per cent.; and trade between the recipient countries almost doubled.

Those were the successes of the Marshall plan, despite continued exchange controls and continued quantitative national import restrictions. The Strasbourg plan, properly executed, should far exceed those, to the benefit of recipient and donor countries alike. Such a plan should not be measured or judged only by short-term economic results. It should provide a cornerstone for achievement in central and eastern Europe in the next decade, and though designed to address specific and immediate economic problems it should help to lay the foundations for free, peaceful democratic practice in those countries. That is a good wish for them and a self-serving wish for ourselves.

A Strasbourg plan would vividly illustrate our shared western heritage. It would illuminate and motivate, at last, a shared common purpose of spreading freedom and of the use of that freedom to benefit all European peoples. In so doing, it would mark the start of a new epoch in history.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will not only carry the support of the House in the recommendations that we are considering but use this moment to start planning such a co-ordinated effort, which could make a difference not only to this decade but to the century ahead.

12.43 am

Mr. Bruce George (Walsall, South): We are debating the extent to which we in the west should help to underpin the emerging democracies in eastern and central Europe, enhance their political systems and rebuild and build their economies, which hardly function. Those countries' economies are now seen to have been bereft of any competence or initiative, and we know that their output was low. Now we are reappraising the bogus statistics that were produced and discovering just how economically, morally and politically bankrupt those regimes were. I would class them as a series of gigantic Whips Offices. When the Minister takes a cheap shot at the Opposition, I shall be tempted to reciprocate by saying that, having spent so long in the Whips Office, he ought to know a thing or two about authoritarian structures. Like the Romanians and the eastern Europeans, he has emerged from a nightmare of discipline—in this case into the relative freedom of the Foreign Office.

No one is asking whether we should help central and eastern Europe. We are merely discussing the extent to which we should help them. Despite the rhetoric and euphoria that greeted the collapse of communism—the collapse of the decks of cards in eastern Europe—I wonder whether the collective efforts of multinational organisations, Governments, the private sector and individuals will be sufficient. It is clear that the survival of the new democracies in eastern and central Europe will largely depend on their own endeavours. But that should not provide us with an easy let-out, because both their progress and our interests will be served by a massive collective effort by the public and private sectors and by Governments—not simply through economic assistance, loans and the wiping out of debts but through the provision of political expertise. Matters are fairly easy

[Mr. Bruce George]

now: things are going well. But things might suddenly get worse, and if that happens, the support of western countries will be even more important.

Sir Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that this is a unique opportunity in the history of Europe and of the world, and that we should take advantage of what has happened in the countries of eastern Europe, which we have all visited at various times? If we do not take this opportunity now, we shall lose many opportunities in future.

Mr. George: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. I suppose that it is slowly dawning on people that the success that has been achieved was not inevitable. We realise now that things can go wrong—that they are going wrong in some respects. We must realise that a year from now, or five years from now, the whole thing could turn sour. Suppose that there is a counter-revolution or that the dark forces suppressed by totalitarianism for more than 40 years re-emerge. We in the west will have to assume some of the responsibility for the failure that may result in eastern and central Europe.

One of the pleasurable tasks that I have had to perform in my capacity as chairman of the political committee of the North Atlantic Assembly is to produce for publication a chronology of the events of the past 12 months. The first entry, dated October 1989, describes how thousands of East Germans were allowed to enter West Germany through embassies in Prague and Warsaw. That happened just 12 months ago. It is almost impossible to believe how much has happened in such a short time. I am sure that historians will regard the past 12 months as epoch-making ones. They will regard this year in the same way as they have regarded 1789, 1815, 1848, 1918 and 1945. But all those great years were years in which Europe was transformed by revolution, by a civil war or by a major conflict. In 1989 and 1990, however, there was a virtually bloodless revolution—a series of velvet revolutions—and we must be eternally grateful for that.

Few could have predicted what happened. Certainly those who were least prepared for it were Jaruzelski, Honecker, Jakes, Kadar and Zhivkov. Why did it happen? It happened because the legitimacy of regimes was exposed. Gorbachev had said that no longer would Soviet armed forces be available to sustain the unsustainable. Bereft of legitimacy and of Soviet military support, those regimes have proved completely bankrupt and the democratic forces have emerged.

I had intended to quote Timothy Garton Ash, but was pre-empted by the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone). Let me now quote from Havel's address to the assembly of the Council of Europe a few months ago:

> "Time suddenly accelerated and what otherwise took a year suddenly happened in an hour . . . the impossible and the dream became reality. The stoker's dream became the daily routine of the Minister of Foreign Affairs."

That is a cause for euphoria, but our euphoria must be translated into something that might be a burden for our constituents and our Government.

The jettisoning of Stalinism was almost simple in comparison with the nation-building that must now take place. The first stage was represented by the events that led up to the revolutions in eastern Europe, the second stage by the revolutions themselves; the third stage was that of transitional government before elections provided legitimacy. It is the present stage that will be the difficult one.

I do not feel that what our Government have done is remotely sufficient. If goods and assistance could be equated with rhetoric, eastern Europe would be as happy as the East Germans will be with the West Germans sustaining them. Our efforts so far would bring about the regeneration of Transylvania, if we were disposed to provide the resources. Much more must be done.

We face a monumental task. Politicians in eastern and central Europe are learning by experience: people who were denied access to the political system are now holding key offices, and must deal with obsolescent industry, limited capital, an unmotivated and, in many instances, unskilled work force, entrenched opposition from forces that have not yet been eliminated politically and peacefully and the lack of any entrepreneurial skill or spirit.

The Minister talks of movement to a market economy. I suspect that the market economy in those countries will be tempered by a significant dose of social market economy. Some may argue that a halfway house is impossible, but this is not a halfway house. I have visited eastern Europe many times, and I know that people there are enthusiastic about their perception of Scandinavia. I suspect that what will eventually emerge could be more accurately described as a social market economy.

We now have support from the EC, and the American seed support, for eastern democracy; there is support from the banks. But we must not look only towards economic assistance and know-how; we must also consider the political framework within which these countries are to emerge. The magnet of the European Community and 1992 was, I believe, one of the significant factors that led to the collapse of communism in eastern Europe: those people could see that, while their societies were disintegrating and old rivalries were beginning to emerge, we in the west were going in the opposite direction. It was the realisation that there was a distance between them, with their COMECON, and us. Someone said to me when I attended a COMECON meeting, "The Phoenicians invented currency 3,000 years ago; we are still operating a system of primitive barter in COMECON." It was the realisation that the gap was widening by the hour that led them to realise that their system had been exhausted.

We must do much more. The know-how fund is wonderful in principle, but it is not sufficiently great in its scope. Although the Minister has excluded Romania for the moment, I wish to advance an argument that may not be especially popular. I was in Romania 10 days after the revolution and I can speak with some knowledge, but not with any certainty. I think that President Iliescu's use of the miners was shameful and wrong and that his country has paid a heavy price for it. The Balkans, however, are not the central or northern tiers of eastern Europe. They are quite different from those areas, and considerable progress has been made so far. The Romanian Government, even though we may not like them, were elected in a relatively free election and have a legitimacy.

Perhaps I am introducing extraneous factors into the argument, but we must remember that it was a Romanian ambassador to the United Nations who chaired the Security Council in August and who was crucial in enabling extremely important resolutions on the Gulf to pass through the council. It was Romania that imposed sanctions, at enormous cost to itself. Romania has offered

United States armed forces the opportunity of rest, rehabilitation and recuperation on the Black sea. If the offer is accepted, it will be the first time that NATO forces have been in Warsaw pact territory. For those reasons alone, we should look a little more sympathetically at Romania. We should not use the stick or the promise of a carrot. Unless we are prepared to assist more enthusiastically than the Government have so far, Romania will be almost frozen on the other side of an imaginary divide.

Why should we be so tolerant of Bulgaria? The reigning Government Ministers—again, a freely elected administration—are members of what was the Bulgarian Communist party, which has been reformed and called the Bulgarian Socialist party. If we are tolerant of one set of reformed communists, we should have rather more tolerance of another more reformist and augmented branch of the regime, which is perhaps different in form, in Romania.

These countries are passing through an horrendous period in their history. Will they seek the road of gradualism or that of shock therapy? If they make wrong decisions, much will turn sour. As the Minister and my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) said, we have much expertise. We have much to give through the BBC World Service—or the BBC external services, which are not exactly the same as the World Service—and it is vital that we do more than cheer. We must help. We must do infinitely more, and it is only right that we should give more. We must provide trade, access to our markets and know-how. Only then shall we see pluralistic, functioning and prosperous democracies in eastern and central Europe.

12.59 am

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): At a ridiculously late hour, once again, we are discussing extremely important matters. Earlier, we spent two and a quarter hours discussing the Redbridge London Borough Council Bill. We spent another two hours or so on the London Underground Bill. I am not saying that they are not important matters, but to discuss matters such as those that are before us at this hour of the night, with the debate restricted to one and a half hours, cannot be right.

The motion mentions the provision of co-ordinated economic aid to Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary. I am all in favour of that. Also relevant to the motion is the establishment of a European bank for reconstruction and development. It is being established as an international development bank, the broad purpose of which is described as being to foster the transition to open market economies and to promote private enterprise in those east and central European countries which are committed to the principles of democracy. So far, so good.

Eight recipient countries will have access to loans from the bank. Furthermore, as the 27th report of the Select Committee on European Legislation states:

"The Department reports that the Bank will lend on broadly commercial terms."

Again, I am all in favour of that, but as has already been said—by hon. Members of all parties—we must be extremely careful about the possibility of those countries building up huge borrowings. We have been through all this before in the past 20 or so years. The developed countries have lent huge amounts of money to third-world countries, doubtless with the best of intentions—and, as a result, many third-world countries are today struggling under a mountain of debts which they have no possibility of ever paying off. We need to be extremely generous not only in the years but in the decades ahead.

From the enormous pile of papers that I picked up earlier from the Vote Office, I gather that, in the present year, aid to the countries of central and eastern Europe from the European Community totals some 300 million ecu. Incidentally, what a horrible expression "ecu" is—almost as bad as the phrase "European currency units". However, that sum is not very much in terms of the problems of those countries, especially when we consider how much money West Germany is proposing to spend on the GDR. It is not just 300 million ecu this year and possibly a few hundred million more ecu next year—it is talking of so many billions upon billions of deutschmarks that I have lost count of the number of noughts on the end. As has been said, we have a great opportunity here. We must take that opportunity, and we must be generous.

An Adjournment debate is the Commons equivalent of putting out the milk bottles. We are not yet on the Adjournment, and it is now 1.2 am. I bet those bottles were put out hours ago. We need to get our priorities right here—and in our dealings with our friends in central and eastern Europe.

1.2 am

Dr. Kim Howells (Pontypridd): The immense changes in central and eastern Europe pose great challenges to the member states of the European Community and to the community as a whole. Great potential markets are beginning to be identified and developed in central and eastern Europe. We are also beginning to understand the monumental scale of the social and environmental rehabilitation that will be necessary to bring the quality of the lives of those living in central and eastern Europe up to the minimum standards existing in most western European countries.

The expanding markets of eastern Europe offer an obvious challenge to our manufacturing and service industries and the potential rewards are not difficult to imagine, but the area that I have termed "social and environmental rehabilitation" also has its potential rewards, and it is on that area and those rewards that I wish to concentrate.

The environment of central and eastern Europe, for example, is as badly polluted as any part of the planet. The West Germans have revealed from their surveys that some 55 per cent. of East German forests are damaged, while more than 40 per cent. of its waste water is untreated. East Germany reported 15,000 uncontrolled toxic waste tips. It imports 700,000 metric tonnes a year of waste from West Germany alone. In central and eastern Europe as a whole it is calculated that 1,200 million tonnes of carbon dioxide and almost 23 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide are pumped into the environment each year.

The European Community is at present the main multilateral agency supplying aid for environmental purposes to eastern Europe. Aid for specific environmental purposes has already been given under the EC-administered scheme PHARE—Poland Hungary Aid for Reconstruction of the Economy. It has given £18 million to Hungary and £16 million to Poland. I understand that that will be extended to East Germany, Czechoslovakia,

[Dr. Kim Howells]

Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania, conditional, of course, on those countries carrying out the necessary political reforms which were mentioned by several hon. Members tonight.

Anxiety about the environment in eastern Europe is widening. In particular, the World bank is concerning itself with environmental issues in middle-income as well as developing countries. In May it established an environment fund of US$1 billion to US$1·2 billion for use over the next three years to help to deal with cross-border issues such as deforestation and climate change.

The World bank has relaxed the income restrictions for its soft loans which would have excluded eastern Europe. It is expected to commit US$2·5 billion to Poland over the next three years and a further US$2·5 billion to the rest of eastern Europe. However, with applications from both Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria under consideration, it is likely that commitments to the region over the next three years will be US$2 billion or so higher, at a total of about US$7 billion. Those funds are for general development, rather than environmental improvements only. They are substantial sums of money and represent a serious attempt at tackling the problem. But in terms of the estimated cost of arresting the worst effects of existing pollution, I am afraid that they are extremely modest. For example, West Germany estimates the cost of clean-up in eastern Germany alone at some US$200 billion over 20 years. Poland requires US$25 billion this decade to arrest air, land and water pollution.

Poland's need is desperate. Half its lakes are contaminated. Half its forests are damaged from acid rain. Poland has five times the incidence of cancer of the west. It has been reported that water from the Vistula river corrodes heavy machinery. In Krakow one in six babies is born prematurely. In some areas 44 out of every 1,000 babies born die before they reach their first birthday. Poland's factories use three times the energy and produce 10 to 20 times the pollution of western ones. Pollution there is greater by a factor of 10 than in the west.

Those are horrendous statistics but they are not the litany of some distant disaster. Poland is a European neighbour of ours, like Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. We know that when radioactivity was pumped out of the Ukraine from Chernobyl it fell across Europe, recognising no borders or frontiers. The

The appalling problems do not merely represent an enormous challenge to the European Community. They represent a chance for economies such as our own, which is in the middle of great changes, to accept those challenges and use them to promote and develop existing technologies designed to achieve a cleaner, more efficient use of energy. We have expertise in clean-up technologies which we should exploit.

My area of south Wales has had tremendous experience in the engineering and energy industries. I have long cherished the idea of that region becoming the manufacturing centre of new energy industries—the clean technologies. We must use those technologies in eastern and western Europe to substitute for our huge levels of fossil-fuel burning and our dirty production systems.

We must be astute about the way in which we approach the problems in eastern Europe. I do not want to sound unfashionably competitive about this, but I am worried that Germany, France, Sweden and Denmark will steal a march on us in terms of the promotion and development of new technologies. The eastern Europeans will look for such technology and I have already read about the joint proposals between the Poles and the Swedes, and possibly the Soviets, to clean up the Baltic. They share that sea and recognise that they face a common problem.

Europe is a small, shared continent. It takes about two hours to go from Heathrow to Warsaw. It takes me longer than that to drive from Heathrow to my constituency, especially if the wonderful Severn bridge is having one of its off days. We must recognise the inherent constrictions on the continent and our shared future.

We must ensure that we develop and expand new technologies so that we can take them to eastern Europe and that we are part of the technological revolution. That is the only answer to the appalling pollution in eastern Europe.

Reports have already been made on the dreadful state of some nuclear plants in eastern Europe. Teams of German nuclear scientists have gone to East Germany and advised that all its nuclear power stations should be closed down immediately because they are unsafe. That is not a general comment on nuclear energy installations in eastern Europe, but a specific observation made by German scientists. We have a great centre of nuclear excellence at Sellafield and we should vigorously employ that excellence by helping to decommission the dreadful plants in East Germany. That work would be a good earner for Sellafield and could do something to promote the image of the scientists and engineers of the industry who have frequently been under attack. Such work would benefit Europe a great deal.

I know that there are industries trying their hardest to push their products and technologies in eastern Europe. I am not sure that that determination is shared by the Government, but perhaps the Minister could enlighten me on that. People in British Gas are doing excellent work in East Germany by helping to improve the transportation systems of natural gas. By entering into such partnerships, British Gas and other industries will ensure their futures in an important market.

I know some of the details of the excellent know-how programme, but I am rather disturbed, having added it up in a naive way I am sure, at the cost of some schemes. I have calculated that the British Government are intending to spend, or have spent, £475,000 on training and retraining eastern European journalists, and have spent £30,000 on schemes for improving the environment in eastern Europe. I can understand their anxiety not to produce large numbers of Brian Redheads in eastern Europe, but I do not understand the logic that informs such decision making. Why is there such a discrepancy? I should be glad if the Minister would enlighten me about that because it seems an extraordinary decision.

I hope that this momentous phase in European history will not be subject to the mistakes that we have made with other under-developed areas of the world, and that we will not simply treat eastern and central Europe to the sorts of unfulfilled promises that we have given so often in the past to the under-developed nations of the third world. I hope that we will realise that we have a shared destiny with Europe, whether eastern, central or western Europe, and that we will put our money, efforts and know-how where our promises have so often been in the past.

1.16 am

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): I shall be brief and I hope that treason is forgivable at this time of the night. I am sorry to cast a little doubt over the great visions and grand designs that have been expressed so far, particularly about saving eastern Europe, which seems to be what most people hope.

We have bilateral aid measures, largely through the know-how fund, and multilateral aid measures, largely through help to Poland and Hungary, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. I was taken by a speech made by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development as recently as 26 June, when she set out how aid programmes should be judged. She said:

"we know that one cannot solve the highly complex problems of development by throwing money at them. Aid quality and effectiveness are equally vital . . . Unless we ensure that our aid is used effectively, we are wasting precious resources for the developing countries and squandering British taxpayers' money in the process. Such action is neither sensible nor defensible. That is why we concentrate on using our aid where it is most needed and why we have rigorous systems in place to ensure project effectiveness and value for money."—[*Official Report*, 26 June 1990; Vol. 175, c. 253.]

I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister of State would readily agree with that.

With those thoughts in mind, how can we measure which is more effective—bilateral or multilateral aid? I also wonder whether multilateral aid will be in any way subject to parliamentary control. I have considerable doubts about that since earlier today we had an hour and a quarter to discuss procedures for considering European Community legislation and voted that any proposal which required adoption by unanimity abstention should be treated as agreement. I do not remember my hon. Friend the Minister of State, when he was in the Whips Office, suggesting that that would be acceptable. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development also spoke of rigorous systems to ensure project effectiveness and value for money. How do we know that that will be achieved with multilateral aid? Which is most likely to benefit United Kingdom trade—bilateral aid or multilateral aid?

Aid for trade is a good principle—£1 of aid can easily lead to £2, £3 or £5 of trade. With what I understand to be a £630 million investment in the bank, how much trade could have been generated under bilateral aid measures? Well-directed bilateral aid, particularly by liaising with the British Consultants Bureau, can be of direct benefit to British industry and therefore of direct benefit to our balance of payments.

That is to be compared with what has happened so far in East Germany. The Germans are not only our partners —they are also our business competitors—but so far the West Germans have taken over East Germany's airline, banks and insurance industry. The rest is just so much dross. I do not think that any British companies had the opportunity to invest in East Germany in any meaningful way. There should be some lessons there for us in dealing with other eastern European countries. If subsidiarity means anything, we should put greater stress on bilateral aid measures.

1.20 am

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) has been in the Chamber for as long as I have, so I shall confine myself to four questions.

First, what assessment has the Foreign Office made of the situation in the middle east and escalating oil prices which may be responsible for no less than the collapse of economic reform as we understand it in areas such as Bulgaria, and perhaps Poland and other parts of eastern Europe? In particular, what is the outcome of the discussions between Mr. Delors, Mr. Sitaryan and separately with Mr. Andriessen on that subject? There must be some Foreign Office assessment.

Secondly, may I have a long written answer to points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells), encapsulated in the fact that apparently one mark spent in eastern Europe is worth six spent in western Europe on anti-pollution measures?

In terms of this debate my third question is not a theoretical one. Given that funds are limited, what is the Foreign Office's thinking on the relative priorities of aid to eastern Europe and aid to Brazil, Zaire and other rain forest countries? A great deal has been said by me and by others in the House about the need to help those countries with rain forests so as to make it possible for them not to destroy their rain forests to the detriment of the global climate, the world in general and the planet itself. There may have to be choices and I would be interested to know the Foreign Office's relative priorities.

I have given the Minister a little notice of my fourth question which comes from discussion with my friend Paul Hare, professor of business studies at Heriot-Watt university, who is on one of the working parties, and with others. What are we doing to provide for eastern Europe what any well-run western firm would simply take for granted in the way of accounting expertise? I applaud the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) is on the know-how fund's advisory board and I know that he knows a lot about it, but there is a problem about providing for aspects such as accounting which we take for granted.

My final point is to repeat the question about non-transferable roubles that I put to the Minister during his opening speech.

1.23 am

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): It is extremely good of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) to split the last five minutes of the debate with me. It is almost impossible to make a 120-second speech, so I shall not attempt to describe my fascinating experiences in Romania in the past few days, regretful though that is, and just concentrate on one small point, which is to do with the scrutiny of the documents.

I warmly welcome the motion. It is rare for us to have such a united and harmonious debate on European directives at this late hour. But I want to make a critical and perhaps irritating point, but nevertheless an important one in view of the fact that we are changing our scrutiny arrangements.

The basic document that we are discussing tonight is EC document 7720. That publication is true to the Brussel's tradition of supplying the national Parliaments with the least possible information. The Foreign Office's

[Mr. Jonathan Aitken]

three-page explanatory memorandum is as thin as dishwater too, and I want to impress on my hon. Friend the Minister that we shall expect a much higher standard in future.

If one wants answers to questions that any sensible person may have about Community aid to eastern Europe —such as the size of the budget, how it is being allocated, which countries are receiving which sums of money, which development projects are to be financed by ECA, and what proportion is being devoted to humanitarian assistance and what form it takes—they cannot be found in the document. That is a regrettable error, but typical of the attitude shown by both the Commission and, sadly, sometimes by our Government towards scrutiny.

In the two minutes available to me, it has not been possible to make a sensible speech, but the documents are seriously defective, and I add that complaint in the hope that it will be remedied.

1.25 am

Mr. Garel-Jones: I thank the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) and all the other hon. Members who have contributed to the debate for the generally constructive tone of their remarks. The hon. Member for Hamilton could not resist taking a few swipes at the Government, and I do not chide him for that. I will respond with some of my own, but I hope without spoiling the amicable nature of the debate overall. If I am unable to cover all the points made in the short time available to me, I will of course write to the hon. Members concerned.

The hon. Member for Hamilton said that brave words from a Minister are not enough, which I accept, and that we must create a culture of optimism. I wish that he had spoken instead of a culture of enterprise, because that is what we are trying to achieve. I agree that we cannot approach the problems of eastern Europe by simply throwing money at it, though I noticed that the hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott) seemed shocked that a member of her party's Front Bench appeared to be coming round to the view that we have expressed in the House for a long time.

Mr. Robertson: The John Smith school.

Mr. Garel-Jones: Indeed.

The hon. Member for Hamilton made specific mention of the British Council, and I am sure that all right hon. and hon. Members agree that it has a specific role to play not only in teaching the English language in the countries of eastern Europe but as the organisation that we will frequently use in implementing know-how fund projects. The council has been given an extra £2·25 million for the year 1990-91 to cover its additional activities in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The hon. Member for Hamilton referred also—although perhaps not strictly in order, in relation to the document being debated—to the United Kingdom's bilateral aid in what I thought were unnecessarily disparaging terms. The United Kingdom was the first country to initiate a know-how fund, and it is now worth in excess of £75 million to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. We expect to make disbursements by the end of the 1991 financial year of £17·4 million. In addition, we have pledged £15 million for an agricultural project in Poland, made a grant of $100 million, or £61·7 million, to the Polish stabilisation fund, and given £900,000 in humanitarian aid to Romania. As part of the Paris Club rescheduling agreement for 1990, the United Kingdom rescheduled £550 million of official Polish debt.

Obviously we all want to do more, but the Government deserved a slightly better response from the hon. Member for Hamilton than they received.

The know-how fund has been a huge success. There is great demand for it and the money has, I admit, been spent rather more quickly than we had expected this year; but I assure the House that future activities will be generously funded and in relation to demand.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) told us—we would all agree with him—that an enormous political effort now needs to be made to create viable and sustainable economies, and he referred to the Marshall plan. I cannot entirely agree with his linking of the Marshall and the Strasbourg plans, but I share his view of the enormity of the task that faces us.

The hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George) referred to the European communist regimes as gigantic whips offices. The hon. Gentleman knows that I have some experience in these matters. Indeed, this is one of the few areas in which I would claim to have more experience than the hon. Gentleman, who we know to have been, in difficult times, a staunch supporter of NATO and to have held a whole range of other positions that were not always easy to adhere to in the Opposition.

The former employment that I held—one should refrain from referring to it overtly on the Floor of the House—is indeed a kind of Securitate, but I assure the hon. Member for Walsall, South that it is a democratic version of the Securitate. As I no longer belong to it, perhaps I can take this opportunity of paying tribute on behalf of both sides of the House to the people who work in that underground world and who provide a service and a continuity for the House which should be placed on record.

The hon. Member for Walsall, South told the House that he was euphoric about the events in eastern Europe. But his hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) is less euphoric about them. The hon. Gentleman also said that he would like a social market economy to emerge. That is not a phrase from which Conservative Members would dissent. It was given wide currency by Lord Joseph. We have always accepted that the market economy and Conservatism are also about living in a community and accepting the duties and responsibilities that that entails.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) mentioned the EBRD. He is right that we should not build up huge debts for the countries in the east. I remind him that the main purpose of the EBRD is to promote the private sector, to make investments in that sector and to help to build it up.

The hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) made a thoughtful speech about the environment in eastern Europe. He painted an horrendous picture of what he called "these terrible statistics". That was the moment when the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East chose to leave the Chamber. No doubt he found it difficult to bear the gruesome picture of a command economy in failure. I should tell the hon. Gentleman that I referred to him in my opening remarks, when I said that last Friday he had praised the full employment policies of the

former German Democratic Republic. I was only surprised that he had not risen to praise its law and order policies, too——

Mr. Harry Barnes: What was said in that debate has no connection with the points about pollution, and was in no way a defence of the bureaucratic and organisational abuses in eastern Europe. But there is a balance to be struck in all debates, and that is what I was trying to do last Friday.

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business).*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 7720/90, relating to the extension of the provisions of Council regulation No. 3906/89 to Czechoslovakia, GDR, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania; and supports the Government's view that the provision of co-ordinated economic aid to those countries by the European Community will promote economic and political reform in those countries and foster a closer relationship with the Community.

British Hostages (Kuwait)

1.34 am

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn. *[Mr. Chapman.]*

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): This Adjournment debate is about the British hostages still held by Iraq. I stress that, because after the Foreign Secretary's statement today and the successful completion of the mission undertaken by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) there is a feeling that the hostage issue is over, but it is not. Tonight, 40 families have been reunited with elderly and sick relatives who were held hostage. Hundreds more, however, watched the television pictures of that reunion with happiness but also with profound sadness because they are still waiting for their relatives. I address the House on behalf of those families, and particularly the Ross family in Stoke Newington, my constituents, who were on the unfortunate British Airways flight BA 149. Alastair Ross has now been held hostage for three months.

I want to draw attention to the hostages on flight BA 149 because it cannot be said of them, as it has been said of other hostages, fairly or unfairly, that they went out to the middle east to earn big money and knew the risk that they ran. The people on that flight were in transit and unwittingly found themselves in a war zone. The horror that followed was entirely unlooked for.

In the emergency debate on the Gulf crisis, the Foreign Secretary said:

> "The House represents those people and their families. In the debate it was striking that not one hon. Member argued that because of the plight, anxiety, unhappiness and suffering of the hostages and their families we should weaken or temper this country's resistance to aggression. That is a striking and welcome fact, and I believe that they accept that. It is a hard thing to say, but a necessary thing to say."—[*Official Report*, 7 September 1990; Vol. 177, c. 895-6.]

Let us reflect on what the Foreign Secretary meant by that. I believe that he meant that hostages are expendable, and the fear that that is what Her Majesty's Government believe led me to seek this debate.

This morning, I woke up to hear on the radio the Under-Secretary of State saying in an embarrassed way that he was not embarrassed to welcome the hostages home. Those of us who followed the coverage that the mission undertaken by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup had in the Tory press and noted the sneering way in which it referred to him wonder whether in some quarters of his party a humanitarian mission aimed at saving lives earns less glory than war-mongering and military adventures.

The people on flight 149 were entirely unwittingly caught up in a war zone. I shall speak of the experiences of the Ross family and the hundreds of other people on that plane on that terrible night. They left London on 1 August on their way to Madras, touched down on 2 August at Kuwait airport just to refuel and found themselves in the middle of a war zone. The Ross family then had to spend 12 days as part of a human shield at a military installation. For four of those days, Alastair, Maggie and two small children, with many others, were under military guard in a building with no natural light. Imagine the horror of not just adults but tiny children under armed guard in those conditions.

[Ms. Diane Abbott]

On 2 September, Maggie Ross and her two children were able to fly to London, but she left her husband behind. The fact is that 146 hostages from flight BA 149 have been left behind. They are held not in luxury hotels but at military installations.

The Foreign Secretary, speaking today about the hostages, said this:

"We should not forget that the plight. . .of our hostages has been caused by Saddam Hussein who is playing cat and mouse with them, and the British Government and this Parliament would not wish to be blackmailed."

That is stern and resolute stuff, but both I and the families of the hostages would say that the British Government cannot be allowed to evade their responsibilities in that way.

Many of the hostages' families, including my constituent Maggie Ross, believe that the Government could do more. They want the Government to press again for consular access. My information is that consular access was last made available on 16 August. If the Minister has more up-to-date information, I shall be glad to have it. They want the Government to continue to press for Red Cross and Red Crescent access. I am aware that the Iraqis have turned down that request, but the hostages' families want the Government to continue to press for that access.

As for the vexed question of mail, Maggie Ross has received a number of letters from her husband which are very precious to her. She has replied, but apparently no mail is going in. The Foreign Office says that the hold-up is in Amman, Jordan. However, I have information that mail sent many weeks before did not leave England until 26 September. There is a great deal of unhappiness among the hostages' families about what has happened to the mail and about what is preventing it from going in when mail is coming out.

Finally—I am loth to criticise civil servants because I was one myself—many questions have been asked about the attitude of the Foreign Office. The majority of officials and very many individuals have done a wonderful job, but there have been too many reports—during conversations that I have had, both with hostages families and with people who work for British Airways, and in newspaper articles—about wrong and late information and about the occasional and unfortunate offhand attitude. There have been too many reports from too many sources about that. The Minister had to reply to those criticisms in a letter to *The Independent* a few days ago. They cannot be dismissed.

Still on the subject of Government Departments, what are we to make of the intelligence services on which we spend so much money and regarding which we have recently passed so much legislation to protect? They could not even predict the invasion.

In the special debate in September, speaking about the hostages, the Foreign Secretary said that the Government's undertaking was

"that we shall not forget them or in any way relax our efforts to get them out safe and sound."—[*Official Report*, 7 September 1990; Vol. 177, c. 896.]

The hostages' families feel forgotten. They believe that getting the hostages out safe and sound is the Government's last priority.

There is no doubt that the annexation of Kuwait was wrong, that Saddam Hussein is one of the most cruel and brutal dictators among many world-wide and that there is a lot at stake in the Gulf. However, some of us believe that the saving of human life and the avoidance of bloodshed come before many if not all the other things at stake in the Gulf. I believe that the saving of human life comes before the interests of American oil companies, above the provision of cheap oil in perpetuity for the United States, above military adventurism and above loss of face for the British Government and the American military. I also believe—as do many people, both in this country but above all in the middle east—that a peaceful settlement is still possible.

I am aware that negotiation and diplomacy do not go hand in hand with the resolute approach, but I have listened to the debate in the House and followed the issue in the newspapers, and the Government's attitude and that of most hon. Members seems to be that the plight of the hostages is all very well but that we cannot allow a handful of people to stand in the way of military action which is in our best interests. I would argue that, on the contrary, far from the hostages standing in the way of a military adventure that is in our best interests, their plight should focus attention on that action which is in everyone's interests—a peaceful, negotiated settlement.

I was driven to seek this Adjournment debate by the obvious misery and concern of my constituents, but this debate, short though it is, is not about one family, about the families of all the hostages from British Airways flight 149 or even about all the other hostages; it is about peace and a stable long-term settlement for the middle east. I ask the Minister to move away from the attitude which has caused so much concern to the hostages' families and which seems to suggest that some sort of military adventure is inevitable. I hope that he will answer some of the detailed questions that I have asked so as to reassure the hostages' families, some of whom are in the Gallery, that the Government are continuing to keep up the pressure for them and have their interests at heart, and that the prospects for a peaceful negotiated settlement are not being ignored or marginalised.

1.45 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd): I should like to thank the hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott) for giving the House the opportunity to debate a subject of great concern. She has spoken of the distress caused to her constituents by the enforced separation from members of their families trapped in Kuwait and Iraq. I knew about the case of Mr. Alastair Ross from the questions that she tabled and from other contacts and I have familiarised myself with his situation.

The hon. Lady said at the beginning of her remarks that she sensed from the Foreign Secretary's comments this afternoon that there was a feeling that the hostage issue was over. I refute that completely. We take this matter immensely seriously. Almost every hon. Member will have heard at first hand of the emotional and practical problems being experienced by families in the United Kingdom as a result of Saddam Hussein's refusal to allow foreign men to return to their homes. We are in constant touch with the Gulf Support Group, a voluntary organisation founded by, among others, my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward). That group is doing a magnificent job in comforting and counselling families.

My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have visited the organisation and I plan to visit it very soon.

The hon. Lady made some criticisms of officials in the Foreign Office. I hope that she is in touch with the Gulf Support Group because the Foreign Office is closely in touch with it. If she asked the support group to make a judgment on its relationship with officials in the Foreign Office, she would find that their comments were not unfavourable.

Last weekend—on 20 October—a senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office official attended a meeting organised by the Gulf Support Group. It was a valuable opportunity for contact with the 150 or so relatives who were present. They expressed their deep concern and frustration, as has been described by the hon. Lady, at the plight of loved ones stuck in Iraq and Kuwait. The Government have the greatest sympathy for all those involved in this desperately difficult situation. At that meeting suggestions were also made—some of which the hon. Lady incorporated in her remarks—of ways in which we might help to improve matters. I am glad to be able to make a few announcements to the House now.

On mail, we are setting up a Post Office box arrangement in London to speed up deliveries of mail to those stuck in Iraq. I hope to be able to give further details in the next day or two.

Following an approach to British Telecom, the cost of telephone calls to Iraq is being reduced by half. That will enable families to make better contact with their relatives.

The BBC World Service Gulflink programme, which was introduced at the request of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is a great support to people stranded in Iraq and Kuwait, is being extended, at our instigation, from 15 to 30 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays with effect from next Saturday, 27 October. Now, there will be a half-hour programme every day. That programme—I am sure that the hon. Lady will agree—is making an invaluable contribution to the morale of those in Iraq and Kuwait.

As members of the Gulf Support Group know, comfort parcels are being prepared by the embassy in Baghdad, with assistance from the British community and Foreign and Commonwealth Office finance, for those held at strategic installations in Iraq. They include things such as chocolates, beer, cigarettes, books, toiletries and vitamins. We are working on other matters that were raised at last Saturday's meeting.

The hon. Lady described me as answering a question this morning in an embarrassed fashion. I most certainly was not embarrassed. I was present at Gatwick to welcome my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) and the 40 people whose return he had secured. It was a very moving occasion. Earlier in the summer, I had been to Gatwick to meet some of the wives and children who returned. It was obviously a tremendous relief to the individuals concerned and their families back home.

The return of those people and of more than 900 women and children whose evacuations we arranged earlier is simply not enough; it is only a beginning. About 1,400 British nationals are still trapped in the area. In Kuwait, there are about 600 people, at least 520 of whom are at liberty, but mostly they are in hiding. Some 80 people are known to be detained at sites chosen by the Iraqis. In Iraq, there are some 800 people, about 480 of whom are at liberty but unable to leave, and 306 are detained by the Iraqis at strategic sites. There is no official information on those detained at strategic sites, whom Saddam Hussein is using as a human shield, and our embassy has no access to them. The Iraqis move them from site to site, probably in a deliberate attempt to add to the uncertainty. Nevertheless, we have managed to locate some of them.

The Iraqi authorities' refusal to allow foreign men to leave the country—and, even worse, to hold them against their will at strategic sites, denying them consular access—is a flagrant and inhumane breach of international law. It constitutes an act of international terrorism on an unprecedented scale, and I have no doubt that it is designed with the purpose of intimidating and disorienting communities in the west.

On the diplomatic and political front, we have been immensely active in many areas since the earliest days of the crisis. The United Kingdom was instrumental in drafting many of the Security Council resolutions, which unequivocally condemned Iraq's holding of hostages. We are in touch, of course, with other Governments whose nationals are stuck in Iraq and Kuwait. We have made, and will continue to make at every opportunity, the most vigorous possible representations on behalf of those held to the Iraqi authorities in Baghdad and to the Iraqi ambassador in London.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The Minister said that the Government are in touch with other Governments. What advice has he had from the Government of France?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The hon. Gentleman will be aware of a statement made by the French Government, in response to an indication from the Iraqi Government that their nationals are to be released, that they are not in a position to negotiate on the release of their nationals. That is the French position, which has been publicly stated.

I am aware that some of those who are most directly involved in this tragedy would like the Government to send an emissary to negotiate with Saddam Hussein for the release of those whom he is holding. There is no possible basis for negotiation, and I have stated the French position. Anything less than complete withdrawal from Kuwait would leave Iraq with a reward for its invasion and for the taking of hostages. That would be in clear contravention of unanimously endorsed United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Nevertheless, we shall do everything in our power to bring about the early and safe release of those who are trapped in Iraq and Kuwait. We shall not rest until that is achieved. I have seen allegations—born no doubt of frustrations with which I deeply sympathise—that the Government are doing nothing. That is most certainly not the case.

Meanwhile, we continue to do everything we can to support those who are trapped and their families. In London we have established at the Foreign Office a centre to provide information and advice to relatives. Its staff continually update lists of the whereabouts of those held. Representatives of the Department of Social Security help to ensure that families quickly get the benefits to which they are entitled. I have already described to the hon. Lady and the House the new measures that we are taking.

In Kuwait, our ambassador and his staff organised the evacuation of several hundred British subjects to Baghdad.

[Mr. Lennox-Boyd]

He and his consul—the only two remaining staff—are managing to keep in touch with most members of the British community, both directly and through the wardens system. I am sure that the House and the hon. Lady will join me in congratulating Mr. Michael Weston and Mr. Larry Banks, and in expressing the warmest appreciation and support for the magnificent efforts that both they and the wardens are making to keep those links going.

Ms. Abbott: I join the Minister in congratulating the staff overseas. Earlier, he said that it was most unfair to say that the Government were not prepared to do anything. But he also said the Government were not prepared to negotiate. The fact that they are not prepared to negotiate means, in effect, that they are not prepared to do anything practical to get these people out.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: It is simply not true to say that we are not prepared to do anything practical. There is an unprecedented barrage of international pressure on Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait and to release all those who are being kept in that country against their will, and I have already explained the French position to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). All western countries are in agreement about that.

Ms. Abbott: The Minister refers to the French position. What about the Saudi position? From reports of what Saudi officials are saying, it seems to some of us that they can see a midway point—an arrangement whereby Saddam Hussein would be allowed to exit but to hold on to his access to the sea. At Question Time on Tuesday, that notion was squashed by the Prime Minister. There seems to be a negotiating position, but the Government do not want to address it.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The Saudi position is not clarified by the statement made two days ago, which was further corrected subsequently, and it does not, therefore, lead to any development on which I can comment.

I want to pay tribute to Mr. Harold Walker, our ambassador in Baghdad, and to his staff. The embassy continues to operate, but with difficulty. Staff are not permitted to travel outside Baghdad. They overcame Iraqi opposition to visit British detainees in the Mansour Melia hotel and are in contact with the rest of the British community in Baghdad. They are providing financial support to Britons who need it. With the involvement of the British community in Baghdad, they are, as I said earlier, organising comfort parcels for detainees.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington for giving the House the opportunity to debate this subject. We have had a useful exchange of views. The welfare of those detained in Iraq and Kuwait is at the forefront of our minds. I hope that my remarks will have shown that we are not merely deeply concerned and sympathetic but that we are doing everything that we possibly can to secure their release, and to provide support for their families in this country.

1.59 am

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I am not at all happy with the Minister's answer. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott) said, it is all very well to take the Government's view, but some of us—it is a minority, as I said to the Foreign Secretary at Question Time—think that there must come a time when we have to start talking, because there is no alternative to talking.

The position is not quite as simple as the Government make out. There is a history to it. At this point I must be personal: my father was one of the aides to Sir Percy Cox, the man who set up Kuwait, and he worked for Sir William Willcocks. He gave me Philip Graves's life of Sir Percy, from which it is clear that Kuwait was part of the Ottoman empire. That does not justify the actions of Saddam Hussein; I am merely saying that it is a grey area.

At the Labour party conference, there was a reception for the Labour Friends of Israel, at which Moshe Shahal —himself one of the 120,000 Iraqi Jews—said that, when he was being brought up in the building in Baghdad that is now the French embassy, he learned that all his contemporaries thought that Kuwait was part of Iraq. It is all not so simple as is being suggested.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington, I am deeply concerned about the hostages. I do not think that it can be said that policy takes over everything. What is the alternative to not using the diplomacy of talking? It is war, frankly. The prospect is appalling: every oilfield from Basra north to Kirkuc would be involved.

I am also concerned about the British forces. I am one of the few remaining Desert Rats in the House, having served in the Scots Greys, now the Scots Dragoon Guards. I was tank crew, and I feel for those people: I know their vulnerability. God knows, just putting on those suits in the desert heat msut be bad enough; but, once blood is shed, heaven knows what will happen in Jordan.

It is all very well for the Foreign Secretary to say that he has talked to President Mubarak and I have not. That is true—but what will happen to the Egyptian masses? As a very young Member of Parliament, I was summoned late at night to the house of the late President Nasser, and I shall always remember the force with which he impressed on me the dynamics behind Arab nationalism. If we do not talk, and once any shots are fired, what will happen there? It will explode—and I would not fancy King Husssein's chances much. Indeed, it may be very difficult for the Saudis.

When the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) comes back from Iraq saying that we ought to use diplomatic means, it is clear that he means the diplomatic means of talking. I know that this is an unpopular view, and I do not claim that it is held by more than a minority in the party, but some people—serious people—think that the time has come to begin talking as other countries have talked, even if it means breaking the consensus. I see my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington nodding. The French are taking a very different view, and I bet that French, Italian and German nationals will get out earlier than the British —assuming, that is, that peace is somehow maintained.

A fireman from Bo'ness, in the West Lothian area, is believed to have been taken off the British Airways plane and sent to Basra. Knowing people who are personally involved—as I am sure that the Minister does—brings home the fact that human situations are sometimes as important as wider policy, especially when one doubts whether that wider policy has much chance of long-term success.

It is all very well to put pressure on people; but people who are pressurised react as Londoners did in the blitz. What happened in Hamburg in 1943? The fact is that the bombing made people rally behind Hitler, although they were not supporters of the Nazis. It is a human reaction. Once we start thinking that there is any kind of military option, and start threatening people with it, we shall be in considerable difficulty—not least the hostages whom my hon. Friend has represented so ably tonight.

We must look again at the matter, in a completely different way. I know that I shall be told by some people, including members of my own party, that I am simply creating difficulties and showing weakness; but those who have had some experience of the Arab world——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at four minutes past Two o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 25 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

REDBRIDGE LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL
(By Order)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [24 October],

That this House doth agree with Lords in their Amendment, to leave out Clause 6.

Debate further adjourned till Tuesday 30 October.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (No. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [26 February],

That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 8 November.

Mr. Speaker: As the four private Bills set down for Second Reading have blocking motions, I propose to deal with them as a single group.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL
[Lords] (By Order)

Order for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 8 November.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL
(By Order)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [10 May],

That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 8 November.

SOUTHAMPTON RAPID TRANSIT BILL *[Lords]*
(By Order)

KILLINGHOLME GENERATING STATIONS (ANCILLARY POWERS) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 8 November.

Oral Answers to Questions

NATIONAL FINANCE

Manufacturing Output

1. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the prospects for manufacturing output in 1990.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. John Major): I shall be publishing a forecast of manufacturing output in 1990 with the autumn statement.

Mr. Morgan: Will the Chancellor confirm that, according to his officials, the manufacturing side of the British economy is now in recession? Will the right hon. Gentleman also give up his previous habit of trying to alter the definitions of expressions such as "recession", renaming it "technical recession", which we understand is the current ministerial sales line, just as he has done with "inflation", renaming that "headline inflation", with "convergence of inflation" in the Madrid conditions becoming "divergence of disinflation"? Does he accept that what industry now wants from the Government is some leadership out of recession so that just entering the exchange rate mechanism is not seen as the answer, because on its own that can be no more than putting on a gas mask full of carbon monoxide?

Mr. Major: I have rarely heard such a short point put at such length. I can certainly confirm that output is slowing and has been slowing over the past two or three months, as I have repeatedly said. Whether it is within the normal definition of "recession"—which is, of course, why my officials and subsequently I use that term—is a matter that we shall soon see. It is not entirely clear yet. It is conceivable that it is, but we must wait and see.

Mr. Oppenheim: Will my right hon. Friend remind the macho champions of manufacturing interests on the Opposition Benches—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."]—that in the past decade, manufacturing output in Britain rose faster than in any other EEC country, according to OECD figures, and that during the period of the previous Labour Government, manufacturing output fell?

Mr. Major: I can certainly confirm those OECD figures. I can also confirm that manufacturing investment has grown on an annual basis over the past decade, whereas that also fell during the period of the previous Labour Government.

Mr. Beith: Has the Chancellor noted the bleak report produced by the British chambers of commerce earlier this week? Recognising that the task of manufacturing industry will not be any easier in the early days of the ERM, will the right hon. Gentleman help it by seeing that we get more investment in skills and skill training and in transport for access to markets so that it can have some hope of increasing competitiveness?

Mr. Major: I read that survey with some interest. It has, of course, been only a recent survey and has not yet passed through a complete economic cycle. There are signs that some of the observations in that survey were a little overdone, but we must wait and see what happens in the

next few months. It is certainly consistent with the slowing down in the economy that we are seeing. That is a necessary part of the cycle. It has been predicted, it is expected and it is here, and the sooner we have it, the sooner we shall be through it and back to low inflation and growth again.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my right hon. Friend agree that wage restraint is needed from the very top of industry, but that it is failing to give the right lead? If industry is to become profitable, it is no good having 6 per cent. wage increases in the German car industry while Rover and other workers are getting 13 per cent. That is the way to ruin and to losing jobs, not the way to prosperity.

Mr. Major: I agree with my hon. Friend. He will recall that it was about a year ago, possibly in answer to one of his questions, that I first made the observation about pay affecting people at the top of industry as well as on the shop floor. That was true when we had that exchange a year ago, and it remains true today.

Mortgage Repayments

2. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the present number of people six to 12 months in arrears on their mortgage repayments.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John Maples): Figures published by the Council of Mortgage Lenders show that at end June 1990 there were 76,280 mortgage loans six to 12 months in arrears.

Mrs. Fyfe: Is the Minister aware that in the past six months more than 400,000 people were two to three months in arrears and well over 14,000 had their homes repossessed? Does he think that his 1 per cent. cut in interest rates will make much of a dent in those figures?

Mr. Maples: I am sure that any cut in interest rates will help people who, for that reason, are in trouble with their mortgages. While all of us feel a great deal of sympathy for people in difficulty with their mortgage payments, the problem should be kept in perspective. The level of repossessions in the year to 30 June was less than one third of 1 per cent. of all mortgages, and we should keep the problem in perspective.

Mr. Jack: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the great tributes to the Government's economic performance has been that mortgages have been readily available to people at prices that they can afford, which has encouraged the responsibility of home ownership? Will he do what he can to use his good offices to encourage the building societies to help fund the excellent debt advice services currently run by the Advice Services Alliance?

Mr. Maples: I shall take up my hon. Friend's second point first. As he probably knows, the Government already give a grant of £11 million to citizens advice bureaux. On his first point, it is worth recalling, when considering the figures, that during the past 11 years there have been 3·5 million additional home owners—more than ever before, and 3 million of whom have mortgages—and 900,000 additional mortgages have been taken out in the past two and a half years.

Mr. Winnick: Is the Minister aware of the number of people who, because they could not find rented accommodation, decided to buy a house, and were actively encouraged to do so by the Government and building societies, but who now find themselves—certainly in the west midlands and my district—in tremendous difficulties? A number of my constituents face the repossession of their homes, with the local authorities not always being able to help. Is the Minister further aware that those and millions of other people who are just able to cope with paying their mortgages do not have the benefit of the tax havens mentioned in *The Sunday Times* last Sunday? When will that loophole be closed? Why is it that time and again the rich are rewarded with the advantages of loopholes that other people cannot use?

Mr. Maples: If the hon. Gentleman is so worried about the unavailability of rented accommodation, perhaps he should not have had such a doctrinaire opposition to the various rent Acts and supported us when we tried to free that sector of the housing market. As for people having difficulties with their mortgages, as I said, that is certainly true and all hon. Members have a great deal of sympathy with such people. However, most arrears are sorted out and few short-term arrears turn into long-term arrears. The figures for repossession show that the total number of repossessions in the past 12 months has been 21,780, and in 1987 it was more, at 22,930. During the intervening period there have been nearly 1 million more mortgages. Perhaps the figures do not bear out what the hon. Gentleman said.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Will my hon. Friend consider what the position would have been if interest rates had not gone up last year, when house prices were going up at a rate of 20 or 30 per cent., particularly in the south-east and south-west, and the first-time buyer was being completely taken out of the market? Has he noticed that during the past year, house prices, particularly for the first-time buyer, have gone down by 10 per cent. in those districts?

Mr. Maples: My hon. Friend makes an extremely good point. There was no way that house prices could continue to rise at the 20 per cent. a year at which they were rising, which was damaging for potential home owners. Some adjustment was long overdue.

Child Poverty

3. **Mr. Leadbitter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met representatives of the Child Poverty Action Group to discuss the effects of the Government's policies on child poverty.

9. **Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met representatives of the Child Poverty Action Group to discuss the effects of the Government's policies on child poverty.

Mr. Major: I have not myself recently met representatives of the CPAG, although I am aware of their representations to my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary.

Mr. Leadbitter: Will the Chancellor consider that between 1979 and 1987, 1·5 million more children were living in families on half the average income; and that from 1987 child benefit was frozen, so its value in real terms this year had fallen by £1·35? Has he got his priorities right,

taking into account the fact that people earning £70,000 a year have had tax cuts 200 times greater than families living on £5,000 a year?

Mr. Major: There are two points in the hon. Gentleman's remarks to which I want to refer. It is relevant that the total amount of money now available for child benefit has risen from something under £2 billion 10 years ago to something over £4½ billion this year—a substantial amount.

Of course, the missing element in the hon. Gentleman's equation about average income is important: the extent to which average incomes generally have risen dramatically and to which the impact of direct taxation has fallen correspondingly. On the greater level—this is what lies behind the hon. Gentleman's question about family benefits in total—expenditure has risen from well under £2 billion when we took office to well over £5 billion today.

Mr. Ralph Howell: Is my right hon. Friend aware that it is no longer acceptable to take tax from people who earn less than a third of the national average wage to give child benefit to the richest people in the country? How much money would be saved if only those earning under £20,000 a year received child benefit?

Mr. Major: I cannot immediately give my hon. Friend an answer. It would certainly be a substantial amount, but child benefit is recognised as a universal benefit paid to the mother, and we have no intention of changing that arrangement.

Mr. Boateng: Will the Chancellor explain how it is that a Government who purport to put the family at the heart of their policies have presided over an increase by more than a half of families living on or below the poverty line, who now number 6·2 million? How does that square with the party of the family? How does he explain a situation in which targeting the first-born is seen as some sort of a substitute for coherent family policy? There may be an historical precedent for that, but it did not do Pharaoh any good and it will not do the Prime Minister any either.

Mr. Major: We return to the definitional point with which we commenced Question Time. What the hon. Gentleman refers to as the poverty line is the level at which social security benefits start. Because we have extended them much more dramatically than the previous Government, more people automatically fall within the statistics.

Miss Emma Nicholson: Does my right hon. Friend agree that under the Conservatives payments to the family have risen by more than a quarter while under the previous Labour Government they fell by 8 per cent?

Mr. Major: I certainly agree with my hon. Friend, except that the figures are, I think, a little more favourable to the present Government than she said.

Taxation

5. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of gross earnings a married couple with one earner on average earnings, with two children, paid in tax, treating child benefit as negative income tax, in 1978-79 and in 1989-90.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Francis Maude): A one-earner couple with two children, on average male earnings saw the proportion of gross earnings paid in income tax fall from 14·4 per cent. in 1978-79 to 12·3 per cent. in 1989-90.

Mr. Caborn: I thank the Minister for that answer, but it would be good if he answered the question on the Order Paper. Does he agree that the information given by the Library shows clearly that in 1979 the tax referred to in the question that the Minister has not answered was 35·2 per cent. and is now 36·6 per cent. and that that represents for the average family an increase in taxation of £300 a year? Does not that underline what many are saying—that the Government are the Government of high taxation?

Mr. Maude: I answered the hon. Gentleman's question. He may have asked the wrong question but I gave the right answer. The level of taxation for average households has fallen considerably. A further fact, of which he may not be aware but which is worth sharing with him, is that real net income for the average household has risen by 34 per cent.

Mr. Paice: Does my hon. Friend agree that, despite massive reductions in income tax rates, we have seen over the past decade a massive increase in income tax yields? The top 10 per cent. of taxpayers now contribute nearly 30 per cent. of the yield as opposed to 24 per cent. when we came to power. That demonstrates that tax reductions help the country to find the money to spend on social services.

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend makes the point well. Very high tax rates provide no benefit at all for the country. They do not result in extra tax yields but drive successful people who are on high incomes overseas to be taxed elsewhere. That is of no benefit to anyone. The only other thing that they do is to appease socialist spite and envy.

Mr. John Smith: The Minister must know that one person's tax dodge is another's tax burden. Is not it time that tax dodges by a wealthy minority, such as those publicised in *The Sunday Times* last Sunday, were brought to an end? That question was put to the Economic Secretary and, significantly, was not answered. Why do the Government permit the easy avoidance of tax by a wealthy few using offshore trusts while ordinary families have to pay every single penny that is imposed on them?

Mr. Maude: The short point is that, above all, what creates tax avoidance and made the tax avoidance industry in the 1970s one of the most successful industries in the country is a high level of taxation and complicated tax laws. Of course, there may be a problem here and we are looking closely at it. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman thinks that the right way to deal with such complicated international matters is to leap to instant conclusions, I am afraid that we part company with him.

Mr. Conway: Is it the case that four out of five families with children of school age are direct tax payers? If that is so, will my hon. Friend tell the House how their family lot could possibly be improved by the high taxation policies of the Labour party?

Mr. Maude: When a party proposes reckless increases in spending, as the Labour party has, the only ways in which that can be paid for is either by increasing taxation,

which would hit precisely the families to which my hon. Friend refers, or by borrowing. We all know the disastrous effects that that had in the 1970s.

6. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of non-oil gross domestic product he forecasts taxes and national insurance contributions will represent in 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. Friend will publish a forecast of tax receipts in the autumn statement.

Mr. Michie: In view of the fact that last year, in 1989-90, the proportion of non-oil GDP taken in taxes and national insurance contributions was 36·75 per cent., which compares with 34 per cent. in 1978-79, whatever the Government say by huffing and puffing at the polls, will the Minister now admit that the Conservative party is the party of high taxation?

Mr. Maude: That is an odd contention in view of the much lower levels of taxation that now prevail. The Government fund their spending honestly by taxation and not by borrowing. When the previous Labour Government left office they had a PSBR of no less than 5 per cent. of gross domestic product. We have chosen to reverse that and to raise honestly the money that the Government spend, by taxation. If Labour's tax regime had remained in force in the way that it was in 1979, the tax burden would now have increased by £12 billion a year.

Sir William Clark: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Opposition's promises on benefits and public spending mean that the proportion of taxation taken by any Labour Government would be vastly increased, to the detriment of ordinary taxpayers as well as the rich?

Mr. Maude: That would be the inevitable consequence. Such reckless promises—of which the Labour Front Bench cannot even keep count—would have to be funded either by higher levels of taxation on everybody or by borrowing, which would be disastrous.

Dr. Marek: The Financial Secretary is wrong if he believes that Labour is the party of low taxation—*[Laughter.]* Will he confirm that the percentage of GDP taken in taxation has been much higher during this Conservative Government's years in office compared with the halcyon days when Labour was in office—*[Laughter.]* Oh yes, the figures are there to prove that, and the Financial Secretary does the House no good by trying to deny them. When will he tighten up the offshore tax concessions that have proliferated during the past 10 years? When will he bring down taxation for the British people to what it was in the 1970s?

Mr. Maude: It is good fun to be lectured by a member of the Labour Front Bench for being a party of high taxation, compared with the Labour party's wonderful history of low taxation—although under Labour taxation levels rose to 83 per cent. and 98 per cent. in the pound. If that is low taxation, thank heavens Labour never went in for high taxation.

Government Expenditure

7. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest forecast for the share of gross domestic product to be taken by central Government expenditure.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): The forecast for the unadjusted ratio of general Government expenditure, excluding privatisation proceeds, to gross domestic product published in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report" is 39¼ per cent. The central Government component of that was 29¼ per cent. of gross domestic product.

Mr. Carrington: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that a substantial proportion of the gross domestic product taken by central Government is spent by local authorities, and that that spending has recently risen dramatically? Will he further confirm that it is an outrageous and unacceptable burden on ordinary people, which must not be allowed to continue?

Mr. Lamont: My hon. Friend is right. Local authorities in England this year increased their current spending by 13½ per cent. That is quite unjustified. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has made it clear that the Government intend to make vigorous use of their community charge capping powers if that continues.

My hon. Friend will be aware that we have introduced a new local authority capital finance regime, which we believe will help to deal with the problem of overspending on capital. My hon. Friend was right to say that it is a serious problem.

Mr. Douglas: To meet that expenditure, what percentage of revenue does the Minister expect to come from oil revenues? As there has been a dramatic rise in the price per barrel—it is touching $40—can we expect an increase in revenue that might, perhaps, touch £5 billion?

Mr. Lamont: The hon. Gentleman takes a special interest in energy matters, so he will be aware that the revenue from North sea oil is a small proportion of total tax revenue. I speak from memory, but I think that it is about 2 or 3 per cent. The level of oil revenue would be affected if there were to be a sharp rise in the oil price, but it would not have a significant effect on total tax revenue.

Inflation

8. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current level of inflation.

Mr. Major: I expect there to be a substantial reduction over the coming year.

Mr. MacKay: As there is a clear need for pay restraint, does my right hon. Friend agree that those chairmen and chief executives of major companies who received highly publicised and spectacular pay rises last year—which, by and large, were supported because they were linked to increased profits—must equally accept reductions in their salaries this year, which should be equally spectacular if their profits are suitably reduced?

Mr. Major: As I said earlier, if there is a need for wage restraint throughout industry to ensure greater competitiveness, it must apply at the top as well as at the bottom. I am happy to reiterate that.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: Does the Chancellor realise that we are now two years into the counter-inflationary strategy of relying on high interest rates? Does he realise that, by increasing the retail prices index—which is what high interest rates have done, through mortgage interest rates, quite apart from the other factors—the Government are now relying on exhortation, and that exhortation will not be enough as the RPI rises?

Mr. Major: The right hon. Gentleman makes a better case against the way in which we measure prices than against the policy that will bring inflation down.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the most sensitive guides to the direction that inflation is taking is not the latest RPI figure but the movement of monetary aggregates? Will he confirm that there has been a steady decline in monetary aggregates over the past six months—particularly in MO but also in M4? Does he agree that that is a good sign that he has got inflation under control and that the Government's policies are working at last?

Mr. Major: I strongly agree with my hon. Friend's view. The reduction in MO has occurred over the past six months or so and the reduction in broad money has continued throughout this year in each and every month since January.

Mr. Flannery: Like his predecessor, the Chancellor is constantly explaining to us that he is trying to bring down the rate of inflation. Why does he talk as though it was an act of God that caused inflation? Why does not he admit that the Government did it? Why is it that, with the bonus of North sea oil, which no other country in Europe has enjoyed, our inflation rate is higher than those of our European counterparts—in some cases twice as high?

Mr. Major: At no stage have I placed the blame where the hon. Gentleman suggests I have. The problem that created inflation was excessive demand, as I have repeatedly stated. That is accepted by commentators and it is broadly accepted by hon. Members on both sides of the House. As a result of monetary policy, demand is falling away, and inflation will come down as well.

Investment

10. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Governor of the Bank of England to discuss levels of investment.

Mr. Maples: My right hon. Friend meets the Governor regularly and discusses a range of issues.

Mr. Coombs: Will my right hon. Friend confirm not only that investment in this country has risen by 40 per cent. in the past three years but that in the past 10, investment in the United Kingdom has risen faster than in any other industrialised country except for Japan? Will he also confirm that, on current trends, investment in the United Kingdom economy in 1990 will be no less than 40 per cent. greater, in real terms, than it was in the so-called halcyon days of the previous Labour Government?

Mr. Maples: My hon. Friend is right. Business investment in the past three years has risen by 44 per cent., and in the 1980s, it rose faster than in any other G7 country except Japan.

Mr. Cousins: When the Minister meets the Governor of the Bank of England, will he be reinforcing the view of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that there is a deal-making culture in the City that hurts industry and investment?

Mr. Maples: That is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: When my hon. Friend meets the Governor of the Bank of England, will he discuss with him the fact that the greater proportion of foreign investment coming into the EEC comes to Britain, as opposed to the continental countries?

Mr. Maples: My hon. Friend is right. Under this Government and over the past 10 years, Britain has proved an extremely attractive place for foreign investment.

Unemployment

11. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the effect of high interest rates on the level of unemployment.

14. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the effect of low output growth in 1990 on the level of unemployment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A period of high interest rates and slow output growth is necessary to defeat inflation. The precise effect of this on unemployment depends crucially on whether wages growth slows as well.

Mr. Thompson: Is the Minister aware that the principal reason for the present large number of bankruptcies is high interest rates? What words of comfort can he give to firms teetering on the brink of collapse?

Mr. Lamont: As my right hon. Friend has repeatedly made clear, a slowdown is necessary so that we can get on top of inflation, and continuing high inflation would do immense damage to all companies, and it is essential for their prospects that we get inflation down.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Harry Cohen. Is he here? [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] The hon. Gentleman may not have heard the whole answer, but he may ask his supplementary question.

Mr. Cohen: Does the Minister believe that the rise in unemployment—by 36,000, in the south-east alone—is a sign of a successful economic policy? Will not unemployment increase enormously in the next two years as a result of the Government's policy of slowing down growth and output because they had overheated the economy in the first place? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It was not too bad.

Mr. Lamont: I was going to congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his quick thinking, but he has merely repeated what he has said many times before. It is noticeable that this is the first time for many months that Opposition Members have mentioned unemployment. They never mentioned it when we had 36 months of a

continuing fall in unemployment. They never acknowledge that we still have unemployment which is below the European Community average, that we have a good rate of growth in jobs and that our record compares well with those of other countries and with that of the Labour party.

Mr. Gale: Is not it as true now as it was under the previous Labour Administration that one man's pay increase is another man's price increase, that unearned pay increases are a major contributing factor to inflation, and that that is the real cause of unemployment?

Mr. Lamont: It is certainly true that excessive wage claims have a considerable bearing on unemployment. They can cause unemployment, and the unions must judge that. I think that they have to stand by the results of their decisions. They are not my words, but those of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith).

Mr. Butterfill: Does my right hon. Friend agree that our successful trade figures for several months now give the lie to the fact that we have poor upward growth and demonstrate that successful British companies are doing well? Is not that reinforced by the fact that Norton is taking over a West German company, and does not it show that British industry should not be written off, as it is by the Opposition?

Mr. Lamont: In recent months exports have been growing faster than imports, and last month's trade figures were the best for three years. The slowdown in the economy is having a beneficial effect on the current pound, as well as being designed to bring about a reduction in the rate of inflation.

Inflation

12. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many countries in the European Economic Community currently have a higher inflation rate than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maples: Two, Sir.

Mr. McAvoy: Does the Minister accept that the so-called Madrid conditions are a sham, especially in view of the Government's failure to get the rate of inflation down before entry into the exchange rate mechanism, and that the Madrid conditions were all abandoned in time for the Tory party conference? Is not it true that Britain has one of the highest rates of inflation in Europe because the Government are totally inept at running the economy? Without sound policies on investment and training, entry into the ERM alone will not undo the damage caused by the Government.

Mr. Maples: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister have made it perfectly clear that the Madrid conditions have been fulfilled—*[Laughter.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maples: I am going to Madrid the weekend after next, but I am happy to say that unless the Madrid conditions have been framed and put in the Prado I shall not be paying them any attention on that visit.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Does my hon. Friend agree that high interest rates are highly inflationary, that they are particularly damaging to investment and that they are very damaging to manufacturing industry, which in my view is the sole non-inflationary creation of a sound economy? What does my hon. Friend intend to do to help manufacturing industry, which is so important?

Mr. Maples: We have a battle on our hands against inflation. Raising interest rates is an essential ingredient of that battle. The way that this country calculates the retail prices index considerably distorts the figure. The underlying rate of inflation in the United Kingdom is 8·3 per cent. which has to be compared with the European average of 5·4 per cent. If we look at the average over the past seven years, we find that inflation in the EEC was 5·1 per cent. and that in the United Kingdom it was 5·9 per cent. The difference, therefore, is not all that great.

Mrs. Beckett: Does the Minister recall that recently the Chancellor of the Exchequer told Brian Walden that he wished the Government to be judged on their record? Since the Government's record shows that they invented the tax and price index and then abandoned it, returned to the retail prices index and abandoned that, too, and adopted the underlying rate of inflation and then redefined it, is there any significance in the Government ceasing to refer to the underlying rate of inflation, or is there no significance in anything that they say?

Mr. Maples: Whatever problems we may have with inflation, there is nothing that we can learn from the Labour party—*[Interruption.]* The Opposition do not like this bit. When they were in office the average rate of inflation was 15·4 per cent. and the lowest was 7·9 per cent. The average rate of inflation under this Government has been 7·9 per cent. Our average, therefore, is the same as their lowest. Over the past six years, the underlying rate of inflation in Britain was 4·9 per cent. The lowest rate of inflation under Labour was 7·9 per cent., so there is nothing that we can learn from the Opposition.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: What would be the effect on inflation of the 182 promises made by the Labour party in "Meet the Challenge: Make the Change"?

Mr. Maples: My hon. Friend makes a good point. The answer is that inflation would increase dramatically. During the past few years the Opposition have constantly told us to cut interest rates when that was inappropriate and to raise public expenditure. In the not-so-recent past they urged us to run a substantial public sector borrowing requirement. Had we taken any of those measures, inflation would be far worse than it is today.

Interest Rates

13. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next expects to meet representatives from the Building Societies Association to discuss the current level of interest rates.

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend the Economic Secretary met the Building Societies Association yesterday to discuss a number of issues.

Mr. Grant: Will the Minister confirm that he will have to reduce the mortgage interest rate by another 1 per cent. if the large number of people whose mortgages are

assessed annually are to have any serious relief? Will he also confirm that unless there is expenditure on research, development and the infrastructure, any benefits that might be created by a reduction in interest rates will be lost? Does the Minister acknowledge that it is the result of his Government's ineptitude that home owners have to bear these massive mortgage increases?

Mr. Maude: On the first point, it is for the lenders to decide when and how to reduce mortgage interest rates for borrowers. As for any further reductions in interest rates —*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the Minister please carry on?

Mr. Maude: I am not used to this degree of acclamation, but I think that I could get used to it. As for future cuts in interest rates, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, there will be no further cuts until it is safe to do so.

Mr. Brazier: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is noticeable that most of today's questions, such as this one, from the Opposition relate either to inflation or to interest rates but never to both? Will my hon. Friend confirm that whether one is inside or outside the exchange rate mechanism there is no soft option for curbing inflation and that it is dishonest of the Opposition to try to pretend that there is?

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend is entirely right. If we want to cure inflation, there is no alternative to keeping interest rates as high as are needed, getting demand down and keeping a downward pressure on demand. In that way we will secure the reduction in inflation that is essential if we are to return to the periods of sustained growth that we saw during the 1980s. We are confident that the Government's tough policy of maintaining interest rates uncomfortably high is working and will show its reward next year in a substantial fall in inflation.

Investment

15. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest OECD forecasts for investment growth in the United Kingdom and Germany in 1990.

16. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest OECD forecasts for investment growth in the United Kingdom and Germany in 1990.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Over the past five years, total United Kingdom investment has increased by 40 per cent. double the rate seen in Germany. The OECD's latest forecast for fixed investment in 1990 was for a fall of 0·5 per cent. in the United Kingdom and a rise of 6·8 per cent. in Germany.

Mr. Morley: Does the Minister agree that it is a disgrace that we are bottom of the league in terms of manufacturing investment and that we are seeing a fall of 1 per cent. while other European countries, such as socialist France, are seeing an increase of 6·5 per cent. in manufacturing investment? What does he intend to do about that?

Mr. Lamont: The hon. Gentleman obviously did not listen to my reply, which showed that our investment record compares well with those of other countries in Europe. Britain has enjoyed an investment boom. Our investment record compares extremely well with that of Germany. That is the point that the hon. Gentleman raised in his question, but he failed to take in the answer.

Ms. Armstrong: The Minister knows that our investment in manufacturing fell by 6 per cent. between the first and second quarters. Is he going to ensure that manufacturing investment and investment on the supply side are a central part of the strategy of ensuring that our economy and inflation improve over the next few years? Areas such as mine need more manufacturing investment. What is he going to do to support them?

Mr. Lamont: Any slowdown in investment that is likely to happen as a result of the general slowdown in the economy happens from a high base. As I have explained to the House, we have enjoyed strong growth in investment —far stronger than many of our European competitors.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Brown: While welcoming the release of a number of hostages from Iraq earlier this week, may I ask my right hon. Friend to make it clear that the Government's and the world's determination to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait remains undiminished?

The Prime Minister: I gladly respond to my hon. Friend. Of course, we are glad to see more hostages home. We are glad for them and their families. Their return brings to 900 the total number of British nationals who have come back from Iraq and Kuwait so far. We are particularly concerned about those who are left—some 1,400—who have been taken totally contrary to international law. They and their families are suffering and for that we should totally and utterly condemn Saddam Hussein. We stand unequivocally by the United Nations decision that the whole of the territory should be restored to Kuwait, Saddam Hussein must withdraw, the legitimate Government must be restored, the hostages should be released and compensation should be paid to the people of Kuwait for the terrible damage done to their territory.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister join me in offering unreserved praise for the humanitarian efforts of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), especially when there are common objectives on both sides of the House and the right hon. Gentleman has undertaken his successful efforts without giving any comfort to Saddam Hussein but giving unending comfort to sick people and their loved ones?

The Prime Minister: I thought that the right hon. Gentleman had already heard me do that. We welcome the return of the hostages whose release was secured by my

right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath): their release brings the total number of those who have returned from Baghdad and Kuwait to some 900. We very much regret that more than 1,400 people are still there, as I am sure my right hon. Friend does, too.

Mr. Marlow: Popular attitudes and aspirations change. Wise political leaders like my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister respond to those changes. In the 1970s, she encapsulated them; in the 1980s, she gave effect to them. What is her assessment, her perception, of the aspirations and attitudes of the British people for the 1990s? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It may take a little time, but let us hear the Prime Minister's reply.

The Prime Minister: To continue to rise to the responsibilities of defending freedom staunchly, as we have always done in the past; to carry on with the pound sterling, and maintain the current Parliament's powers with regard to the economy and monetary policy; and to continue with policies that have resulted in the creation of more jobs, more wealth and a higher standard than ever before—policies that enabled us yesterday to announce the distribution of a further £5 billion to families with young children and old people.

Q3. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Smith: What action does the Prime Minister propose to halt the destruction of our countryside—especially in areas of outstanding beauty such as the Vale of Glamorgan, where developers propose to build no fewer than six golf courses, four large hotels, three new town settlements and a racing track? This madness must stop.

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, that is a matter for the local planning authorities. As he is also aware, we must try to find a balance between the beauties of the countryside and the importance of providing jobs for the people.

Mr. Robert Hicks: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is right to give every encouragement to the strengthening of the rural economy, so that we can maintain the social stability and the fabric of the countryside as we all know it? In that context, does she also agree that farmers—as the managers of the countryside—have a specific responsibility, and that they will be unable to undertake that responsibility if real reductions in their income result? I am thinking particularly of hill farmers, and those in the beef and sheep sectors.

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that the preservation of both the rural countryside and the rural economy is vital. Much of the landscape that we seek to conserve, however, was created by farmers in the first place. There is nothing contradictory about wanting both to conserve the environment and to look after farmers.

I agree with my hon. Friend that it is particularly important to look after the fortunes of hill farmers, and we have tried to do that. We pay hill livestock compensatory allowances of more than £125 million a year, and our total support for the sheep and beef sectors is running at about £750 million to £800 million this year, compared with about £450 million last year. We are trying to make up for the very difficult time that many farmers have had this year.

Q4. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hinchliffe: Is the Prime Minister aware that the £5 per week increase in income support payments to care home residents announced yesterday will do nothing to stem the tide of closures and evictions that are affecting vast numbers of elderly and handicapped people? Is the right hon. Lady further aware that the safety net once provided by local council homes is no longer available to many of those people because they, too, have been closed as a consequence of Government policy? Has not the Government's exercise in free market community care been a disaster for vast numbers of elderly and disabled people, who are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society?

The Prime Minister: Yesterday's announcement represents a £5 billion increase in all, which is a fantastic amount—made possible by the Government's successful economic policies. As to residential care, the Government are spending, through the taxpayer, £100 for every £1 spent under Labour.

Q5. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Hicks: In acknowledging, rightly, that only three out of 10 absent fathers pay maintenance, does my right hon. Friend think it disgraceful that seven out of 10 absent parents, usually fathers, make no contribution to their children's welfare, and in so doing impose an intolerable financial burden on the state and cause untold misery for their neglected families? Although I welcome the forthcoming White Paper designed to overcome that problem, will my right hon. Friend ensure that the pressure groups that ask for legislation do not cause those proposals to be watered down?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Fathers may sometimes walk out on their families, but they must not be allowed to walk out on their financial responsibilities. If they do, conscientious families have to meet not only the cost of looking after their own children but of caring for the children of those who have walked out on their responsibilities. We shall not water down the White Paper. The people in question must make some proper payment towards the cost of caring for the children whom they left behind.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Prime Minister intend to meet today the farmers from all over the United Kingdom who have come to London to lobby? That demonstration began in Llanrwst in my constituency. The right hon. Lady has already answered a question on agricultural policy, but does she understand that as long as the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Government policy

support a 30 per cent. reduction in farm support in the GATT talks, that will undermine any Government proposals for saving agriculture in the hills?

The Prime Minister: I have already indicated some of the help given to hill farmers. We acknowledge that it is vital that they should stay farming in the hills. In addition to the support that I earlier described, we recently announced a higher rate of suckler cow premium for hill producers. Next year, we shall pay a special supplement to hill sheep farmers. The 30 per cent. reduction in subsidy in the Uruguay round is effective from 1986, so it takes into account much that has already been done. I believe that the hon. Gentleman would agree that where heavy subsidies are given to small, inefficient farms on the continent, that undermines the opportunities for our larger family farmers to be efficient and to secure a larger market. It is important that they should have a better chance of being very efficient, so that they may enjoy a bigger share of the food market.

Q6. **Mr. Sayeed:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Sayeed: Will my right hon. Friend find time today to study the Audit Commission report on day surgeries? She will note that it clearly demonstrates disparities in efficiency between authorities. Does my right hon. Friend agree that organisations spending billions of pounds of public money have a duty not only to determine best practice but to implement it?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. The Audit Commission has done an extremely good job on the education and health services. The report that came out today is particularly interesting. It shows that different district health authorities vary very much in the efficiency with which they use their resources, particularly with regard to day surgery. It points out that if all health authorities brought their day surgery up to the level of the best 25 per cent., 186,000 more patients could be treated at no extra cost. That would help enormously to reduce waiting lists. It would not require any more money, just better use of the money that they already have. Indeed, we have already given a great deal more money to the health service. In the past three years, it has gone up from £24 billion to £26 billion to £29 billion—far better than the Labour party achieved during its time in government.

Q7. **Mrs. Heal:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Heal: As the Prime Minister has said that there are incontestable signs that the economy is working in the way in which the Government intended it to, does she gain any satisfaction from the comprehensive report published this week by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce which shows that industries everywhere, including the west midlands, are already in severe recession?

The Prime Minister: Where we had inflation in the economy—where the extra money supply was going not into extra growth but into extra prices—it was vital that we squeezed it out. The report from the Association of British Chambers of Commerce shows that we were entirely justified in reducing the interest rate from 15 per cent. to 14 per cent. at the precise time when we did, and I should have thought that Opposition Members would have had the integrity to admit it.

Mr. Fry: Will my right hon. Friend turn her attention to the plight of British agriculture and agree that, basically, it is the fault of the monstrous common agricultural policy, which was devised and is administered by the Commission in Brussels? Is not it time to point out to Mr. Delors that his proposal earlier this week that the unelected Commission will take over all tax, environmental and employment law will be totally rejected by her Government?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend knows that my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food battles nobly for British farmers. We object to discrimination in favour of small farmers on the continent, for many of whom farming is not their livelihood, and against British farmers, who have family farms much bigger than those on the continent and a high standard of efficiency. Those with a high standard of efficiency should have a bigger share of the market for food, and therefore should get bigger and better incomes.

Business of the House

3.32 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): Will the Leader of the House tell us the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): Yes, Sir. The business of the House will be as follows:

MONDAY 29 OCTOBER AND TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER—Consideration of Lords amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill.

WEDNESDAY 31 OCTOBER—There will be a debate on noise abatement and the environment, on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

THURSDAY 1 NOVEMBER—It will be proposed that the House will meet for prorogation.

The House may be asked to consider any Lords messages which may be received, and any other business as necessary.

Dr. Cunningham: As the Prime Minister is always anxious to address the House on European Community matters, may we have an assurance that she will make a statement on her return from the European summit next week?

Will the Leader of the House respond to requests from all parts of the House for the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to be ready to make a statement to the House before prorogation if at any time there are major changes in the serious situation in the Gulf?

May we have a statement from the Secretary of State for Energy on the report of the Cullen inquiry into the Piper Alpha tragedy in the North sea? As that report will have important lessons for not only that tragedy but the continuing safety of operations in the North sea, and as we understand that it is now in the hands of the Secretary of State for Energy, can we have an oral statement to the House before prorogation?

On Monday and Tuesday next week, the House is being asked to consider no fewer than 436 amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill. That alone shows the mess that that legislation is in following its consideration in the House and in the other place. Can we at least be assured that the House will have an early opportunity to vote on two important issues in it? First, I again invite the Leader of the House to ensure that we can have a free vote on the dog registration scheme, so that the real will of the House of Commons can be expressed. Secondly, can we have a convenient vote on the proposals for the Nature Conservancy Council, which are also controversial?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: On the hon. Gentleman's first point, as he knows, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister generally makes a statement to the House on her return from such meetings, but I shall bring his request to her attention.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made a statement to the House yesterday, but I understand why the hon. Gentleman remains concerned about the matter, and I shall bring his request to my right hon. Friend's attention.

The Cullen report on Piper Alpha is in the hands of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. I understand that it is a substantial document. My right hon. Friend is arranging for it to be published and will make a statement in due course.

The hon. Gentleman draws an uncharacteristically misguided conclusion from the fact that there are 436 amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill for consideration—*[Interruption.]* It is a lot, but the amendments show the extent to which the Government, in their consideration of this matter in another place, have been willing to respond sensibly to sensible discussions.

I agree that the two items to which the hon. Gentleman referred, particularly dog registration, require consideration. If the House is able to handle the rest of the legislation reasonably expeditiously, it is obviously desirable that those matters be considered at a reasonable hour. I think that that issue can best be discussed further through the usual channels.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): In his significant evidence to the inquiry by the Select Committee on Procedure into the workings of the Select Committee system, my right hon. and learned Friend made the significant proposal that Select Committees should, wherever possible, attempt to reach a conclusion. In response, the Select Committee concluded that the subject of science and technology was too important a matter to be absent from the agenda of the House of Commons.

The Select Committee made the interesting proposal that two Members of the House should be added to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology and that that Committee should be made into a Joint Committee on that subject. How soon does my right hon. and learned Friend expect to respond to that extraordinarily interesting and important suggestion? How soon may we expect to debate this equally interesting report?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I must admit that I approach with some hesitation a question that starts from the premise that I have been giving significant evidence about something. I have noticed this proposal in the report of the Select Committee on Procedure, but I have not yet had time to study it. I know of my hon. Friend's interest in this matter, and I shall study the report with all the more care because of that.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Will the Leader of the House ascertain whether there will be time next week for a debate on what appears to be a totally novel development in the management of the health service? Hospitals—the name of the one announced was Guy's hospital in Southwark—are now sending their nurses and doctors, who have been trained for and paid for here and have been engaged here, to work in hospitals abroad during their time of contract to the NHS. In that case, they are being sent to a military hospital in Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, as we now know that there will be an Adjournment debate on Wednesday on an environmental subject, will the Leader of the House tell us whether that betokens a welcome change, in that there will be a regular annual occasion, on a more formal basis, for proper debates on the state of the environment? Shall we not have to rely on the occasional allocation of spare time because such debates will be a built-in part of our agenda?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: On the first point, I am afraid that I cannot comment on the substance of what the hon. Gentleman says and I cannot offer him the prospect of a debate on that topic in the few days remaining of this Session. However, I will bring the matter to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

On the environmental matter, the hon. Gentleman should be content to count his blessings for the week ahead; we can see how we get on thereafter.

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): Does my right hon. and learned Friend feel that there is a hope of having a debate next week on the plight of the hostages in the middle east? I have a constituent who is in that unfortunate position, and who is not a guest, but a hostage of Iraq. When I read in the papers that the French are sending mail through the diplomatic bag and are allowing families to telephone French hostages on a freephone service to Iraq, I wonder whether we are doing sufficient. Can my right hon. and learned Friend find time for a debate on that matter?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will have heard my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs making a statement on that and other matters yesterday. He will have told the House, as is the position, that the welfare of British people in Iraq and in Kuwait, as well as the welfare of those still held hostage in the near east, is one of his first and continuing concerns. One must recollect that the plight of the hostages in Iraq and in Kuwait is the consequence of the gross misbehaviour of the Government of Iraq. I will bring my hon. Friend's specific concern to the attention of my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Robert Parry (Liverpool, Riverside): The Leader of the House will have seen early-day motion 1453, which was tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan).

[That this House applauds the Right honourable Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup for helping to secure the release of some British hostages from Iraq; calls on the Prime Minister to publicly thank and congratulate her Right honourable Friend; and urges her to maximise diplomatic pressure on the Iraqi authorities for the release of all hostages, of whatever nationality.]

If the Government had made official representations on behalf of the very sick and the aged, Mr. Ron Duffy might still be alive. Will the Leader of the House ask the Prime Minister whether she believes in the statement made by Winston Churchill many years ago:

"To jaw-jaw is better than to war-war"?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is difficult to dissent from the quotation rightly attributed to Winston Churchill. One of its consequences is that unprovoked naked aggression such as that committed by the Government of Iraq is wholly to be condemned by either standard. On early-day motion 1453, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in his statement yesterday made it clear that we welcome the release of the British nationals who have been released, and we look for more.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Could we have a debate shortly about a daft EC draft directive on birds? For many years, those of us who live in the countryside have known that there are three kinds of birds: protected birds, game birds and pests. As the Italians and the French slaughter all their birds indiscriminately in what the French call "la chasse", the EC directive will prevent us from culling pests such as wood pigeons in a sensible way. Can my right hon. and learned Friend assure all those in the countryside that we take these matters seriously, that this is an issue where national sovereignty should be paramount and that we will not allow ourselves to be run over by yet another daft EC directive?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend may seek to draw constitutional implications that are a shade wider than is deserved by the ornithological subtleties which he is discussing. However, I shall bring his point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Leader of the House aware that he has decided to close down Parliament for this Session five hours before I got No. 1 to the Home Office? Is he aware that the question asked for free television licences for all old-age pensioners? I have a suggestion for the right hon. and learned Gentleman. He reckons that he has power, and he is supposed to be the deputy Prime Minister. Why does not he get the proposal into the next Queen's Speech? We will guarantee to support it and to get it through in 24 hours.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Had I known that we were closing the House down five hours before the hon. Gentleman had a question to pose, it would have enhanced my enthusiasm for that proposition; nevertheless, he has taken the opportunity to bring this issue to the attention of the House. The answer to his argument is a familiar one—that the cost of any such concession would have to be borne by other licence holders. That is one of the questions which is never addressed by those who advance the argument for free licences.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): On the announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport about the central London rail study, will my right hon. and learned Friend invite my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to come forward shortly with proposals on the public transport element of the London assessment studies, so that London south of the river can benefit from the same increased investment in public transport which is now happily being given to London north of the river.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I will bring my hon. Friend's point, understandably put forward on behalf of his constituents, to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, but I cannot promise that he will respond in the course of the next few days.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Will the Leader of the House please arrange for an early debate on the extortionate rates of interest charged by many licensed moneylenders? In the Leicester area, and no doubt in other parts of the country, interest rates are pushing towards an annual percentage rate of an incredible 2,000 per cent. Is he aware that those moneylenders batten on to the very poor, usually the unemployed, and always on to people who cannot get loans from banks or building societies? Will the Government deal with this disgrace at once, or at least allow the House to debate it?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. and learned Gentleman has done a modest service to the cause he advocates by publicising it in the House today. He will know that that matter has preoccupied Governments for many years. I was responsible for introducing the Consumer Credit Act as long ago as 1973. I shall bring his up-to-date concern to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Could we have a statement on the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights that purports to set aside the British system of parole? Does that institution serve any useful purpose? It seems to meddle a lot in our domestic affairs. As we are not willing to concede sovereignty to the European Community, why should we concede it to a bunch of unelected foreign lawyers?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall of course arrange for the particular point raised by my hon. Friend to be studied by those responsible. My hon. Friend might recollect that the jurisdiction of the court and the commission was established in the early 1950s largely on the basis of proposals put forward by Her Majesty's Government as part of our determination to establish respect for human rights throughout the continent, which still remembered vividly the deprivation of those human rights following Nazi activity during the war.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Last week, the Leader of the House suggested that he would hasten slowly on the Select Committee on Northern Ireland. In the light of the Precedure Committee report published today, is there any justifiable reason for continuing a delay that has extended from 1978 when the then Procedure Committee recommended such a Select Committee?

If a Select Committee on Northern Ireland was set up, it would deliver a message from this House to those trying to detach Northern Ireland from the kingdom. That Select Committee could deal with those affairs of Northern Ireland that would never be under the scrutiny of a devolved administration in Northern Ireland.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The whole House is always mindful of the points advanced by hon. Members representing Northern Ireland, not least in the light of yesterday's particular tragedies. I do not want to sound in any sense dismissive of their deep concern, but my recollection of the report of the Select Committee is that it concluded that now is not a sensible time to establish a Select Committee on Northern Ireland. That is the recommendation, so it does not induce me to take a different view. I shall, of course, study the matter with the care that it deserves.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): On noise, and having asked for it exactly a week ago, may I warmly welcome the decision of the Government to hold a debate on it next Wednesday? However, although the lead Department in this matter is obviously the Department of the Environment, may I draw the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend to the fact that a large proportion of the matter with which the report on noise deals is transport noise, whether from aircraft, helicopters, lorries or trains? Therefore, could he consider how to draw into the debate Ministers from the Department of Transport as well who might listen to the debate and take account of the wishes of the House?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I know that my hon. Friend, having had years of practice speaking under the flight paths from Heathrow, has developed a powerful noise-emitting organ on his own part. I will draw the point he makes to the attention of the Secretary of State for Transport. I hope that my hon. Friend will not conclude from the speed with which I responded to his request that I shall always do so with similar speed in future.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will the Leader of the House take note of early-day motion 1446, "Retention of the Multi-fibre Arrangement":

[That this House welcomes the lobby of the textile workers and expresses strong opposition to the Government policy of phasing out the Muliti-Fibre Arrangement from 1991 without any safeguards yet in place and without any transition period to ensure preservation of a strong textile industry; and reminds the Government that child labour, absence of health and safety laws and trade union rights, dumping, outward processing and fraudulent trade marks are the hallmark of some areas of so-called competition, and that without proper safeguards there will be further catastrophic job losses, in an industry already struggling against high interest rates and an over-valued pound and more members of a skilled and dedicated work-force will be thrown on the scrap-heap.]

Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that all this week, a Trades Union Congress delegation is lobbying Members of Parliament because of great concern over the fact that the Government are now admitting that they are accepting Common Market policy to phase out the multi-fibre arrangement without any provision for safeguards through the general agreement on tariffs and trade and no phasing-out period to ensure that we develop a soundly-based, confident textile industry? Many jobs are threatened in the textile and clothing industry, including in my constituency, where 14,000 jobs depend directly on the textile industry. What action will the Government take to reassure the industry? Will they retain the multi-fibre arrangement, which has served the industry well in the past and is needed for confidence in the future?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman speaks as though there is something surprising in what he says. The Government have repeatedly made it clear that we are firmly committed to the Community policy of phasing out the MFA after the present extension expires next year. But it is also clear that that should take place as an essential part of the general strengthening of GATT rules and disciplines and the lowering of trade barriers generally, which are at the heart of the objectives of the Uruguay round. The Uruguay round is intended to promote trade opportunities generally, including for those in the third world for whom the hon. Gentleman sometimes seeks to speak. It must all be put in the proper context, and there is no surprise about the policy to which he draws attention.

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): Will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange for the earliest possible debate on the management of the commuter rail services in Network SouthEast because, despite the record levels of capital investment from the Government going into British Rail, it seems that the managers persist in producing ill-timed trains and bad timetables for my constituents and others in south-west London?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Patronage Secretary and I, who sit alongside each other on the Front Bench, both represent constituencies in the same region, and I do not think that either of us would wish completely to repudiate on behalf of our constituents the points made by my hon. Friend. I would not go further than that in accepting the points he makes, but I shall bring them to the attention of those responsible for the management of the railway system.

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): The Leader of the House will be mindful that, just before the recess, he placed in the Library the document on privatisation recommendations and consultative matters. He and others will be fully apprised of the difficulties concerning private Bills. They become quite an embarrassment sometimes, and there are illogicalities in the procedures, some of which are serious. For example, this week we had the Third Reading of the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill at a time when the Queen's Speech is likely to announce enabling measures for privatisation. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman announce, now or next week, the extent to which progress is being made to achieve some changes in the privatisation proposals?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Two points are intermingled there. The privatisation proposals are a separate policy question, and the hon. Gentleman will have to await the Queen's Speech before he learns the Government's intentions in that respect. Private Bills are an important topic, the management of which has been preoccupying myself and others for some time. We are still considering the way in which we should proceed in the light of my consultation document, and I hope that we shall be able to get ahead with it as quickly as possible.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that the number of deaths prevented by the wearing of seat belts has been remarkable. However, when cars are fitted with rear seat belts but those belts are not worn, more injuries are being caused to rear seat passengers. At present, the law says that only children must wear rear seat belts. Will he find time in the near future for a debate on the compulsory wearing of rear seat belts?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I will certainly draw my hon. Friend's point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and see how far we can consider it in the light of what he said.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Will the Leader of the House ask the Secretary of State for Social Services to come to the Chamber and make a statement before the House rises on women's refuges and the way in which the change in the benefit laws has put more and more women at risk from personal violence because they are unable to claim support from the Department without disclosing their whereabouts? Individual refuges are suffering as a consequence.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise an early debate on that topic, but I shall bring the point to the attention of my right hon. Friends. The hon. Lady may have the opportunity of raising the matter during the debate on the Queen's Speech.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Will my right hon. and learned Friend try to arrange a debate on the textile industry? When the textile mills ran into difficulties in the north-west, the workers did not get lucrative redundancy payments and a job at another mill somewhere else, as the miners did in another pit, but had to work hard, and the survivors are doing well. They will continue to do well as long as there is fair trading and no dumping into the United Kingdom. Can we impress on the Government that, when the new arrangements are made, they should bear that aspect in mind? We are fighting for the future of an industry on which this country was founded.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I certainly need no reminding of the importance of the textile industry, and I fully understand my hon. Friend's point, which is in the Government's mind as they seek to promote liberal but fair trading conditions. I shall bring that point to my colleagues' attention.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): Does the Leader of the House agree that the reason that not one Scottish Tory is present in the Chamber this afternoon is because they have read the second report of the Select Committee on Procedure and are too ashamed to come here and admit that it put the finger on them as being primarily responsible for the fact that there is no Select Committee on Scottish Affairs? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that in Scotland we face problems in the steel industry and damp housing, and that there is low morale in education, yet we continue to be denied a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, the legitimate instrument to bring the Government to account.

Will the right hon. Gentleman talk to the man next to him, the Patronage Secretary—the Chief Whip—get him to bend a few arms up a few Tory backs, and ensure that, when we go into the new Session, Scottish Tories face up to their responsibility to the Scottish people and provide us with the instrument of investigation that every English Department has?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman has a total misunderstanding of the gentle techniques of my right hon. Friend the Patronage Secretary. I notice that the Select Committee's report urges the Leader of the House to continue to search for a solution to that problem, and that reaching such a solution may require compromises on all sides. I have tried to achieve that in the past. There are ample opportunities for important Scottish matters to be debated in the House in a number of ways.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware of the contribution that United States bases such as Burtonwood and Warrington make, both to local economies and Anglo-American relations. Will he find time next week to arrange a debate to discuss the impact were any of those bases to close?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Government have already announced this year that a total of four United States' facilities in Britain have been or are being returned to the control of the Ministry of Defence, but no further changes have yet been decided. The Ministry of Defence is in close contact with the United States authorities over any possible future changes. I cannot go beyond that now, but I shall certainly bring my hon. Friend's point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): In a week when House of Commons chefs walked out because of salmonella scares, will the Leader of the House say when he intends to find time to debate the way in which this place is run? Will he have some regard for health and safety issues? When he walks around the corridors—not the main ones, but those outside—will he look at the totally unacceptable standards of cleanliness in this building and come forward with real proposals for food nutrition and food handling standards, bearing in mind that many thousands of people use the facilities of the Palace of Westminster?

Finally, when will the right hon. and learned Gentleman bring forward proposals to remove Crown immunity from the Palace of Westminster?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am afraid that I did not hear every component of the hon. Lady's question; but on the general point that she made, I would not accept such a far-ranging and comprehensive condemnation of every aspect of the House or of every aspect of the catering system, but I would readily agree that there is substantial room for improvement in many respects. That is one of the reasons that has prompted the Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Speaker to invite Sir Robin Ibbs to prepare a report on improving the management of the House, and the Commission will, I hope, be considering that report shortly. The hon. Lady will find that it is directly related to some of the management issues with which she is concerned.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): May we have an early statement on the finding by a judge in the High Court this week that the former Ealing Labour council acted improperly in 1987 when granting planning permission to a small sect for a mosque and town houses on an industrial estate in Northolt? Could that matter be brought to the attention of the House and properly debated, since the council acted improperly, in total disregard of the feelings of local people and industry and everyone concerned with the matter—and especially since not a single member of the sect lives in Northolt?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend is second to none in bringing to the attention of the House the shortcomings of the formerly Labour-controlled council that covers his constituency. I could not possibly accede to every request that he makes for these matters to be debated here, but he may take some comfort from the fact that the electors in Ealing passed their own judgment on that council at the last election.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): May we have another debate on the exchange rate mechanism? Is it true that the Governor of the Bank of England commissioned a report from the economics division of the bank into the appropriate rate of entry for sterling? Is it also true that an interim report was produced but that the Governor expected a figure to be submitted to him—a figure which was not submitted in time for the Chancellor's statement, so that there is now some confusion in the Bank of England about why its views and all the work that it has done on the matter were completely ignored by the Government? Does not that show that entry was a political decision taken irrespective of its economic consequences?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Nobody is more adept than the hon. Gentleman at launching into proceedings of this sort a whole series of allegations at a time when they cannot be assessed or responded to. He had the opportunity to raise these points when the Chancellor was answering questions earlier this afternoon, and he might have taken that chance.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): May we have a debate next week on airport security? I ask that in the light of the report in today's *Manchester Evening News* by the paper's reporter Peter Spencer that, on Tuesday, officials of the Department of Trade and Industry went to Manchester airport on an inspection visit and discovered a serious security breach which involved the carrying of a gun and explosives through the security area. Had the officials been terrorists, they would have been allowed to get on an aircraft. That is very worrying for my constituents who use this airport, so will my right hon. and learned Friend undertake to refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Transport and to ask him to make an urgent statement in the House on the matter?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise either a debate or a statement on the matter. Of course, it does need to be taken seriously, and I shall bring it to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): In view of the somewhat sleazy appointments by the Prime Minister of some of the trustees of the boards of the national institutions, and in view of the conviction of Gerald Ronson, when can the House have a statement on what the Prime Minister intends to do to get that gentleman off the board of the natural history museum, to which she appointed him?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot offer any comment on the point raised by the hon. Gentleman. My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister for the Arts is lurking around the premises and I shall draw it to his attention when he joins me on the Bench.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): My right hon. and learned Friend is well aware of the concern expressed in the House about the possible effects of the proposed European directive on traffic in live animals for slaughter. When he is looking into the business for the next Session, will he be good enough to seek an opportunity for the House to debate that directive before it becomes a fait accompli? As Chairman of the Select Committee on the Televising of Proceedings of the House, will my right hon. and learned Friend find time for that debate to be held not at 3 o'clock in the morning, but in prime time?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I find it hard enough to manage the affairs of the House and fit them into the hours that are available for general purposes. If I had also to take into account the need to meet my hon. Friend's ambitions to get the best television coverage, my task would be even more difficult. I shall certainly bring my hon. Friend's general point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): As it is now widely recognised that the victims of medical accidents get a raw deal in the courts system, may we have an early debate on the setting up of a no-fault compensation scheme so that money can go to the victims and not to the lawyers?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise a debate on that topic in the limited time available before the House is prorogued at the end of this Session. Of course, the hon. Lady will have many opportunities in future to draw the matter to the attention of the House.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Will my right hon. and learned Friend consider the prospect, and encourage a White Paper on the whole question, of economic and monetary union, and will he follow it with a debate? Does he agree that the idea that economic and monetary union attached to the principle of subsidiarity is a one-way ticket to a federal train and a central bank of the kind outlined not necessarily by Mr. Delors but by Mr. Christophersen in the European Commission?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Even given the relative simplicity of my hon. Friend's question, I would be unwise to attempt an answer during business questions.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): Does the Leader of the House recall that my hon. Friends the Members for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) and for Liverpool, Riverside (Mr. Parry) and I went to Iraq last month on a peace mission? Therefore, may we have a debate on early-day motion 1453 so that the whole House may have an opportunity to congratulate the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) on having the courage to follow in our footsteps and on helping to secure the release of some of the British hostages?

[That this House applauds the Right honourable Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup for helping to secure the release of some British hostages from Iraq; calls on the Prime Minister to publicly thank and congratulate her Right honourable Friend; and urges her to maximise diplomatic pressure on the Iraqi authorities for the release of all hostages, of whatever nationality.]

Does the Leader of the House accept that the plight of the hostages is far too important simply to be left to a few Back Benchers and a former Prime Minister, and that it is up to the Government to accept their responsibilities and do everything possible to maximise the diplomatic pressure on Saddam Hussein for the release of all the hostages of whatever nationality, because he has no moral right and no right under international law to hold any of them?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I hesitate to follow the hon. Gentleman into an assessment of the comparative courage of himself and my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). It is important that, on humanitarian grounds, we should welcome, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs did yesterday, the release of British nationals. That is welcomed by us all. I was glad that the hon. Gentleman went on to agree with the Government by saying that the fundamental cause of this problem is the brutal illegality of the action taken by the Government of Iraq. We must all continue to devote our united efforts to that issue.

Mr. David Trimble (Upper Bann): I regret that there is no provision next week for a debate on security in Northern Ireland. I am sure that the Leader of the House will agree that statements of the sort that we had yesterday are unsatisfactory, not only because they involve invidious choices about which incident one responds to, but because the brief time available for discussion after such a statement and the limited range of questions that can be asked do not allow for a proper exploration of all the issues. Will he arrange for a proper debate in which, perhaps, the Government could take some steps to resolve the constitutional uncertainty which is the root cause of the terrorism from which we suffer?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not begin to underestimate the importance of both aspects of the hon. Gentleman's question. I shall certainly remind my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland of the continuing wish not just of those who represent that part of the United Kingdom to have the matter under continuous and serious scrutiny in the House.

Mr. Trimble: And properly discussed.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Yes, and properly discussed. Nevertheless, it must take its place among the many other matters for which the House is responsible. I understand why the hon. Gentleman feels that yesterday's statement and subsequent questions were not sufficient to exhaust the topic.

Mr. Trimble: It was scarcely enough to deal with the matter.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It represented what it was meant to represent—an instant response by the House and by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the deep concern about those incidents. In fact, we accommodated the statement alongside two other statements in a very crowded parliamentary afternoon. That is a sign of the extent to which the House is concerned about the very points that the hon. Gentleman raised. I shall certainly bear in mind the way in which he put them.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): As it is generally accepted that lone parents have had a raw deal on income during recent years—not least because of the change in 1987 that made it more difficult for them to work and retain benefit—will the House give two cheers for the White Paper that is due to be published next week? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman arrange for a statement on the day that it is published so that hon. Members will have an opportunity to question the Government about the proposed quango? The point must be made that, during the past seven years, the Government have cut by one third the number of staff in the "liable relative" section of local social security offices—yet the National Audit Office says that those staff made benefit savings for the taxpayer and gained extra benefits for parents totalling eight times as much as their wages. Are those savings from staff cuts now to be used to create another quango, while lone parents remain the losers? It is crucial that a statement is made, so that the issue can be clarified before we debate the White Paper.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Contrary to the impression given by the hon. Gentleman, Government policies have been directed towards the maintenance of and an improvement in the way that lone parents are treated. On a less contentious point, I welcome his two cheers for the prospective White Paper. I shall draw his request for a statement to accompany the publication of the White Paper to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): May we have an early debate on the enormous difference in constituency work load carried by individual Members? Some Members —they include some Conservative Members—are struggling with constituency caseloads that are actually breaking their backs, while for other Members—they are mostly on the Conservative Benches—the only problem appears to be working out which garden fete to open on a Saturday. Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman inform the House of any other occupation that would have such a disparity in work loads, but still allocate exactly the same resources to each individual?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman so often raises a point that deserves reasonable consideration but overloads it with tendentious and critical points that devalue his contribution to the discussion. A maximum figure is set for office costs, allowances and other matters, and various Members take up that allowance to differing degrees. The House will no doubt have another opportunity, in due course, to consider the matter more widely.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Can we have an early statement by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the European Community's seventh directive on the shipbuilding intervention fund? I understand that the directive, which will come into force on 1 January 1981, contains a paragraph inserted by the European Commission to the effect that shipyard communities in what was the German Democratic Republic should be given additional financial aid. Although that aid should rightly and properly be given to those communities, there are shipbuilding communities on the Clyde, on Merseyside and elsewhere that require and demand the same sympathetic consideration by the European Community and the Government.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise a statement on that point, despite its importance to the hon. Gentleman, but I shall bring the matter to the attention of my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): May I join others in urging the Leader of the House to organise an early debate on the textile and clothing industry? A textile lobby consisting of textile workers from Yorkshire and other parts of the country has this week warned all hon. Members of the danger of recession returning to the industry, which is being crucified by high interest rates and unfair trade.

As the negotiations are being conducted by the EEC, it is only right that the House should give its advice to the negotiators concerning the vital importance of ensuring that proper safeguards are retained for the textile and clothing industry. I urge the Leader of the House to give proper prominence to the industry, which is the fourth largest manufacturing industry in Britain, as well as the fifth largest employer and one of our major exporters. Surely we deserve more than a half-hour Adjournment debate at the fag end of the Session, which is what we got last July. We need a full debate to ensure that Ministers stoop oozing complacency about the problems of the industry and do something to safeguard it.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is no question of complacency about the problems and opportunities facing the textile industry. The House and the Government are aware of its importance. The Government have made a substantial contribution to the formulation of Community policy on this matter. We are keeping a close eye on it in the management of the Uruguay round and we shall continue to do so. I shall see whether there is an opportunity, when the new Session begins, for a debate on the Floor of the House, although I can give no promise in that respect. The House should not underestimate the importance that the Government attach to the health and prosperity of the industry.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): May we have an early debate on the Government's attitude to re-emerging trade unionism at GCHQ? The House needs to know whether the staff federation will be allowed to form links with other trade unions, whether the Government support the certification of the staff federation as an independent trade union and whether we are now witnessing the beginning of the end of the unjust, undemocratic and unjustifiable ban on trade unions at GCHQ.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is probably not possible to say much that is new about the topic to which the hon. Gentleman has referred. There are no formal links between the General Communications Staff Federation and any other trade union. It was made clear to the GCSF from the outset, by the management of GCHQ, that affiliation to any outside bodies was not acceptable, and that remains the position.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): In view of the recent terrible events in Northern Ireland, may the House have an opportunity to pay tribute to those brave people in Northern Ireland who stand up for peace? I am referring to people such as Nancy Gracy, who runs a group that opposes intimidation and terrorism, and to those who are associated with the peace train that will be running from Portadown to Dublin this weekend.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot comment on the cases to which the hon. Gentleman has referred, but the whole House has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to, and support of, those who are trying to bring peace to Northern Ireland in place of trouble, and takes with the utmost seriousness tragic disasters of the kind that happened yesterday.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Can the Leader of the House assure us that there will be another full debate on the crisis in the Gulf and on the middle east before any decision is made by the Government to deploy troops against Iraq? Will he give us the opportunity to have a serious debate not only on the plight of hostages from Britain, France and other countries who are held in Iraq but on the plight of the Bangladeshi people in Jordan and in Turkey, where they are incarcerated in a camp? Will he also allow us a full discussion of the plight of the largest unrecognised nation in the region—the Kurdish people, who number 30 million and who have been abominably treated by Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria over the years?

It is important that we should recognise that peace in the region can come only when the rights of the Palestinian and Kurdish people, and the right to democracy in every country, are recognised. The deployment of troops will not solve the problem: it will merely delay its solution for much longer.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I do not mean to be frivolous, but the length of the hon. Gentleman's question almost amounts to a contribution to a debate on such a scale that we need not have the debate. There will be an opportunity during the debate on the Queen's Speech, when no doubt there will be a day devoted—in the ordinary way—to foreign affairs. I cannot make any promises beyond that. Of course, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will keep the House informed of developments, as he has done heretofore.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): We cannot wait for the Queen's Speech. When persons sitting on green Benches take decisions that will send young men and women to a war of doubtful outcome in deserts, should not there be an urgent, specific parliamentary debate? Does the Leader of the House realise that those of us who attended the Adjournment debate at 2.30 in the morning—heaven knows why a debate on hostages takes half an hour at 2.30 while we spend three hours on Redbridge market; what sort of priority is that—were absolutely chilled by the Minister of State's statement?

Before there is any sneering, has the right hon. and learned Gentleman noticed that, among the most cautious are the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey), who have distinguished—

Mr. Speaker: Order. It was very late at night, but we are not debating the matter again now. Could the hon. Member please ask a question?

Mr. Dalyell: Quite simply, unlike some hon. Members who have been rather casual about the military options, there are those of us who have been tank crew and worn the Queen's uniform. Are we to be dismissed? Are we not to have a parliamentary debate? It is a scandal.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman must judge the extent to which we attach importance to Parliament's role in this matter by the fact that we arranged, to general welcome, a special debate during the recess on this important topic and that there was a long period devoted to a statement by the Foreign Secretary yesterday, which started off with a reaffirmation by the shadow Foreign Secretary of the essential unity of the position of both major parties on this matter.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Would the Leader of the House reflect upon the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Sillars) and note that today there has been a further insult to Scottish hon. Members: the Secretary of State making a statement on the testing of primary school pupils in Scotland and not to the House, in respose to a written question put by the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart)? I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and that of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), because he has a feel for matters historical.

Could you—and perhaps the Leader of the House—in your procession through the House note that one disparaged leader of the Labour party, Ramsay MacDonald has been put on a pedestal in a place of prominence, whereas the bust of a revered and honoured leader of the Labour party, James Keir Hardie, is skulking about under a display cabinet? Is there any political significance in that denigration of Keir Hardie?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I fancy that the question extends beyond my responsibility in answering business questions. I hesitate to throw in the additional fact that Ramsay MacDonald, unlke Keir Hardie, for a time had the advantage of representing my home constituency of Aberavon and that may be the reason.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): Could my right hon. and learned Friend arrange for a statement at the earliest possible time next week on the all-day closure of the M1 last Tuesday due to a spillage of dangerous chemicals? The spillage seemed to display the inadequacy of the response by the authorities in providing for vehicles coming onto and getting off the motorway. The whole M1 was brought to a halt because they were ill prepared and there was no way for the public to know that the road was totally closed. It caused delays of seven, eight and nine hours to people who had no advance notice that they were going to be stuck on the motorway. No provision was made for them to exit at an earlier stage. I should be grateful if my right hon. and learned Friend could arrange for such a statement next week on that matter and on the implications of potentially dangerous chemical transport in this country.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If the matter is indeed on the scale suggested by my hon. Friend it certainly deserves to be brought to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. I cannot promise a debate about it, but I can certainly bring the topic to his attention.

BILLS PRESENTED

Compensation for Medical Injury

Ms. Harriet Harman presented a Bill to provide that persons injured as a result of mishap during treatment by the National Health Service may be awarded compensation without having to prove negligence on the part of the National Health Service; to define eligibility for compensation; to establish a Medical Injury Compensation Board and to make other provision for the assessment of eligibility and payment of compensation; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow, and to be printed. [Bill 208.]

Licensing Reform

Mr. Anthony Coombs, supported by Mr. Denis Howell, Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark, Mr. Robin Corbett, Mr. Roger King, Mr. David Gilroy Bevan, Mr. John Bowis and Mr. Simon Burns, presented a Bill to amend the Licensing Act 1964 to make new provision with respect to licensing justices and to the grounds upon which applications for liquor licences may be refused; to require a statement of reasons for any refusal; to set a time limit on the consideration of applications; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow, and to be printed. [Bill 206.]

BROADCASTING BILL

[Ways and Means] (No. 2)

Resolved,

That for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Broadcasting Bill ("the Act"), it is expedient to authorise the inclusion of—

(1) provisions by virtue of which holders of licences granted under the Act for the provision of Channel 3 or Channel 5 services may be required to make payments to the Independent Television Commission as contributions towards the expenses of the body nominated under the Act in connection with the maintenance of a national television archive;

(2) provisions under which financial penalties imposed on bodies holding licences granted under the Act may be recovered from persons controlling such bodies, and provision for sums so recovered to be paid into the Consolidated Fund.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Orders of the Day

Broadcasting Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Ordered,

That the Lords Amendments to the Broadcasting Bill be considered in the following order, namely, Nos. 22, 35, 46 to 48, 111, 399 to 406, 466 to 499, 1 to 21, 23 to 34, 36 to 45, 49 to 110, 112 to 398, 407 to 465 and 500 to 676.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Clause 6

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AS TO LICENSED SERVICES

Lords amendment: No. 22, in page 6, line 38, at end insert—

("(4A) The rules specified in the code referred to in subsection (3) shall, in particular, take account of the following matters—

(a) that due impartiality should be preserved on the part of the person providing a licensed service as respects major matters falling within subsection (1)(c) as well as matters falling within that provision taken as a whole; and

(b) the need to determine what constitutes a series of programmes for the purposes of subsection (2).

(4B) The rules so specified shall, in addition, indicate to such extent as the Commission consider appropriate—

(a) what due impartiality does and does not require, either generally or in relation to particular circumstances;

(b) the ways in which due impartiality may be achieved in connection with programmes of particular descriptions;

(c) the period within which a programme should be included in a licensed service if its inclusion is intended to secure that due impartiality is achieved for the purposes of subsection (1)(c) in connection with that programme and any programme previously included in that service taken together; and

(d) in relation to any inclusion in a licensed service of a series of programmes which is of a description specified in the rules—

(i) that the dates and times of the other programmes comprised in the series should be announced at the time when the first programme so comprised is included in that service, or

(ii) if that is not practicable, that advance notice should be given by other means of subsequent programmes so comprised which include material intended to secure, or assist in securing, that due impartiality is achieved in connection with the series as a whole;

and those rules shall, in particular, indicate that due impartiality does not require absolute neutrality on every issue or detachment from fundamental democratic principles.")

4.25 pm

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. David Mellor): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following Lords amendments: Nos. 15, 17 to 20, 135, 136, 170, 172, 174, 175, 252, 253, 255 and 257 to 260.

Mr. Mellor: I should like to begin by saying that it is with a very real sense of loss that I record my deep regret at the passing of our late colleague Norman Buchan. I had a lot to do with Norman during my 10 years in the House.

On some occasions we agreed; on others we did not. However, I was never in any doubt about the calibre of the man and his commitment to a whole range of issues that were well worth being committed to—not least the arts. Even if one disagreed with him, one did so cordially and with humour, as was so evident in Committee. One could always have a chat outside the Committee Room with him in the utmost amity.

I respected and liked Norman. I am deeply distressed that he is not with us today. Our debates will not be the same without him. It came as a shock to me yesterday to read of his passing. I am sure that the whole House joins me when I say that we feel a real sense of loss at his passing.

If I may refer to another preliminary matter, this is the first group of amendments to be dealt with after the Bill's return to us from another place. About 700 amendments were made in the other place. I should like to express my gratitude to the Opposition for their co-operation in ensuring that we can manage the debates in a way that will allow any remaining controversial issues to be dealt with early. I am also grateful for the assistance given by all parties in the House, but particularly by the official Opposition, which has led to a grouping of the amendments that will, I hope, enable us to have sensible debates.

I make no apology for the fact that there is a large number of amendments. We shall almost immediately discover that some are a little controversial, but most represent the Government giving effect to agreements reached in the Commons as a result of the open debate that we had. They also reflect our continuing commitment to listen to points made in debate. When, after debate, a point appears to have such force that it should not be impeded by Government obstruction, we have been only too willing to concede it. Lord Ferrers, the Minister of State, was particularly effective in conducting the Bill through the other place. He gave way gracefully and without ill will. I refer in particular to the moratorium on takeovers. We were able to meet what seemed to be the unanimous view on Second Reading in the other place that something ought to be done.

A document extending to four and a half pages includes the changes that were made in the other place. Some of them reflect our willingness to recognise the strength of feeling in the Lords—for example, in relation to the disabled and the indexation of cash bids. All those changes make it a better Bill, as do a large number—I am sorry that it is such a large number—of technical amendments that reflect the continued combing through of the Bill by the draftsmen to ensure that any minor problems were ironed out. As we know, the odd injudicious comma or the wrong word, even if it does not amount to a matter of policy, can sometimes skew meaning in a way that raises problems later. Therefore, I apologise for burdening the House with so many amendments, but I believe that for the most part they are in a good cause.

I shall deal immediately with a group of amendments that I suspect some will not think are in such a good cause. That controversial set of amendments relates to impartiality and it is right that they should be dealt with first. I shall set out my stall on the matter and then listen with care to what is said on both sides of the House and, I hope, respond later.

Since the Bill left the House, not as much has changed as some contributors to the debate in the other place suggested—and I suspect from the look of jovial good humour on the face of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) he might also want to suggest that there have been many changes.

As a result of a small wobble over the word "current", the substantive law on impartiality in the Bill is precisely the same as it has been since 1954. That is important. We made one addition in the House in recognition of the fact that the Independent Broadcasting Authority is the broadcaster and the Independent Television Commission is the regulator. We added to the Bill a requirement for a code, making clear that the code was not one approved by Parliament because that would blur the arm's length relationship in regulations to which I and many others attach importance. The code will deal with what we know to be some of the problems. It is recognised that there were problems about what constitutes a series of programmes and about other aspects of the regulations. That will always be a difficult and sensitive area. That is why, to general acclamation—no one dissented—we made provision for a code. It will enable broadcasters to know where they stand because, if the regulators are to have the right to intervene, the broadcasters should know on what basis they may do so. Also, the public should know where they stand. All manner of folk, from time to time, take issue with what is contained in television programmes and it would probably assist if one had clear guidance as to what the ground rules were.

4.30 pm

I want to restate the principle with as much clarity as I can muster that it is the right of Parliament—it has been so for four decades—to insist that there is due impartiality on matters of current political or industrial controversy and so on. However, it is not for us to usurp the function of the regulators and state exactly what the detailed rules should be. We are not doing that in the amendments. I say that with sincerity amidst the mutterings of scepticism from the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), who has lifted his head from correcting the proofs of "War and Peace" or whatever he is doing. I had not expected that to be a universally acclaimed sentiment, although it is a true one.

It was necessary—and it was welcomed—for the Government to take account of the strong expressions of view in the House during the passage of the Bill. It also seemed to be eminently right that we should take account of the strong expressions of view in the other place, although not to the extent—I make no apologies for this—of accepting the precise amendments tabled by the noble Lord Wyatt and others, but to recognise their concern. That concern has been reflected in an early-day motion in the House. There was concern that the rules would need to be clear after the Bill had finished in the House. However, insights come to people at many different times. St. Paul gained his insight rather late, so I dare say that everyone else is entitled to gain theirs rather late as well. But there was still time, and we considered it right to add to the Bill a series of points that the code should cover—points that I believe to be a matter of common sense.

It is crucial for hon. Members to understand that we did not specify what the code should say about those points; we merely provided for the ITC, in drawing up its code, to take account of them. I still believe that that was a legitimate way of dealing with the sentiments that were

expressed so strongly in the other place, and that it does not blur the crucial matter of principle to which I have adhered throughout.

I shall reserve my more detailed comments until later. Let me say now, however, that I was intrigued by the allegation made persistently in the other place and elsewhere that this would be a lawyers' picnic. As I have said before, I am well aware of—and subscribe to—Ogden Nash's view of professional men:

"Professional people have no cares,
Whatever happens, they get theirs."

I am certainly not anxious that my former profession should benefit unduly from any act of generosity performed late in the day. Everyone can come to this party, with their lawyers; it is not only those who take exception to some of the legislation who will have the benefit of legal advice. We have the benefit of that advice, and so has the ITC.

The Bill will not open the way for any legal challenge that is not in any case inherent in the concept of due impartiality, and the need for the regulatory body to flesh out a bare rule and make its own judgment about how that rule should be applied in complex and difficult circumstances. Provided that the ITC draws up its code in a reasonable manner, there will be no scope for judicial intervention or extensive litigation, because the normal rules of scrutiny will apply: a decision made by a public body cannot be overturned in the courts unless that body has acted unreasonably. It is no more likely that the ITC would act unreasonably when faced with a limited or skeleton framework for its code than that it would err in drawing up a code seeking to give effect to a basic principle that Parliament has set out for nearly 40 years.

I place some reliance on that. In the other place, as one or two speakers in that debate pointed out, there was a tendency for arguments about the legalities of the matter to apply not so much to the limited amendments that the Government were seeking to make as to the whole principle of the due impartiality provision itself—which, as I said, has been part of our law for nearly 40 years. Someone who had arrived the previous day from Mars —or, in the case of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), from Australia or some equally far-flung place—would assume that the argument did not concern some minor adjustments to the code proposals; he would assume that exception was being taken to the very idea of a due impartiality provision. That was where many of the more telling—or, depending on one's view, not particularly telling—legal points took us.

Let me state categorically that, if I thought for a moment that they would result in a legal picnic, I should not commend the amendments to the House; nor should I do so if I thought for a moment that they blurred the key distinction that strikes me as fundamental. Parliament has a right and a duty to prescribe due impartiality in what is still a relatively scarce service, in television. The concept of due impartiality does not exist in the written word, but I still believe that it is necessary to retain it in respect of the principal television services. It is right for us to tell those responsible that they should regulate that rule and, so that everyone knows where they stand, for there to be a code dealing with certain issues rather than avoiding them.

However, it would be wrong to dictate the way in which those issues should be dealt with, and none of the amendments does so. That is the bedrock of principle on which they are founded.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland) *rose*——

Mr. Mellor: I was about to subside into my seat for good, but I shall do so only temporarily instead.

Mr. Maclennan: I understand why the Minister prefers to reserve his detailed responses until a subsequent intervention. However, as he is advocating a change of considerable controversy and of great importance to broadcasters, as he admits, his initial speech should discharge the onus of proof for change—particularly as the Minister himself earlier made it abundantly clear that the thought that the language in use since 1954 is still adequate.

What is the mischief? Are we speaking only of the views of Lord Wyatt and of one or two other rare birds in another place, or is there a more general problem? The number of complaints made about impartiality has been minuscule.

Mr. Mellor: The Television Act 1954 prescribed the basic law, which will remain unchanged by the Bill, but instead of there being a bare requirement for a code—with which I should have been perfectly content, if it had been left to me—the question arose, as expressed in the concerns of their Lordships and in an early-day motion of this House, as to whether that bare requirement would of itself be adequate, and of whether we should perform the additional task of making it clear that the code dealt also with controversial areas.

The amendment sets out several areas which some would argue any self-respecting code would anyway be bound to cover, and which the ITC of its own volition would have chosen to cover. I should have rested perfectly content with such a provision, but as their Lordships took the view that it would be possible to achieve a broader consensus, it seemed perfectly proper to flesh out the requirements for a code by setting out certain heads that it should cover.

Such a provision could only distort the intentions of the 1954 Act if it added to the requirement for due impartiality that has always been part of the law since the creation of the independent television system. I can state categorically —and this is the belief also of the ITC—that it will not do so but will merely set out points that the ITC should take into account when drawing up its code. The amendment will not alter the substantive law but will introduce only an element of consolation for those concerned that the code might fall short in certain respects, that it will cover certain key areas. Nevertheless, the amendment does not dictate how the ITC should discharge that function.

Despite some of the huff and puff that we have heard, a much more minor amendment would make people think. Just as I have given considerable thought to whether to advance the amendments—all of which passed through my office in their drafting—and to making sure that we did not blur the principle to which I attach importance, others should be certain that they are not—as appeared to be the case from one or two speeches in another place—arguing against the principle of due impartiality, or merely wanting a good old ding-dong about what is admittedly a highly attractive subject for a good old ding-dong, without relating it to the substance of the debate.

The Government showed their good faith by reflecting on all those matters and tabling a draft amendment, albeit that it was found wanting in certain respects.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): And sometimes described as defeated in Committee.

4.45 pm

Mr. Mellor: No, it was not defeated. The right hon. Gentleman could not have been following the Bill's progress with his customary attention. The water was tested, and certain views were expressed that seemed to me appropriate to take into account. That was done, and a new draft emerged that was entirely satisfactory to the ITC. After all, it is that organisation that will have to perform the duty of regulation. The ITC would not have given its approval to the amendment if it achieved only one half or one quarter of the things that those who cannot reconcile themselves to the amendment say that it will. That is the case for the amendment, and I shall let it rest at that.

Mr. Hattersley: I begin by thanking the Minister for the tribute that he paid to my late hon. Friend and colleague, Mr. Norman Buchan. Had he been with us today, Norman Buchan would have contributed to this debate with great passion and authority. We shall miss him for more than this afternoon, because he was a genuinely interesting man who took a real interest in a variety of matters in the House and outside it. I am grateful for the Minister's remarks. I know that my right hon. and hon. Friends would want me to emphasise the great loss which we feel and which the Minister was kind enough to mention.

It is difficult to follow the passion with which the Minister defended the proposed new clause. He proceeded with what is, in his new mood, his usual emollience, saying that he will listen with care and interest to all that is said. That would be enormously comforting if only we could believe that, having listened to all that we say, the Minister is likely to take any notice of it.

We know very well that the clause will be added to the Bill, although, judging from the right and hon. Gentleman's closing remarks, that will happen without the slightest enthusiasm from the Minister who pilots the Bill. He said that, to his mind, the Bill was perfectly satisfactory when it left the House and that he would have been perfectly content if it had remained as it was. He spoke of others taking a different view without identifying them.

Mr. Mellor: I made it clear that the others to whom I was referring were certain of their Lordships and hon. Members who had expressed a view in an early-day motion in this House. It is perfectly proper that I should listen to them, as I do to Opposition Members. I did so many times, and then changed the Bill as a result.

Mr. Hattersley: I do not want to argue that point at great length, but if the Minister had simply been willing to listen to their Lordships' views, he would have abandoned his attempt to introduce such a clause when it became clear from the outset that their Lordships did not want it to proceed. The Minister tells the House that the clause is of no consequence, and no doubt he would like the country to hear that remark—yet it is of such importance to someone that three attempts were made to devise a draft acceptable to another place, and enormous pressure was placed on the stalwarts who support the Government there to turn up and ensure that it was passed.

Somebody liked the clause and regarded it as important. I accept that that somebody is not the Minister, because his reply to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) gave every impression of a man swimming in treacle. He was making the heaviest possible weather of defending what he had to defend. I at least propose to set out in the clearest terms within my capability why we are wholly opposed to it and to make it absolutely clear that when the Labour Government are elected we shall repeal this clause, which we regard as intimidatory and inconsistent with broadcasting in a free society.

There is general agreement among the parties, broadcasters and, I believe, the viewing public about the importance of impartiality in television. It is essential to a democracy, particularly in a society that increasingly obtains its information from television. For that reason, successive Broadcasting Acts have charged the ITA, the IBA and, soon, the Independent Broadcasting Commission with the duty of ensuring that proper impartiality and balance are preserved. From the inception of independent broadcasting to the passage of the Bill through all its stages in the House, it has been generally agreed that the judgment on how impartiality was to be maintained should be left to the body that was required to regulate independent television. It should be left to its judgment alone.

That was the view because there was a general wish, which I hope and believe is shared on both sides of the House, that the preservation of impartiality and balance should be carried out in a way that is not oppressive and is not likely to result in a deterioration of programme standards. The Government's proposal has both those disadvantages. It is oppressive in effect and will lead to reductions in the standards of certain programmes.

I have no doubt that the proposal will intimidate some programme makers, and I go further: I believe that it is intended to do so. Anyone who doubts that intention should read the speech by Lord Wyatt of Weeford, the only true begetter of the new clause in the House of Lords last Monday. He proposed that, before beginning their work, programme makers should be required to sign a declaration saying that they understand, respect and will observe the code of impartiality. The idea that programme makers should be required to sign a document accepting anything except the law of the land as it stands—the Minister was careful to tell us this is not the law of the land—is not consistent with a free society.

Before I describe the consequences of the clause, I want, partly as a result of the extraordinary activities of Lord Wyatt, to remind the House of its origins. By understanding its origins, we understand its purpose. When the Government drafted the Bill, no such clause was thought necessary. All who heard the Minister's speech will agree that it was clear that he does not regard it as necessary even today. No such clause was added or even contemplated by the Government in Committee. The idea is the product of the paranoia about broadcasting which Lord Wyatt has deployed time after time in the articles that he writes in *The Times* and in the articles, if that is the right description of them, that he writes in the *News of the World*.

We all know—it is almost a matter of public record—that Lord Wyatt, who has a special entrée to No. 10 Downing street, convinced the Prime Minister that to expose the independent television companies to the threat of continual litigation would severely restrict their willingness to make the controversial programmes that many of us regard as the life-blood of broadcasting in a

[Mr. Hattersley]

free society. I doubt that the Prime Minister needed much convincing, but we know that she insisted on the inclusion of the clause. I doubt that the Home Secretary has read it. It is clear from last Monday's debate in the other place that the Minister of State did not understand and, as we knew before today but which was confirmed a moment ago, the Minister for the Arts certainly does not agree with it.

The Minister for the Arts told the Royal Television Society, as late as 4 September:

"Due impartiality is not a matter which can be reduced to some simple mathematical formula, nor can its achievement be guaranteed through any mechanistic statutory requirement."

On 4 September he was against a mechanistic statutory requirement. Let us examine what he advocates today. I describe it in the words of the Minister of State, as he spelt out the clause in the House of Lords last Monday:

"Paragraph (a) of new subsection (4A) relates to due impartiality being achieved for each major matter of political or industrial controversy . . . Paragraph (b) of subsection (4A) requires the code to take account of the need to define what is meant by a series of programmes. Paragraph (a) of subsection (4B) requires the code to indicate what due impartiality requires in particular circumstances. Paragraph (b) of subsection (4B) sets out that the code should indicate the manner in which impartiality is to be achieved for different programme types. Paragraph (c) of subsection (4B) requires the code to indicate the timescale within which programmes must be included if impartiality is to be achieved over a series. Paragraph (d) of subsection 4(B) requires the code to indicate the means by which the audience is informed that impartiality". [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 October 1990; Vol. 522, c. 1144.]

That is being advocated by a Minister who is, root and branch, against mechanistic statutory requirements.

I hope that the Minister will not suggest that what his colleague in the House of Lords said cannot be described as "mechanistic or statutory", for were he to attempt to do so I should be grieved to discover that, even in this Government, the least literate this century, the Minister for the Arts has only a passing acquaintance with the English language. It is clear that what he has developed and is now advocating imposes statutory duties on the new commission to define in some particulars what objectivity and impartiality is, and is wholly mechanistic in its application.

The real question is not whether the Minister changed his position but why he has appeared to change his mind. I have no doubt that it is because pressure was put on him to produce and to create a new chain, a new limitation and a new burden on the independent television companies in the hope and intention that they will reduce the number of controversial documentary programmes that they produce.

The Minister said again today that the new Independent Television Commission is to draw up a code to ensure impartiality. He repeats time after time that the commission is responsible for the code. I shall read, at perhaps intelligible speed, what the Minister of State described as the new obligations in the House of Lords, from which the House will realise that, although it is the duty of the ITC to draw up the code, the Government are telling it what the code must contain. They are telling it the nature of the code, its provisions, its scope and in some particulars its contents. The contents are to be specified in law and, by specifying its contents, the House, if it supports the clause, will be imposing on the television industry a series of adverse consequences.

Mr. Mellor: If the right hon. Gentleman were the ITC and were faced with a bald requirement from Parliament to have a code, I do not see how he would find it possible to discharge that duty without setting out in the code—I quote from paragraph (a) of the amendment—

"what due impartiality does and does not require, either generally or in relation to particular circumstances; (b) the ways in which due impartiality may be achieved in connection with programmes of particular descriptions".

What is the point of having a code if it does not deal with those matters, and what is the harm in setting out clearly what a code should deal with?

Mr. Hattersley: The Minister for the Arts was perfectly happy to proceed in the way that he now derides throughout the passage of the Bill.

Mr. Mellor *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Hattersley: He does not deride it; he seemed to be doing so. He seemed happy not to have these specifications in the code until they were imposed by the Prime Minister. There was no mention of them when we debated the code before, no suggestion of them in Committee and no inclusion of them in the original draft. Since 1954, the concept of objectivity and impartiality has been left entirely to the Independent Broadcasting Authority or its successors.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): The right hon. Gentleman has said a couple of times that these measures were imposed on my right hon. and learned Friend by the Prime Minister, but they were brought before the House by the other place. If the Opposition in the other place were so passionately opposed to them, why did they manage to muster only a fraction of their strength to vote against them? Could it be that their Lordships, in their wisdom, realised public concern in this matter?

Mr. Hattersley: The hon. Gentleman talks about public concern. He can talk about it, but he cannot demonstrate it because there is virtually no public concern on record. The Government have added to the number of institutions that exist to encourage, monitor and publish details on the amount of public concern, but the number of complaints received is minuscule. I propose to deal with the large number of complaints from Conservative Members, but they must not think that they speak for the British public —a fact that they will discover to their discomfort over the next 18 months.

I wish to go through, one by one, the detriments that will be the inevitable result of the clause being passed into law. They show why I was astonished at the words of the Minister of State in another place and even more astonished by the support given to this notion by the Minister for the Arts. They are why almost everyone who has judged these matters with authority believes that the clause will result in constant litigation.

5 pm

The chairman of the Bar Council and the professor of law at the University of Oxford predict constant litigation. That is certainly the fear of the television companies, which naturally are apprehensive about it. They fear, and we believe that they are right to fear, that every group of

right-wing loonies will take them to court—perhaps frivolously, perhaps contentiously, perhaps with the intention of making a point rather than with winning a case—by arguing that a programme should be covered by the impartiality guidelines, as covered by subsection (4B)(a); by arguing that a programme should have carried a warning that it was controversial, as covered by subsection (4B)(d); or by arguing that balance has not been achieved by an alternative programme putting a different point of view and being broadcast in the required period, as required by subsection (4B)(c).

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch) *rose*——

Mr. Mellor *rose*——

Mr. Hattersley: I shall give way first to the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), who was bobbing up and down earlier, and then gave way to the Minister.

Mr. Adley: The best speech in the other place, for brevity and content, was by Lord Peyton of Yeovil. I have a philosophical question for the right hon. Gentleman—perhaps I should be careful about asking it and he should be careful about answering it. He referred to right-wing loonies. Does he agree that political proselytes can often be dangerous people?

Mr. Hattersley: Of course they can. It is rather like loving one's mother and not kicking dogs. We can all agree with that. The brave and interesting point comes when we start defining who those people are, and I propose to do so. First, I shall give way to the Minister for the Arts.

Mr. Mellor: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. It is good of him to give way to me again, and I shall try not to make a habit of intervening. The right hon. Gentleman is making some important technical points, and I believe that it would be useful to all of us if we had a chance to explore one of his contentions.

The nub of the point seems to be that the provision will lead to constant litigation because it is an intimidatory device to be used by the Government to compel the ITC to do something for which various loonies can then hold it to account. On the right hon. Gentleman's partial reading of the clause, that does not strike me as being exactly what the clause will permit.

The right hon. Gentleman read us chunks from Lords amendment No. 22, but he did not quote these words from subsection (4B):

"The rules so specified shall in addition"—

here are the crucial words—

"indicate to such extent as the Commission consider appropriate".

In other words, it is for the commission to judge whether it considers that it is appropriate to do the things set out therein. It would be extremely difficult for a judge—although not impossible, and it would not be impossible to have masses of litigation about other matters—to say that it was wholly unreasonable for the ITC to have determined whether it was appropriate to do certain things, when the statute indicates that that was left to its discretion.

Mr. Hattersley: That point was made not by the Minister of State in another place but by one of his supporters—I took specific advice on that. The answer relates to the words that the right hon. Gentleman used in his intervention and several times in his speech—"as long as the ITC behaves reasonably". I have no doubt that the ITC will behave reasonably, but the television companies are afraid that the group to which I referred will insist on testing the nature of reason in court and that it will say, "In this particular, the ITC did not behave reasonably. In allocating this programme under one heading while not considering it under another, impartial or not impartial, the ITC behaved not reasonably but unreasonably." The television companies are particularly concerned about the concept of "reasonable".

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): Does the right hon. Gentleman suggest that the ITC should be totally unaccountable and that no group of citizens should be entitled to challenge whether it has acted reasonably?

Mr. Hattersley: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman was here at the beginning of my speech, but if he was, he was not listening. I made it clear that I want impartiality to be preserved and that the ITC should have an unfettered right to make sure that that happens. I want the ITC to have the right that it has enjoyed since 1954, not least because, on the general judgment of the British public—who do not complain about partiality—the present system operates perfectly successfully. We have not heard a word today from the Minister about why a change is necessary because, despite all his debating skills, he cannot produce such an argument.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): If the right hon. Gentleman is right in assuming that the ITC will behave reasonably—which is what my right hon. Friend the Minister and I think—why do we need the amendment?

Mr. Hattersley: The right hon. Gentleman must not ask me. I shall not answer Home Office questions for another year or so, so the right hon. Gentleman must put his point to the Minister. I agree 100 per cent. with him—there is no justification for this change. The Minister has not even attempted to justify it. We have not yet heard any reason for making the change.

The fear of litigation is very much related to those groups that the broadcasters rightly suspect will take contentious actions, testing the concept of reasonableness with the intention of intimidating. The hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) almost challenged me to suggest who those people might be. Everyone knows that the Freedom Association takes such cases to make a point rather than to win a legal battle. Everyone has heard of Lord Chalfont's media monitoring unit. The television companies are rightly apprehensive about how such groups will behave.

Let us have no doubt about the outcome of that apprehension. Programme makers will choose the bland and the anodyne because they believe that the bland and the anodyne are safe, yet the bland and the anodyne are the last things that should characterise some programmes—in particular, the documentary programmes against which the clause is directed. The amendment will result in, and is intended to result in, a reduction in controversy, yet controversy is often the life-blood of good broadcasting.

Let me put it in simple terms. Throughout the debate in the other place, several programmes were cited as the new target for these impartiality rules—for example, "Death on the Rock", "Who Bombed Birmingham?" and Harold Pinter's programme on Nicaragua. We were repeatedly told that, because of these new rules, after such a

[Mr. Hattersley]

programme was broadcast there would be a Government health warning saying that that programme was not impartial and that, within a specified period, a programme would appear putting the contrary argument. I do not believe for a moment that that would be the outcome. The outcome will be that programmes such as "Who Bombed Birmingham?" and "Death on the Rock" will not be produced at all. I have no doubt that that is the intention of many of the proponents of the clause. That is what they want and I fear that that is what they will get if the clause is passed.

For that reason, the clause is repressive, and that is why I repeat that the next Labour Government will repeal it. We shall expect impartiality, but we shall have the sense to know that impartiality cannot be precisely defined and that the commission—and the commission alone—acting under the general law, has the duty to see that balance is preserved, not in relation to any one programme but over time. The idea that a programme's imbalance and impartiality are put right over time is wholly consistent not simply with the free society in which we live, but with the idea of plurality of broadcasting on which the Broadcasting Bill is supposed to be based. When we heard the talk of the brave new world of new broadcasting with multiple channels, the argument was always that different opinions would cancel each other out.

That argument was put before Lord Wyatt thought that he could do his worst with some programmes of which he disapproved, before he approached the Prime Minister and before the Prime Minister instructed the Minister for the Arts on what he had to do. It was put when the Broadcasting Bill was in the hands of the Home Office, not in the hands of No. 10 Downing street.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Is not my right hon. Friend being unduly unkind to the Minister for the Arts? After all, since he has rewritten two thirds of the Bill, is not it understandable that the Prime Minister would like to have the odd bit that relates to the original legislation?

Mr. Hattersley: I take my hon. Friend's point. However, I understand that most of the rewriting was done by the Home Office. The fact that this proposal was imposed on the Home Office illustrates its basic purpose —to intimidate broadcasters. The result will be a reduction in high-quality broadcasting, a reduction in tolerance and a reduction in freedom—a reduction of the values that we want to see in our society. I repeat, for the third time, that we will repeal the clause at the first opportunity and, for that reason, we shall tonight vote against its incorporation in the Bill.

Mr. Julian Critchley (Aldershot): What on earth is all the fuss about? We left for our summer hols in July happy in the knowledge that we had persuaded the Minister of State that, at long last, he was on the right lines, only to find in October that he has been shunted into a siding. That is due to an unholy alliance between Lord Wyatt and an early-day motion signed by 100 Conservative Back Benchers—one sage and a hundred onions. *[Laughter.]* I am not getting paid for this.

Some of us remember Lord Wyatt—Mr. Woodrow Wyatt as he then was—when he was a Member of the House of Commons. Once heard, never forgotten. The most accurate description of him then would probably have been "crypto-socialist". In more recent and happier times, he is the author of a column in the *News of the World* entitled, believe it or not, "The Voice of Reason". He is even better known as a man of views; he has more views than a dog has fleas. How suitable it is that he should have devoted his remaining energies to emasculating his media rivals elsewhere.

Why is it that many hon. Members—I was going to say "of my great party", but that would be presumptuous—of our great party believe that we have the best newspapers in the world and the worst broadcasting, when all the evidence suggests that it is the other way round? Could it be because youthful left wingers are persuaded to join the media, while youthful right wingers go into the City, become estate agents or manage, for a time, the Scottish Conservative party?

5.15 pm

Perhaps, in the dog days of summer, I should have tabled an amendment that would have put the BBC and ITV firmly under the control of Conservative central office. Let us suppose that we had passed such an amendment. I should like to offer an example of some of the programmes that we might have been enjoying this winter. We might have had "Thought for the Day" by Mr. J. Archer and "Listen with Mother" with Mrs. Angela Rumbold. "The Weather" would be the province of my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) with "England fog-bound; the continent isolated." There would have been a new series of "Dr. Finlay's Casebook" in which those two loveable Scots, Dr. Finlay and Dr. Cameron, would be played by Messrs. Forth and Forsyth. We might have had "Last of the Summer Wine" starring Sir Marcus Fox and "The Money Programme" fronted by a series of "friends of the family".

I can assure the House that no old films would be shown over bank holidays and the Christmas period. We should no longer have to watch "The Guns of Navarone" for the umpteenth time. Bank holidays would be filled by extracts from the Prime Minister's speeches at party conferences ranging over the past nine or 10 years. Such a regime would not be without its entertainment and its quiz shows. There would be a quiz show entitled "Standing Ovation" in which Young Conservatives were encouraged to make speeches and in which the one who got the longest applause would be awarded shares in the electricity industry.

Would not my clause have solved, once and for all, the problem of bias? Many of my hon. Friends on the Back Benches would have been able to boast of Britain's good fortune in possessing not only newspapers such as the *Sun*, the *News of the World*, the *Sunday Sport* and *The People*, but the fairest, cleanest and best broadcasting in the world. Sadly, we have missed yet another opportunity.

Mr. Maclennan: The late Norman Buchan would have enjoyed that speech. His presence in this debate is felt by all of us; that is why we thank the Minister for paying a well-deserved tribute to him. He inspired not only the interest of which the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) properly spoke, but something pretty close to affection among hon. Members of all parties. He would have cared about this debate.

In all fairness to him, I must say that the Minister did not attempt to discharge the onus of proof which I

suggested, in the concluding moments of his speech, that he might do, because it is not possible to demonstrate widespread public dissatisfaction about impartiality in broadcasting. Tens of millions of viewers watch controversial and less controversial current affairs, news and documentary programmes, but the number of complaints on the ground of partiality is very small.

In the year ending March 1990, there were only 245 complaints from the public to the Independent Broadcasting Authority about impartiality. The IBA's own annual survey in 1990 on public opinion showed a pattern similar to previous years. Between 76 per cent. and 78 per cent. of the public thought that no favouritism towards any party was shown either by ITV or Channel 4. In 1988-89 the Broadcasting Complaints Commission adjudicated on only 19 complaints relating to unfairness or unjustified invasions of privacy. Six complaints were upheld wholly, five were upheld in part and eight were not upheld. In the light of those figures, it is hard to see why we should weigh in the balance Lord Wyatt and the 100 onions and allow the Government to amend the Bill in such a significant fashion at this last gasp.

In my intervention I reminded the Minister that he made his views clear not only in his speech to the Royal Television Society, to which the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) referred, but rather more fully in Committee on 30 January when he said:

> "When I was presented with the opportunity to reflect on whether we should make changes to the impartiality requirement it occurred to me that a Government of any stripe are always the last group to be credited with impartiality. I decided that it was better to leave well alone. That is what I have done. We have not fiddled around with the impartiality arrangements. We felt that it was better to leave goalposts where they were."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F,* 30 January 1990; c. 411.]

I understand the ways of politics and the pressures that Ministers can be put under by other Ministers, sometimes senior ones. I do not find it in any way disreputable that the Minister should have deployed the argument that he has deployed this afternoon with his customary skill. His position today is in stark contrast to what he has said publicly and in the House on a number of occasions.

Mr. Mellor: I reject that imputation, however courteously put, because it is not so. The burden of what I was trying to say to the House earlier is that the law on impartiality, the requirement that there should be due impartiality on matters of current industrial and political controversy and so on, is precisely the law as it was in 1954. I was not prepared to make that change. What I said in January stands and what I said in September was said in the clear knowledge that we were going to do what we have subsequently done.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): Oh!

Mr. Mellor: Oh yes, absolutely.

In September I dealt with some of the solutions put forward by Lord Wyatt which I thought, and have successfully been able to persuade others, were not workable. We have not moved the goalposts. Everyone agreed that the referee should have a proper rule book so that the players knew what rules they were playing to. We are simply saying that that rule book should contain rules to be determined as to those particular aspects of the game and not by us.

I am prepared to be criticised for making a change that some people see as purely cosmetic, but that change does not go to the root of the impartiality law, which is exactly as it was.

Mr. Maclennan: The Minister says that in his speech to the Royal Television Society he knew exactly what was going to happen, but the proposals have changed three or four times since then and we are now dealing with a proposition that is quite different from that first put forward in the other place.

I admire the Minister's dexterity in a purely rhetorical sense as he has tried to reconcile the irreconcilable. Neither he nor I, nor the public, are interested in the thought processes that led him to arrive at his stand—we are more interested in the effect of what has been done.

Mr. Mellor: I respect the hon. Gentleman's contribution to the Bill and I want to pose to him this question: what will be the difference that television companies will face today, as against what they have faced for nearly 40 years, apart from the fact that there will be a code about which everyone agreed anyway? What substantive change wreaks the mischief complained of?

Mr. Maclennan: As I said in my earlier intervention, I believe that the onus of proof on the mischief lies with the Minister. I do not believe that he has discharged it. As to what will be the consequence of this, who am I to put myself in the shoes of many broadcasters who have cast doubts upon the appropriateness of the clause as amended? There is not one broadcasting company that has not expressed its grave reservations about this change. They have all taken endless legal advice. Some of us have received the authorative opinion of Mr. Anthony Scrivener, chairman of the Bar Council. He has spoken of continuing litigation that will be necessary to sort out the consequences of the amended clause.

It is plainly not possible for me to answer the question posed by the Minister, any more than it is for the broadcasters to answer it. That is the nub of the problem. The clause will leave us with a vast uncertainty that cannot be resolved by debate across the Floor, but by a whole series of cases in the courts. It will not be solved by one case as the judges themselves may disagree. Those cases will be pursued by people who have a desire to obstruct the freedom of expression that the Minister and I are at one in seeking to preserve.

Mr. Mellor: The requirement on broadcasters today is that they should adhere to due impartiality on matters of current industrial and political controversy. That is almost exactly the same as the rule that they will face under the Bill. As far as I am aware, that requirement has not been the subject of frequent legal challenges in the past 40 years, and I doubt that it will be during the next 40. The substantive law, the requirement to observe due impartiality, is precisely the same in the Bill as it is in today's law.

Mr. Maclennan: If we were debating precisely the same provisions as the substantive law set out in the 1954 Act I do not imagine that we would have had a long debate or any debate. The Minister knows that the Government are imposing upon the ITC an obligation to prepare a code with specific, new, substantive requirements. That code

[Mr. Maclennan]

will create uncertainty and that uncertainty will cause problems for broadcasters and make the mischief of which I complain.

We are fortunate to have television and radio stations that are not afraid to make controversial programmes. Broadcasters are entitled to put out such programmes. Hon. Members have already mentioned Harold Pinter's programme on Nicaragua, and what about Norman Stone on Poland? Those programmes contain different views held by very different individuals on important current events. No one believes that the views expressed are those of the broadcaster—clearly they are the views of those participating in the programme. That very independence is at risk. Companies competing in an ever-hostile commercial climate will be frightened of making such programmes if there is a risk of organisations such as the Freedom Association—there are plenty of such well-heeled organisations—taking those companies to court.

I do not regard the opinion of any single lawyer on this matter as conclusive. It is the multiplicity of views that have been expressed by lawyers that could be regarded as giving rise to concern. There is no doubt that the balance of legal opinion on this is in line with that expressed by Lord Goodman, to which the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook referred. He believes that it will create a legal picnic. We managed at an earlier stage of the Bill to persuade the Minister of the undesirability of that in the context of the quality threshold. He showed himself then to be sensitive to the undesirability of dragging these matters, which should be handled by the regulators, to the regulation of the courts, or to the establishment of precedents with one test case after another. They will not all follow in line, for the sort of subject matter that could be challenged, particularly in considering whether a matter is major, as required by the measure, will be extremely difficult.

5.30 pm

The Minister has won his spurs in the House. Indeed, he has won recognition in the Government, in view of his elevation to his important post, as a result of the manner in which he handled the Bill, listened to opinion and weighed it up. He did not favour a particular view but weighed the argument.

The argument deployed in the other place in favour of the clause as drafted was of the strength of gossamer. If the Minister has any scope for manoeuvre, I urge him to drop this worthless and dangerous clause. The previous three chairmen of the IBA wrote a powerful letter to *The Times* warning of the dangers of what the right hon. and learned Gentleman has in mind. I read with interest what Mr. Glyn Mathias, an experienced programme maker and broadcaster for ITN, and a man known to most of us, said on the subject. He commented:

> "The application of due impartiality can vary depending on the number of differing views on any one issue. It is rarely just a question of a right-wing view versus a left-wing view. The result of the amendment will be to neuter the news and to impede our ability to cover events as we have in the past."

Coming from a man such as Glyn Mathias, that is serious, for he weighs his words with care.

I have also paid attention to what has been said by the IBA and the shadow ITC. They were not persuaded of the need for what is proposed by anything the Minister or anyone else said. On 3 July they issued a briefing on the question of impartiality in which they said:

> "In our view, the Bill as drafted offers appropriate safeguards for impartiality."

That is why there was no debate on the issue on Report and why there was no serious lengthy debate about impartiality in Committee, for we are united in recognising that impartiality is the bedrock of television and we are satisfied that it has been adequately secured in the past.

I conclude with an appeal not in my words but in the words of a leader writer in *The Daily Telegraph*. Perhaps it was written by Mr. Max Hastings, who in matters of freedom is a voice to be listened to. I should not attribute it to him because I cannot be certain that he wrote it, but the writer stated:

> "A classic test of any government is how far it seeks superintendence over matters left to good sense. The amendment . . . takes intervention well beyond what should be acceptable to Conservatives."

I hope that Conservative Members will heed that and will vote tonight with my hon. Friends and Her Majesty's Opposition.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) on a highly entertaining speech. I hope that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) will forgive me if I do not express the same congratulations on his remarks. My hon. Friend achieved his laughs, not for the first time, at the expense of some of his colleagues. He complained that he was not paid for his performance here this afternoon. Perhaps he should look for a forum where he will be suitably rewarded, because he is assuredly good enough to be paid. I fear that he will never need to worry about the ITC getting at him about being partial or biased over a major matter.

I strongly support the amendments on impartiality, particularly No. 22. The broadcasters have only themselves to blame for the amendments. I suggest that the original amendments in the other place were introduced in frustration at the arrogance of a minority of broadcasters, in the ITV companies and in the BBC, who have abused their positions of influence by producing programmes that peddle their political viewpoints——

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Great Grimsby): Name them.

Mr. Riddick: If the hon. Gentleman will be patient, I shall refer to a few programmes.

The hysterical response to the impartiality amendments has brought no credit to some of the broadcasters concerned. Many of their claims have been highly misleading, while some have been merely abusive. Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel 4, said that Tory Members of Parliament were employing "McCarthyite tactics" and claimed that

> "this campaigning has been orchestrated by a small right-wing lobby."

Was he referring to Lord Wyatt, to the Media Monitoring Unit, to the Freedom Association or to the 113 hon. Members who signed the early-day motion? I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot that they are not all Conservative Members. The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland will be pleased to hear that they include a Liberal, and there are a few Ulster Unionists. At any rate,

the 113 hon. Members who signed the early-day motion represent not a small but a substantial lobby that is not without influence.

The most misleading claim that broadcasters have made is that the amendments introduce a new concept into broadcasting law. That is not true, and I was pleased that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) did not try to put forward that argument.

Due impartiality has been a requirement since the 1950s, and the requirement in the Bill referring to due impartiality is word for word the same as the requirement for due impartiality in the Broadcasting Act 1981. In other words, due impartiality is not a new concept.

The wording is specific, saying that due impartiality must be achieved on matters of industrial and political concern and that that balance should be achieved within a series. Indeed, the IBA has incorporated the requirement to balance over a series in its guidelines.

The trouble is that the broadcasters have been ignoring those requirements and the IBA has proved itself unable or unwilling to enforce its own rules. That is why the amendments are necessary and why it is important that the basic outlines of what is meant by due impartiality, how it is to be achieved and the time limits within which balancing programmes are to be shown should be clearly spelt out in the Bill. That way, there can be no misunderstanding or ignoring of the impartiality rules by broadcasters and the ITC will not simply be able to turn a blind eye to abuses. The forces of law will be solidly behind the new ITC code.

There is no doubt that there has been a clear flouting of existing impartiality rules. In some cases that can be put down to sheer ignorance on the part of the broadcasters. I talked to some broadcasters who did not realise that they had a responsibility to be impartial in the way that they presented things. They simply were not aware of the current state of the law.

Mr. Corbett: Name them.

Mr. Riddick: I have talked to individual broadcasters —for example, people who have interviewed me have been unaware of such matters. However, the majority of cases in which the impartiality rules have been flouted have been deliberate.

Recently, there was a highly revealing article in *The Guardian*. It was written by Paul Bonner, the founder programme controller at Channel 4 and now the director of programme planning at the ITV Association. He wrote quite openly:

"to do justice to difficult and unpopular arguments has meant that balance might only be reached in terms of two or three years, rather than within any series."

He says that balance can be achieved over two or three years, which may be all very well for him. But the law says that balance should be achieved over a series. He is clearly flouting that and seems to be doing so with impunity.

In a radio discussion with my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern), Mr. Michael Grade, to whom I have already referred, actually admitted that "Oh Superman", a highly partisan and one-sided programme attacking American foreign policy and presented by Harold Pinter, was not balanced or impartial. He said that a balance to the programme was provided in a "Right to Reply" programme by an unknown individual, who was given two or three minutes to put the counter argument. One might say, "So what—it does not matter." But the current law—the Broadcasting Act 1981—states that impartiality must be achieved.

There is proof elsewhere that some television series are one-sided and unbalanced. I make no apology for referring to the Media Monitoring Unit, which has shown that some television series, notably "World in Action" and "Open Space", are consistently biased to the left.

Mr. Corbett: Give an example.

Mr. Riddick: The hon. Gentleman asks me to give an example. I have mentioned "World in Action" and "Open Space". I do not suppose that the hon. Gentleman has actually taken the trouble to read any of the material produced by the Media Monitoring Unit. Were he to have done so, he would have seen clearly to which specific programmes the unit was referring.

Some people might say that Tories and right-wing people would have a go at "Panorama". It is interesting that the last report by the Media Monitoring Unit found that the "Panorama" programme's output during the series in question was extremely balanced and there was little bias towards either left or right.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: Does my hon. Friend think that the reason why the "Panorama" programme was found to be balanced was that it had faced a couple of libel actions successfully brought by hon. Members?

5.45 pm

Mr. Riddick: My hon. Friend makes a telling point, but there is another issue. My hon. Friend knows only too well the difficulties of taking legal action against broadcasters. We have heard that it will be a lawyers' paradise, that they will have a field day and will be taking the television companies to court every five minutes. That is absolute nonsense. For a start, the amendments will not result in that, but even if they were to make litigation easier, the cost of taking such legal action is prohibitive. Therefore, to suggest that the amendments will produce much more litigation is absolute nonsense.

I am not just concerned about party political bias; I am equally worried about a more general anti-free market, anti-big business, anti-capitalism and pro-Government intervention approach that seems to pervade so much of British broadcasting.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: Will the hon. Gentleman give an example? I hate to interrupt this tide of nonsense. Will he give us examples of producers, directors and programmes that have shown the malevolence, bias and lack of impartiality of which he accuses them all?

Mr. Riddick: I have no intention of starting to name lots of names.

I have been involved in a television programme made by one of the respectable current affairs teams, which was quite clearly biased. When I met the programme's producer and presenter it was interesting to find that they quite clearly had a specific view about the programme that they were making.

Mr. Corbett: Like the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Riddick: Yes, of course it was like me. The reason why I was being interviewed was that I had a certain view.

[Mr. Riddick]

I should have thought that producers and presenters would be interested in presenting programmes that were balanced and impartial.

Mr. Hattersley: I would hardly believe that the hon. Gentleman said it, but he did so twice, so I must ask him the question again. His complaint is that producers have a specific view. Does he believe that television programmes should or could possibly be made without the producers having a specific view or did he just make a couple of slips of the tongue?

Mr. Riddick: I know that the right hon. Gentleman is trying to be clever, but the producers' and presenters' views should not be peddled in the programmes that they make. Of course, everyone has a perfect right to a view, but they should attempt to present a balanced approach in the programmes that they make.

One radio programme that I regularly listen to is a classic example of the sort of thing that we get. It is "Start the Week" on Radio 4 on Monday mornings, presented by Melvyn Bragg—*[Interruption.]* That programme is one of the more notable but subtle exponents of the sort of thing about which I have been talking—*[Laughter.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. Barracking from sedentary positions does nothing to improve the quality of debate in the House.

Mr. Riddick: I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Opposition Members have been talking about intolerance. They are demonstrating enormous intolerance simply because I am putting a counter view.

One of the interesting comments made in the debate in the Lords on Monday was made by Lord Annan, a respected commentator on broadcasting matters who chaired the Committee on the future of broadcasting 13 years ago. In Monday's debate he said:

> "Two distinguished broadcasters in current affairs on television told us that there ran through the output a strain that was anti-establishment, anti-institution, anti-free enterprise and anti-American."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 October 1990; Vol. 522, c. 1160.]

I fear that that strain has not entirely disappeared.

The other day, Barbara Amiel, writing in *The Times* under the rather extraordinary headline

> "Bias makes for better television",

said:

> "Good documentary makers almost always have a point of view, and in my 20 years of working in the medium I found few who could be said to have sound Tory views."

That does not prove anything, but it suggests that a large number of people working in the media have a left-wing perspective on life. I do not object to that, but I object when they peddle their left-wing views in the programmes that they make.

Most hon. Members will have heard of Christopher Dunkley, the respected television reporter of the *Financial Times*. Back in July he questioned why the BBC was so enthusiastically preaching one point of view on environmental matters. He went on to ask:

> "When does the BBC intend to give equal time to other political attitudes on the environment?"

So, several people are worried about what is going on in television. There is clear evidence of bias in certain radio programmes on the BBC——

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Would it be possible to give a specific example from "Start the Week", because I understand that it is enjoyed by a large audience of all sorts of people, including large numbers of bourgeois ladies whose favourite subversive habit is flower arranging?

Mr. Riddick: As it happens, it is my misfortune to listen to "Start the Week" most mornings on my way to the station. The other day my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) was on the programme talking about bias on television. It was interesting to hear how Mr. Bragg interrupted my hon. Friend far more than his other guests—*[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend is perfectly capable of looking after herself, but it was clear that Mr. Bragg thoroughly disapproved of what she was saying and made sure that the other point of view was put—and that is not always his practice.

For as long as broadcasting plays such a vital and integral role in the British way of life, due impartiality will be a key component of it. I congratulate all who are responsible for these amendments, in this House, the other House and outside Parliament, and I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister on coming forward with the amendments. I look forward to the day when similar impartiality requirements apply to the BBC, but in the meantime I am happy to support the Lords amendments.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I thoroughly enjoyed the speech by the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley), but I am a bit worried because he was not nearly as funny as the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick).

When I became a young councillor, I joined a local authority in Devon, which was wholly controlled by so-called independents. One of the first things that I was told was that they had no politics there: they were all above that sort of thing. I discovered that that meant, "We do not have any Labour party politics." All the councillors were happily Conservative and had always voted for and propagated Conservative ideas on the council.

Listening to the hon. Member for Colne Valley I had a tremendous sensation of deja vu. Here is a party which happily and consistently supports newspapers which quite a few people would think had about as much independence of view and lack of bias as Mrs. Whitehouse; yet that party claims that the journalists who work in broadcasting are not to be trusted to be independent.

But the Lords amendment is rather different. Those of us who sat through the Committee and watched the Minister for the Arts reshaping the legislation, so that it became by the end completely different from what had been intended by the people who wrote the line on the back of the envelope on which it was based, know that the fact that he has now had to give way at this very late stage to an amendment as bigoted, unimaginative and stupid as this one must show that he is acting on the instructions of his mistress.

The House should realise that the amendment encapsulates a dangerous attack on freedom of speech. I am a very partial person, so I believe strongly in impartiality. All my life, I have had a definite view on a number of subjects about which I have not hesitated to express my opinions, but I accept the right of others to disagree with me, publicly and in writing. I expect people

to have a contrary point of view and to express it, and I believe that our broadcasting would assume a much sadder and more dangerous form if we changed this set of values.

Democracy depends on the ability of people who have a vote to listen to differing points of view. Why do we offer ourselves for election if we do not believe in the right of every person in the country to listen to differing points of view? Why do we protect so strongly the privileges of the House of Commons which allow us openly to attack other institutions and ideas? It is because we believe in the right of free speech——

Mr. Gale *rose*——

Mrs. Dunwoody: I want to develop my idea a little further. I heard the hon. Gentleman express his views at considerable length in Committee, and learned there of his expertise in "Blue Peter".

It is vital that we understand that there must be diversity and the expression of a wide variety of views in broadcasting. We need to maintain codes of control, in the sense that we expect people to present balanced views. All of us, having seen programmes with which we disagree, demand some sort of balance for the other point of view; but we who are not involved in broadcasting must not sit down and draw up rigid rules which appear to tell the broadcasters they are not to be trusted to do their own jobs responsibly.

It is noticeable that we do not do this with newspapers. We allow journalists who work on newspapers to be as bigoted, ignorant and lazy about doing their research as they want to be—and from time to time they are helped by people who are as bigoted as they are——

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South: As a totally bigoted journalist in my other life, I put it to the hon. Lady that there are nevertheless hon. Members who think that the Lords amendment as it stands is worth having; that there are problems; and that it is appropriate and right that broadcasters be reminded of their duties.

Mrs. Dunwoody: I have no objection to broadcasters being reminded of their duties. That is the responsibility of those to whom we have given powers under the Bill to do precisely that. Why did the Government come here with a Bill that gave them those powers? Why do we have codes of conduct in existing broadcasting legislation? The Government gave those powers not because they thought it amusing to do so but because they expect those charged with them to carry out their duties. Those who have any doubt about the reasoning behind the amendment should listen carefully to the hon. Member for Colne Valley. The hon. Gentleman's one distinction is that he actually says what many Conservatives believe but are much too tactful and clever to put into words.

I think that only a small number of Conservative Members will vote against the amendment, although the commitment of Conservatives to freedom of speech is no less than the commitment of some Opposition Members. If the amendment is accepted, we shall be underlining not the need for impartiality but a call for bigotry, for political control by a Government who feel themselves under attack and who want to restrict the opportunities for broadcasters to put different points of view before the public. That is a dangerous form of paranoia and in the final analysis it is extremely restrictive.

6 pm

I frequently argue with the broadcasting authorities and often wish that they would show greater impartiality in their handling of some subjects. But I reserve my right to go on protesting to them through their existing machinery, raising points on which I think they are wrong and winning or losing my case on the basis of my evidence. I do not accept and hon. Members should never accept a deliberate, bigoted, small-minded and unacceptable attempt to restrict the freedom of broadcasters to produce open debate. Such debate is the life-blood of democracy, and for 10 years the Government have sought to restrict it. They must not be allowed to get away with it.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): I was always schooled to believe not to add to a construction anything that would not improve it. That has legislative wisdom, which is why I am slightly puzzled because the burden of the argument advanced by my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State was that the Lords amendments add nothing to the Bill. Under questioning, that was expressed once or twice. Why are we adding something that is unnecessary? I wish that my right hon. and learned Friend would look more carefully at that proposition, because some people suspect that the amendments add something that the Minister does not want. My right hon. and learned Friend would have been better advised to stand by his original position that the Bill had integrity as it was and that any additional information added by the clause was superfluous. That suspicion, that contesting of the proposition, means that he may find that he has agreed to something that he does not want.

The Minister was right to say that some of us do not like the impartiality rules. That is an important element in the argument. It is wholly appropriate that there should be an impartiality rule when the public fund, effectively through taxation, the licence fee, a public service broadcasting system. I had hoped that, in the advancement of broadcasting, we were moving to sufficient diversity so that competing views and ideas in the system were such that we did not have to worry about each jot and particular of everyone's view.

The past 11 years have unhappily concentrated our minds on the history of broadcasting. At one time, presses were licensed because we feared that their contrary views might undermine good government. We used to license the theatre and some productions there, because we feared that they might be insidious and seditious. The remarkable stability of this country over three centuries does not, by and large, bear that out by contrast with the experience of other countries. I thought that, by getting rid of the Lord Chamberlain, we had made a great leap forward.

As a Conservative, I do not like the concept that one man's views on a programme or what I should read or see are better than my own ability to judge. In amendments such as the one we are discussing, the detailing is a manifestation of the old-fashioned nanny state, which says that my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister and I and other hon. Members are not able as free citizens to say, "This is nonsense." It is like saying that we cannot judge, and that, because we are unable to make a judgment ourselves, specious bodies of the great and good have to be set up to do it for us. As I say, I thought that we had got rid of the Lord Chamberlain and his remit for the theatre. However, we now have Lord Rees-Mogg who has a better

[Mr. Richard Shepherd]

view on these matters than we because he is judged by the Government somehow to sum up the nation's propriety in these affairs.

My hon. Friends have expressed agitation about how awful and frightful some programmes are. I agree that some are motivated and some are particular, but the smashing thing about this country is that this clash of ideas is what we have always been about. We have advanced, and the freedom of speech and expression, which mean that I and my hon. Friends may be particular, are vital.

There is a fear of broadcasting through television. We are going back to the old licensing of the presses. It is said that there are too few of them and that, if they fall into the wrong hands, our dull electorate—Mrs. Smith of Aldridge or Mrs. Brown from somewhere else—will be incapable of recognising a prejudiced programme. Wise dissertations in the newspapers argue that visual images are somehow so captivating to our intelligence that they render us incapable of saying that something is wrong.

I advance my next argument because it is relevant. We banned the direct broadcasting of members of certain organisations in Northern Ireland. Among other things, that was a denial of people's right to hear even the unacceptable and it is therefore a denial of our freedoms. I have been trying to say for a couple of years that my party above all ought to be mindful of the fact that we are strong and free. I said that in the debate on the IRA. As free citizens in a free country, we are the final arbiters.

That may be seen as a slight digression, so I shall return to the proposition advanced by the Minister. The amendment adds nothing and should therefore be dropped. The Minister has secured that which he and other hon. Members think appropriate. It is over the top, and the Bill as it was before it went to the House of Lords should be allowed to stand. We should say that the amendment is unnecessary and drop it.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) is a remarkable Member of Parliament. On many issues, bucking the party system—which also happens on our side—enlightens a subject. The benefit of this place is not the two sides of the House, although that is necessary to get business through. It is that there are hon. Members in all parts of the House who buck the system and put forward their own ideas. I should like to see that inside and outside the House. I have not participated in debates on the Bill but, like the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills and my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), I should like to ask what the amendments are about. I have read reports of the debates and read about proceedings in the Lords.

The Minister has told us that the amendment will not make a big change. A problem arose from an early-day motion signed by 100 people and by some people in the other place with ideas about the problems, especially with independent companies. It was therefore thought that a little should be done to make those people feel that the subject was important when in fact it is not. However "better" it is than the original idea, there are some problems that I should like to investigate. I shall discuss partiality and impartiality and the legal challenge. It is a long time since I was Home Secretary but I should like to look at the problems that a Home Secretary might face if a legal challenge, or judicial review, were taken out. Judicial review seems to be becoming more common.

I shall look first at impartiality. People think that the Home Office runs broadcasting—which was certainly not the case when I was Home Secretary and I hope that it is not the case now—and on a controversial subject half the letters that used to pour in were in favour and half were against. On another subject, a different half might be in favour and another half against. It is surprising how subjective are the views of those who want particular programmes.

What is impartial? There is a newspaper in Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, called *The Impartial Reporter*. That is a curious use of the word "impartial", but perhaps it is the typical use of the word. People believe that they are impartial even when they are partial. For example, I shall be watching the televisoion on Saturday when the British rugby league team are playing the Australians. Unfortunately, I cannot go to the game. I hope that the commentators will be very partial because that is what I want. It does not matter because the Australian commentators will also be partial. I am only sad that I shall not be there.

Of course, I am not saying that all is well with British broadcasting. The way in which the Home Office used to run it—I hope that it still is running it—was correct. I remember a member of the Cabinet berating the BBC and threatening it with a reduction in its licence if it continued to behave in a certain way. I wrote to all my colleagues saying that it was neither their business nor mine. I said that if any individual member of the Cabinet felt strongly about any matter, he should write and complain as an individual, as large numbers of people used to do. Broadcasting is not under the control of the Government, the Cabinet or the House of Commons, and nor should it be. That does not mean that I do not have complaints about the BBC, but there is a code of practice for the BBC as well as for the IBA.

Of course, the BBC makes mistakes. I wrote to Sir Ian Trethowan at the time of Airey Neave's death. In the interests of impartiality, the BBC interviewed someone who said that his organisation had killed Airey Neave. In my letter—which appears in print in my book—I said:

"As a minister, I never attempted to dictate or interfere in BBC programmes. Indeed, it is my view that the BBC has a duty to allow a wide spectrum of political opinions to be voiced. Ideas and opinions will never subvert our society."

But I argued that it was a grave error of judgment to interview that man at that time. I was entitled to my view, but it did not mean that I wanted to control what the BBC was doing.

At the time of the Ulster workers' strike—this is an important point that should have been picked up before—Lord Fitt, then a Northern Ireland politician, came to me in high dudgeon and said that the BBC was the voice of the loyalist paramilitaries. He called the BBC "Radio Free Belfast", and said that it was the mouthpiece of the organisers of the Ulster workers' strike. The BBC argued that it required the declaration of an emergency to make it act in a different way. It does not worry me that the existing system does not mean impartiality in the true sense because it entitles me to complain if I wish to do so.

Despite all the weaknesses of the BBC and the IBA, I believe in the present system and in the distancing of Ministers and the House of Commons from the running of

broadcasting. It is vital that that should be so. That is why I am against a Ministry of Broadcasting. Broadcasting is better off under the Home Office because it pays so little attention to it. Indeed, it is vital that it does not. Imagine a Minister of Broadcasting going to his office every day, taking his coat off and saying, "I run broadcasting; it is my fiefdom." That would be wrong. Just imagine what would happen if broadcasting was put under the control of the Department of Trade and Industry because it controls the spectrum, or something like that. Please let us not do that.

Currently, it is left to the Home Secretary, through the Queen and others, to appoint the governor and the members of the board of the BBC. It should be possible not to appoint supporters of the Government in power. The only time that I was in a position to appoint a chairman of the BBC, I rang Edward Boyle and offered him the post. He had been a Conservative Minister, but I had the highest admiration for him. He declined, and one reason that he gave was that he loved his job at the University of Leeds. What I did not know was that he was dying. The appointment of chairmen or governors should be done out of respect for their intelligence and ability, not because of party support. That might not be perfect, but it is important to keep a distance. The code of practice in the Bill is an interference in freedom.

6.15 pm

How will the legal aspects affect the Government? I recognise the Minister's experience as a lawyer; he said that there would be no problem and that the Government would not end up in the courts. However, Lord Boston —who is the chairman of Television South, a former Minister with responsibility for broadcasting when I was Home Secretary, and a Queen's counsel—in another place called in aid legal opinion. Indeed, he dismissed legal opinion that I would not have lightly dismissed when I was Home Secretary. For example, he called in aid Mr. Anthony Scrivener, an eminent silk, who questioned the replacement of the words "make provision" by "take account of". He said that it was an improvement, but not a matter of great significance. He also referred to the words "major matters" replacing "individual issues". One person's major matter is another's minor matter. Lord Boston also quoted Lord Goodman, another eminent lawyer, who took a different view from that of the Minister.

Mr. Mellor: If the right hon. Gentleman had been advised by his lawyers and by the lawyers to the regulatory body that this was not a lawyer's picnic, he might have felt the same degree of fortitude that I feel when facing such comments. The right hon. Gentleman may not have been present when I said earlier that, although it has been suggested that the term "major matters" would lead to difficulty, in fact for 40 years the law has contained the word "matters", which would be just as likely to lead to difficulties. If someone wished to make a fuss about "major matters", he would be as likely to make a fuss about "matters". However, there has been no litigation in that respect during those 40 years. Many of the lawyers' arguments appear to be arguments against the original proposition, not the amendment.

Mr. Rees: Why put it in the Bill? The BBC and the IBA have had codes of practice for many years, but they are not in the Bill. Eminent lawyers take a different view from the Minister. He argues that there have been no court cases, but I warrant that there will be—especially in view of the strong views expressed by the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) and others. Those who wanted change have been conned. The Government believe that they are adopting a policy of damage limitation, but they are wrong.

There should not be the slightest question of broadcasting being under the control of the Government or Parliament. Let us have a statute for the ITC and a charter for the BBC and appoint the right sort of people as governors. Of course, mistakes are made, but I am proud of the BBC and the IBA none the less. We have the best broadcasting system in the world. It is not often that we praise anything in this country. In this place, we are here to run things down; to us, everything is wrong.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Speak for yourselves.

Mr. Rees: The hon. Gentleman has not been here long enough. When he comes to sit on the Opposition Benches, he will say that whatever the Labour Government do is wrong.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): He will not be here.

Mr. Rees: My hon. Friend says that the hon. Gentleman will not be here. If that is the case, we shall all be happy.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: The right hon. Gentleman should not confuse criticism of a Labour Government with criticism of the country. We do not run this country down. That is the prerogative of Labour Members.

Mr. Rees: The hon. Gentleman will never be a Minister at the Home Office and he will never have anything to do with broadcasting. He is typical of the sort of man who wants thought control and who believes that *The Sun* is the best newspaper in the world. I get angry about this talk of the country and political parties. It explains why politicians are held in such low esteem.

Do not put politicians in charge of broadcasting because that is wrong. The Government have made a mistake. The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills has it right. This country must be free, even if that involves making mistakes from time to time.

This is a silly Bill. We shall lose tonight, because that is the way things are, but it will be a sad day for broadcasting when we do.

Mr. Gale: In introducing the amendment, my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister for the Arts said that the 1954 Act makes provision for due impartiality. He told the House that those of us who served on the Committee felt that that provision was probably adequate and that he would probably have settled for that.

Those in the other place felt otherwise and they chose to table an amendment that would place greater emphasis on impartiality. The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) said that those in the other place did not want the amendment. If they had not wanted it, presumably they would not have voted it through by a two to one majority. If they had chosen to seek to defeat it, presumably there would have been more than 100 or so Labour peers present.

[Mr. Gale]

Sometimes this House and the other place are not entirely in touch with public opinion. It is interesting to note that, when the Lords defeat a Government measure, the Opposition say how wise they are.

Mr. Maclennan: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gale: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me to finish, I shall, of course, give way. As he knows, I have a high regard for the comments that he has made throughout our proceedings on the Bill. When the Lords introduce an amendment that none of us has discussed in Committee or on Report, it is suddenly wrong.

Mr. Maclennan: I always listen to the hon. Gentleman with interest because of his knowledge of broadcasting. He did not see fit to represent the so-called views of the public, as embodied in the amendment, at any stage in the Bill's proceedings. I imagine that, as a man interested in broadcasting, he is usually very much in touch with public opinion. Why was he not on this occasion?

Mr. Gale: I am perfectly prepared to concede that, on occasion, other people have better ideas than me. My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister conceded exactly that this evening. I think that it has been generally accepted that, since the Bill entered its Committee stage, it has been improved considerably following non-partisan discussion. The hon. Gentleman contributed a considerable amount to that process, as did many other Opposition Members. Indeed, I meant to start my speech by saying how very much those of us on the Back Benches who served on the Committee will miss the amusing wisdom of Norman Buchan, who played such an important part in our proceedings. Opposition Members contributed a great deal, but none of us in the House has a monopoly of wisdom, and I genuinely believe that, in this case, their Lordships have brought to our attention a matter that we should have considered earlier.

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook said that the amendment represented an effort to intimidate and that, if it reached the statute book, the programmes that would result would be bland and anodyne. I do not believe that. The general public want, and generally believe that they get, and generally do get, impartial programming. The hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) said that she wanted to see and hear both sides of the argument. That is what impartiality is about and the amendment has been drafted precisely to achieve that end: it represents a genuine and fair attempt to write impartiality into the Bill in terms that most reasonable people will be able to understand.

I am, by trade, a journalist and a broadcaster, and I find nothing frightening about the amendment. As the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich said, I used to make "Blue Peter," and I find no shame in that. But I spent two thirds of my career with the BBC making current affairs programmes. People of all political views were involved in making the programmes, but it was our proud boast then that our personal political opinions did not interfere in our programme making.

Mr. Corbett: What, even on "Blue Peter"?

Mr. Gale: People say that the old jokes are the best, but although I am in favour of the environment and recycling, I think that it would be nice to hear a new joke from time to time.

The amendment is being treated by some as an attack on freedom of information. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), who has been a staunch defender of freedom of information, introduced the IRA argument. As a current affairs producer and director, I shared with my colleagues of whatever political persuasion the clear understanding that we should never give air time to terrorists or convicted criminals. It was only as a result of the breakdown of that understanding among broadcasters that the Government found it necessary to impose that regulation. Undoubtedly, the best form of regulation is self-regulation.

I see no cause for fear in the amendment. My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) will be seeking to catch your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I know that he will put another point of view. My hon. Friend and I do not always agree. Sometimes my post is misdirected to him and he courteously forwards it, and sometimes it is the other way round, so we know each other's constituents' views. We know that, out there, there are a lot of people who are genuinely concerned about the standards of broadcasting and about impartiality. They are not only Conservative supporters; there are most certainly Labour supporters among them.

The public want security. They want to feel that, broadly speaking, what they see on the screen—over a reasonable period—is balanced. That is what their Lordships have sought to write into the Bill. They had three attempts at it before getting it right. That, in itself, says a lot for the way in which that House works. The amendment was not forced through the other place in an imperfect form. Their Lordships considered it as they often consider matters—perhaps with greater wisdom and depth than we do in this place. I think that they got it right and I see nothing whatever to fear from the amendment.

I hope and believe that the House will accept that, in this instance, the other place has made a significant contribution to freedom and democracy in broadcasting. One side will never be impartial, fair and democratic. The public want the opportunity generally, consistently and all the time to hear both sides of the argument. That is what the amendment would ensure and I hope that, on consideration, hon. Members on both sides of the House will feel able to support it.

Mr. Tony Banks: I also pay tribute to our dear, late colleague, Norman Buchan; one of the few poet politicians that we have—or had—in this country. Opposition Members will miss him greatly, and I know that he will be missed by many Conservative Members who criticised him in the past, but who always recognised the sincerity of his views.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) on his skilfully crafted vignette. I know that we shall be reading about it for the next six months in the various publications that he writes for. He was able to speak with all the freedom of a man never likely to be tempted by political office.

6.30 pm

The code of practice for broadcasting put before us by the Lords has all the hallmarks of the Prime Minister's paranoia—she who actually believes that any form of opposition or criticism of her or her Government's policies is tantamount to treason. I am afraid that she is supported by many intolerant people on the Conservative Benches.

The code would have been unacceptable to me wherever it had originated, and whoever initiated it. Even if it had come from the Minister for the Arts—the most acceptable face of Tory extremism on the Front Bench today—I should have opposed it. The fact that its genesis was in the vile and bilious views of that odious bigot Lord Wyatt makes it doubly repellant. As far as I can tell, he wants the unrestricted freedom to write what he wants in a newspaper such as the *News of the World*, and to restrict broadcasters from making programmes with which he happens to disagree. What hypocrisy that amounts to. What double standards.

Sir Ian Gilmour: The hon. Gentleman is not being altogether fair to Lord Wyatt because 40 years ago he was on the extreme left and now he is on the extreme right. Surely that demonstrates due impartiality.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Before the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) deals with that, I am sure that he will recognise, on reflection, that we should refer to members of the other place with some respect.

Mr. Banks: It is very difficult to have any respect for Lord Wyatt, to be perfectly honest, and I am not prepared to accord him any. I shall not mention him again—that is the easiest way in which to pay him any respect. Anyone who can write the sort of article that he writes in the *News of the World* does not deserve serious consideration when he expresses views about impartiality in broadcasting, and it is as simple as that. He wants to turn broadcasters and broadcasting into as unbiased a medium as the *News of the World* or *The Sun*.

When the Minister for the Arts was speaking about the code of practice, he said that there was no impartiality in the written word. That is certainly true of the extreme right-wing bias of our great national newspapers. Surely, if the written word is central to and underpins the democratic process, as so many journalists constantly tell us, we should require balance from the written word, from journalists and from newspapers. We already require balance from broadcasters, through the IBA and the charter. Balance is written into that, and there are statutory rights and requirements with regard to it.

What is so unsatisfactory about the present situation? We should like to see a statutory right of reply as regards the written word, but when that case has been argued, the Government and journalists have always rebutted it. We are asking broadcasters to go much further than journalists. As I have said, broadcasters already impose upon themselves, and adhere to, an acceptable balance. The public do not require us to change the rules as they currently apply to broadcasting.

Mrs. Currie *rose*——

Mr. Banks: I am happy to give way to the hon. Lady so that she can get a story to use in her next newspaper article.

Mrs. Currie: Where, in the hon. Gentleman's paeon of praise for balance and in his attitude to newspapers, lies the refusal by the Leader of the Opposition to talk to *The Times*, or the refusal by Derbyshire county council and other council leaders to put advertisements in *The Times Educational Supplement* because of articles that appear in *The Sunday Times?* What about the views of a headmaster —who happens to be a Labour councillor in east Staffordshire—who believes that all satellite television dishes should be banned, along with *The Sun?*

Mr. Banks: I certainly do not think that the anecdotal approach to politics, which the hon. Lady specialises in, is the way to treat the matter at a serious level, which is how one would expect it to be treated.

Any hon. Member is entitled to say that he or she does not wish to speak to a particular newspaper. Even if an Opposition Member told some newspapers everything—the whole truth—they would never print it, because it is the function of a number of newspapers to do the dirt on the Labour party. I remember talking to a journalist from the *Daily Mail* whose specific instructions had been to do the dirt on the Labour party. If an Opposition Member does not want to talk to a newspaper, surely that is his or her right.

I do not agree with banning newspapers from libraries, which means that I do not agree with some of the decisions taken in local government, by councils controlled by the Labour party. The hon. Lady knows that because of our exchanges in Committee. There is no way in which she can catch me out in such an obvious and predictable fashion.

I am worried that, when the justification for the code was advanced in another place, it was said that broadcasting existed as a protective monopoly. Up to 30 channels can be obtained by people with cable television. That does not seem to me to be a definition of a monopoly. If a programme on one channel puts a view that another one disagrees with, or if it has its facts wrong, there is ample opportunity for another television station to put it right. Newspapers do that from time to time when they attack each other.

If the code is passed, it will be largely unenforceable, but that is not its real danger, and we should not reject it merely because of that. My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) got it right: the code is there to intimidate broadcasters. It will result in self-censorship, because broadcasters will be so worried about what might happen that they simply will not make certain programmes, on the ground that it could get them into difficulties with the authorities. It is the self-censorship element of the code that worries me most.

To so many Tory politicians, impartiality merely means agreeing with their views. In recent months and years broadcasters have embarrassed the Government. That is one of their prime functions.

The hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) knows about the broadcasters' ability to criticise Government and call Ministers to account. It might detract from Ministers' dignity of office, but, frankly, that is what the public expect broadcasters and journalists to do. Unfortunately, it is a lamentable fact that few journalists and broadcasters are prepared to do that today. There is far too much deference given to Ministers by the broadcasters whom I listen to on the radio or the journalists whose articles I read in the newspapers.

[Mr. Banks]

The code is part of a long-running campaign by Conservative Members against broadcasters and against the BBC in particular. The people have made no demands for such a code to be imposed upon broadcasters. When it is only the politicians who are complaining, I am convinced that they have got it totally wrong. If I had received a large number of letters telling me that there is bias in broadcasting and giving me details, I might be more concerned. I have received no letters to argue that case. I have received dozens of complaints in letters—I am sure that many other hon. Members have, too—from people with the opposite point of view. They are worried about the implications of the code and of the Bill in general.

The code and the proposals in the Bill come from a dangerously authoritarian Government, led by an intolerant Prime Minister, who uses the language of freedom while always acting to limit it. I greatly welcome the assurance given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook that when he is Home Secretary the code will be repealed. I am sorry that the Minister for the Arts supports it.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): Although I do not necessarily share some of the darker insinuations about repression that have been made by some Opposition Members, it is legitimate for certain Conservative Members to be tentatively puzzled, to put it mildly, about why we have got to where we are tonight. In the past few months, we have moved from the position where we did not feel it necessary to legislate further on these matters to the position where we were going to legislate on individual issues, and then to the position where we would legislate on major matters. In a short time we have moved from the non-defined to the over-defined and then to the ill-defined. We have moved from arm's length to hands on and then to one hand on. At the very least, that suggests uncertainty of intent.

When Members on both sides of the House mention the possibility of litigation, it reminds me of a phrase that featured in the Lords debate. A legal expert from Oxford was quoted as having said that the phrase "major matters" was

"elusive of meaning and pregnant with ambiguity."

That sounds like the House debating earlier this week economic and monetary union.

Leaving that aside, that seems to me, as a non-lawyer listening to lawyers—my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) and lawyers in another place—to be a worrying prospect. I believe that, on television, there is bias of four kinds. The first sort, which occasionally I think that I see with my slightly biased eye, is blatant anti-Tory bias. But what do I say to myself? I say, "I can rely, above all else, on my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) to act not only as a bias detector but also as a bias corrector in his own right."

I have to remind myself also that I read studies which show that large numbers of people in the country believe that much of the television output is biased in favour of the Tory party. I need also to take note of the stark, simple fact that, although this medium is caricatured as a thoroughgoing anti-Tory medium, and although it is alleged to have enormous influence over people's opinions, the Conservative party keeps winning elections. Although, therefore, I see aspects of anti-Tory bias, and sometimes what seem to be blatant examples of anti-Tory bias, on television, I try to put them into a common-sense context.

The second sort of bias that we see on television is anti-Government bias—indeed, anti-any-old-Government bias. What that means is simple: that when my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health hands out another few million or billion pounds, television will show a picture of someone on a long waiting list who needs an operation. I can guarantee that, if ever the Opposition come to power, they will not solve the waiting list problem in a hurry and that television will do a programme saying, "You said six months ago that you were going to solve the problem, but here is the same person in the same queue." There is nothing that one can do about that second form of bias. Moreover, if one thinks about it, it is a healthy form of bias.

The third form of bias that I see, according to my own eye, is cultural bias. There is not a great deal that we can do about it, but I believe that it is a damaging bias. I am political about it. As a whole, the BBC is a little too anti-enterprise for my taste. It is a little too conservative. It has not caught up with some of the new thinking that I personally and some of my colleagues wish to see disseminated.

I sympathise with the description about a year ago at the Edinburgh television festival by Mr. Rupert Murdoch of that sort of cultural bias by the BBC, but then I say to myself, "What can we do about it? What we see on the box is a reflection of the state of our society." In my view, it is an inert and over-conservative society that does not respond as quickly as I personally would like to some of the policies that the Government want to pursue. We have to remember, however, that Mr. Rupert Murdoch's cure for that form of bias would be far worse than the disease. We should be screaming for a return of the bias after we had had a dose of Mr. Rupert Murdoch on the BBC.

6.45 pm

The fourth form of bias is the most difficult of all. It is ontological bias. I know that that is an awful word, but I think that it is the one that I mean, if I have got it right. It means that bias is built into the nature of the medium. It means that, if there is a spectacular picture, no matter who is at the controls behind the machine there will be an enormous compulsion to show it. Nine times out of 10, that picture will be damaging to authority, order and reasoned assumptions. However, there is nothing that we can do about it. That is the nature of television film. One could write philosophical treatises about it, but there is nothing that we can do about it.

That reinforces the other form of bias, the inbuilt anti-Government bias of the medium. There is nothing that can or should be done about it. Moreover, we should be grown up about it.

What concerns me about the Bill has nothing to do with oppression and some of the other exaggerated words that have been used by the Opposition. My belief is that the amendment, even in its watered-down form, springs more from instinct than from intelligence. If a little more thought had been given to the nature of the broadcasting medium in general, and television in particular, I should not have been put in this sad and silly position of having to vote, as I shall do tonight, against something, not

because I think that it will do immense damage to the country, or that it will seriously curtail freedom of speech, but because I believe that it is a sad and silly amendment.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: I have to declare an interest as the presenter of a political programme for Sky Television. It might be seen as an attenuated interest, given what I read in *Private Eye*, but it is there, none the less.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) on his speech. He suffers in his party from an unfortunate handicap—that he can think. If more Conservative Members suffered from it, we should not be debating the amendment. I do not intend to follow the attempt by the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) to be humorous about this sad and sorry affair, but he could have devised something worse than putting Central Office in charge of television. It would almost certainly do for the viewing figures what it did for the vote in Eastbourne. However, that could do radio, for which both the hon. Member for Aldershot and I have made programmes, a great deal of good. It could, by contrast with some regimes, be enlightened. I think of the news coming from a lectern in Downing street and of a nice little programme about Downing street called "Neighbours", with the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) playing Kylie Minogue's role and the Minister for the Arts playing the Jason Donovan of the series. It could be an interesting programme.

What is even more important, if television were put under the control of Central Office we should not have the saturation bombing of the BBC by the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) from which we have suffered in the past. It could be more enlightened than the regime under which the Lords amendment would put it. That would lead to much influence in television being given to a body that would be less enlightened, more partisan, prejudiced and ideological than even Central Office. It would pass it to the judges and the courts. If such a requirement, framed in that way, is written into the law, we shall turn the whole matter over to the courts. It is a sensitive question. Moreover, it is a question on which a large collection of people, with strong prejudices and large amounts of money, are prepared to go to law. We have many wealthy lunatics in this country who will almost certainly want to take up the opportunity that is offered to them to wreak a sort of indirect revenge on the broadcasting system for all the prejudices that we have heard about today. It creates an opening for any lunatic with any prejudice and enough money to push the issue into the courts.

The debate is a sad reflection of the way in which the Government function and how decisions are taken. The Bill's progress has been a steady dilution of the Prime Minister's very real prejudices. She wants to bring a touch of discipline into television. She does not like it, is prejudiced against it and wants to put the frighteners on it by legislation. Throughout the months in Committee and in the House, we have seen a steady dilution of that impact. The Minister has done the job, on which we have all congratulated him, of diluting those prejudices. He will earn plaudits from the media, the Opposition and the House. Yet now, after the Bill has been to the House of Lords, the Prime Minister is wreaking her revenge through her representatives in the geriatric ward up there. Lord Wyatt proposed this amendment, which is known to echo her instincts, attitudes and views. We now have the spectacle of that nice Minister who has told us one thing being forced to say something else because of the process in the House of Lords.

Mr. Tony Banks: What I find most distressing about the debate—perhaps my hon. Friend will agree—is that the majority of hon. Members on both sides who have spoken have disagreed with the code. What is acutely depressing is that we can win the debate and then lose the vote. That is a very sad mark of our parliamentary democracy.

Mr. Mitchell: Yes, it is a sad mark. In fact, the Minister's own words go against the proposal. In Committee, the Minister said:

> "When I was presented with the opportunity to reflect on whether we should make changes to the impartiality requirement, it occurred to me that a Government of any stripe are almost the last group to be credited with impartiality. I decided that it was better to leave well alone. That is what I have done . . . The Government deserve some credit in this matter. We have not fiddled around with impartiality arrangements. We felt that it was better to leave the goalposts where they were. Grief has not been turned away entirely, but may be more difficult to detect among the clouds of suspicion inevitably generated—rightly or wrongly—about these matters."

He went on to enlarge on that and said:

> "I am indebted to the hon. Member for Erdington, as he has put his finger on an issue that has caused me concern. My inclination was to leave the impartiality provisions as they were on the basis that our impartiality would not be readily accepted by some, and thus it would be better to leave matters well alone unless there was a compelling reason for changing them . . . The problem with removing it is that, as with many of these matters, it is easy to have a well intentioned stab at an alternative, and easy to find a reason why that well intentioned stab is not as good as what one has."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F*, 30 January 1990; c. 411-17.]

That was in January and now, in October, all those words have to be eaten. It is like running against one's own video tape in an election campaign. The Minister's case then was strong and telling and he should be putting it now.

Mr. Mellor: I am sorry to intervene because I know that there are some who want to draw the debate to a close. If what I am doing today required me to eat those words, I should not be here doing it. I want to make that clear. I have stood up for what I believe about the Bill on several occasions. The fact that I am commending the amendment is not in any sense a violation of what I said in January. What I said then related to the basic law on impartiality. We are talking about subsidiary matters to the code. The law is precisely as it was. When I spoke those words in January, there was a provision for a code. What has happened in the House of Lords is not that what Lord Wyatt said should be in the Bill has been put in the Bill, but certain matters were added to the requirement for a code to assert that the ITC should have regard to certain areas which, if it saw fit, a code should cover. That is different from changing the law on impartiality which, I shall say with the same force as I did in January, we are advised to leave well alone. My advice has been taken on that point.

Mr. Mitchell: The Minister doth protest too much. I am happy to allow him a long intervention but his position must be ambiguous if the intervention had to be that long to explain it. In January, he was arguing about leaving the requirement as it is. He is now arguing in favour of writing something into the Bill in the terms suggested by the House of Lords. That is an entirely different position. I accept

[Mr. Mitchell]

what he said about the other changes to the Bill, but he cannot have it both ways on this matter. That is the problem.

To enlarge the field of attack, the fact that the ITC has tacitly sanctioned the provision—albeit under duress—is a betrayal of its responsibilty. It has let down the television industry. The television industry feels that the ITC caved in far too easily.

We are left with a folly. The legal opinions gathered by the various television organisations make a telling case against the amendment, which throws everything into the courts. That is the wrong forum for airing such issues.

Professor J. M. Finnis for the Independent Television Association said:

"There can be no doubt that the phrase 'take account of' has an unsatisfactory elusiveness. It could be interpreted by a court as requiring that the ITC's rule conform to some judicially conceived standard about what matters are and are not major, and/or about what is and is not a due standard of impartiality . . . Such an interpretation . . . might be supported by pointing to the fact that whereas (4B) expressly provides that the rules need comply with the requirements of (4B) only 'to such extent as the Commission consider appropriate', there is no such leeway expressed in the face of (4A)".

Christopher Beaumont, the Queen's counsel for ITN, said:

"If the word 'major' is used it would raise formidable problems of drafing and definition. There would probably have to be a catch-all provision . . . I think that as the latest Third reading amendments stand there could be a risk of the Courts being asked to rule on the criteria used by editors in compiling their programmes."

That is a further argument against the amendment.

Anthony Scrivener, Queen's counsel for Channel 4, said:

"The words 'major matters' involve making a judgemental decision in a context where there is and can be no guidance as to how the words should be defined. It is obvious that what one person may consider to be a 'major matter' would be considered by another to be a matter of little importance."

Lord Goodman said that the amendment proposed is "virtually legally unworkable." He went on to say:

"Quite apart from the legal difficulties (including applications for injunctions before transmission, applications to the Divisional Court, and post transmission complaints and litigation) the practical difficulties are insuperable."

He goes on to put the point that I have already made about defining the words "major matters". That is the mess in which we are left. This is a sensitive area and people have strong feelings. People with money have prejudices that they want to pursue and the issue will be pushed into the courts.

This matter is central to the regulation and self-discipline of broadcasting and we are taking it out of the hands of the regulators, saying, "We have no confidence in you because we are going to throw it into the courts." That is a failure of the principle of regulation that has been the essence of our system until now.

The matter is one for doubt, hesitation and pain. We cannot compromise with this amendment. There is no way of taking out its teeth, diluting it or modifying it. It has to go. If it does not, we shall be in uncharted waters and enormous difficulties will be caused.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancaster, West): We have, effectively, been reviewing the question of impartiality since 1954—in the Broadcasting Act 1981, for instance. The hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) kept circumventing the main point. His objection to the amendment concerns the use of the code. An impartiality code relating to the BBC and the IBA has operated for many years, and, as far as we can establish, has prompted no litigation in the past 36 years. Why should it suddenly start now?

The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) made a good point: he said that we should allow the regulators to operate at arm's length from the Government, who, he said, should not be involved. Careful scrutiny of the amendment, however, reveals that that is precisely what the Government have set out to achieve. They do not suggest that the code that will govern future broadcasting is written in the Bill; the code will be written and implemented by the ITC. The amendment lays down what the code should include to ensure impartiality, but it does not say how that should be done.

7 pm

No Conservative Member is setting out to censor, say, a series of television programmes. The director, or producer, must have the right to present his argument. The code is intended to ensure a proper balance: the aim is to prevent a director from presenting a series of programmes —the amendment refers specifically to a series—in which only one party or point of view is represented, and no attempt is made to balance that with opposing views.

Since the introduction of the Television Act 1954, the power of the media has vastly increased. How many of us receive letters from constituents who have been moved to write to their Member of Parliament about a television programme? Surely we should be trying to ensure that, when an argument is presented to the public by such a powerful medium, the opposing argument is presented as well. We are not trying to tell broadcasters what they should be doing; we are asking them to do what they have been required to do since 1954.

Let me deal—as a former practising barrister—with the question of litigation. We are being asked to judge whether the code will prompt extensive litigation before it has even been written, which is nonsense. Lawyers in the other place have passed judgment on something that is not yet in existence, adducing the few scintillas of evidence available to them in relation to the ITC's guidelines. Should we not pay more attention to the experience of the past 36 years than to a few lawyers in the other place and outside the House who are gazing into their crystal balls?

The ITC will view the code in a common-sense way, remaining at arm's length from the Government, political parties and specific points of view. The ITC will be the regulator. As a member of the governing party of this country—the Conservative party—I do not wish to be involved in broadcasting; I merely want the regulators to ensure that impartiality is exercised. I am sure that the ITC will not produce a code that obliges the Leader of the Opposition, for instance, to follow any speech by the Prime Minister about a news item with his own comments. Surely everyone recognises that that would be absurd.

Given the current power of the media, we must provide guidelines, and give the authority to implement them to people who operate at arm's length from the House of Commons.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: What about the press?

Mr. Hind: I take the hon. Gentleman's point, but it is possible to buy a whole range of newspapers and to choose which political point of view to absorb. That choice is not possible when one particular point of view is being expressed on one particular television channel.

Some may consider that this proposal is going in the wrong direction, but it is based on 36 years' experience, and—in view of the growing power of the broadcasting media—makes good sense. Those who say that it will change the face of broadcasting are living in cloud cuckoo land. It will not do that; what it will do is provide a sensible framework for the future.

Mr. Clifford Forsythe (Antrim, South): I am prompted to speak by something that was said by the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd). He based part of this argument against the amendment on the fact that the IRA and its supporters were not allowed to broadcast freely.

I am afraid that, as a Northern Ireland Member, I cannot accept that the sickening spectacle of supporters of terrorism—and, on occasion, the terrorists themselves—should appear in people's living rooms after the atrocities such as have been perpetrated this week and in the past. That cannot be used as an argument for freedom.

Mr. Richard Shepherd: I think that the hon. Gentleman misunderstood me. We were talking about proscribed organisations and the form that they take. I said that we were being denied the freedom to judge such organisations for what they are. If the hon. Gentleman is saying that their members are evil and godless people, I entirely agree, but I believe that, as an honourable citizen, I am able to judge their evil and godlessness for myself.

Mr. Forsythe: If someone who had just killed a child in a forest was interviewed by the BBC or Ulster Television, I do not think that any hon. Member would wish to take part, believing that that constituted freedom. We in Northern Ireland, who suffer such terrorist incidents daily —who witness them from our living rooms—support freedom as much as anyone in the United Kingdom. We are in favour of democratic freedom and freedom of expression. Sometimes, however, we are not given the freedom to live. I hope that the House will not accept the argument of the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills in deciding whether or not to support the amendment.

I accept the argument that television should be impartial, and in Northern Ireland, Ulster Television is very good in that respect. Unfortunately, the BBC—although it will not be affected by the Bill—cannot be said to show the same impartiality.

Mr. David Trimble (Upper Bann): Does my hon. Friend agree that, in respect of both Ulster Television and BBC Northern Ireland, the local broadcasters in Belfast behave responsibly, and that irresponsible behaviour is usually associated with broadcasters based in London—whose conduct in the past makes a strong case for the proposed new clause?

Mr. Forsythe: My hon. Friend makes the point very well.

Years ago, I was a professional footballer. We all knew the rules—including the referee—and did not try to change them while we were on the pitch. Even the professional footballers of today who are paid enormous sums of money do not attempt to change the rules of the game. I do not understand why there should be any objection to guidelines that could easily be observed, or why there is such fear of them among the television companies. Is it their intention to broadcast programmes that would break those rules? It occurs to me that we are anticipating a situation that may never arise, but certainly my hon. Friends and I support the amendment.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Eltham): The hon. Member for Antrim, South (Mr. Forsythe) is right to say that there is nothing in the Lords amendments to which anyone could take serious exception. The interesting question is whether the amendments are necessary, but to debate that would require passing judgment on the proceedings in another place.

I pay tribute to my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister and to my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden), who was the first to be alert to some of the dangers in the original Bill. He has not been sufficiently credited with helping to make possible the return of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) to the Home Office to get a grip on the Bill and to put it in such a form that allows all right hon. and hon. Members to support its provisions.

The broader issue is that television must be interesting, and that producers and editors should be allowed to choose the subjects that they cover. By all means argue, but they should choose—and the BBC and independent companies should devise their own codes and guidelines by which their programmes are made. I hope that other organisations will spend £5 on buying "BBC Guidelines for factual programmes," which on pages 21 and 21—which shows how numerate is the BBC—presents the corporation's code. Given the length of this debate already, I shall not quote even the extracts in bold type. Nevertheless, those who have grounds to complain—given the vast range of programmes produced, there should be scope to make complaints, and whether or not they are upheld by the BBC itself or others does not matter—ought to be able to do so, when the programmes that are the subject of such complaints can be judged against the broadcasters' own criteria.

Past controversies proved that broadcasters have not lived up to their own codes, which is only natural. There must be scope for human error and for differences of judgment. However, I follow the analysis of my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham in saying that much of what is newsworthy and broadcast is anti-Government. It is not anti-Government in the sense that *The Guardian* is —and which, because it thinks that the Opposition are so feeble, regards itself as a one-newspaper opposition to the Government, and always tests the Government rather better than the Labour party. *The Guardian* is anti-Government in terms of challenging the Government and providing a forum for debate of a kind that cannot always fully take place in this House.

The House should support the Government in their reluctance to say that nothing can be done if it might be the subject of a genuine complaint. That is a potential danger in journalism in respect of press freedom, and Calcutt and the new criminal law affecting journalists begs full debate and preferably delay. One thinks also of the privacy Bill. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Knight) and to my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton), who together managed to stop it making too much progress last Session. There is also the

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

question of the statutory right of reply. We must be big enough to say that we will not stop being broadcast anything against which a complaint might be lodged.

My recommendation is that people should take the bigger attitude, and recognise that one can sometimes succeed with a complaint, as one should—but that on other occasions simply a row can help. Most of the time, it is worth considering the variety of programmes and ways in which people can put across their views, and accept that broadcasting and the press are a bit like this House, in that they can say what they think, but must accept the consequences.

7.15 pm

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister is a parliamentarian with a deft sense of humour, and he will need it when he comes to winding up this debate on the so-called impartiality amendments. I liked his style when he opened the debate. To my satisfaction, it lacked the messianic fervour exhibited by Lord Wyatt or even by my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick). My right hon. and learned Friend affected instead the manner of a cynical head waiter who finds himself serving a dish when he does not really like the chef's cooking.

I did not find my right hon. and learned Friend totally convincing, but he was more convincing than the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) who over-egged his pudding. He seemed to be using a sledgehammer rather than a stiletto, and made our flesh creep not only with talk of lawyers' picnics—although I did not infer that he was all that averse to them—but with words such as "intimidatory" and "offensiveness". He conjured up a vision of a new Woodrow Wyatt wing being built on to Brixton prison to accommodate erring broadcasters.

Let us return to the point at which the Bill left this House in July. What happened since serves as a cautionary tale of a lordly rake's progress. The Bill was in good shape when it left this House. There was no discontent about its provisions and no amendments concerning impartiality or the lack of it had been tabled at any stage. As my right hon. and learned Friend honestly admitted, the Government felt no concern about the lack of impartiality clauses.

When the Bill reached the other place, enter the voice of the people in the rather surprising shape of the patrician Lord Wyatt of Weeford, who claimed to speak for an army of discontented listeners and viewers who complained of major bias. There is no use pretending that constituency does not exist. It was echoed in our own debates, particularly in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley.

What response should one make to that angry if sometimes contradictory discontent? My hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley directed most of his fire at a programme entitled "Start the Week". Apart from the fact that it is not covered by the Bill, it is one seen by many listeners who genuinely enjoy it and cannot find anything to be cross about. That shows that one man's negative bias is very often another man's positive political enjoyment or prejudice.

Such contradictions did not deter Lord Wyatt, who, like Prince Rupert of the Rhine, went riding off on a charger in all directions. He did not mind where he went, and he probably would not have achieved anything, except the decent obscurity of a Division defeat, if the principal opposition had not come from Lord Thomson of Monifieth, formerly head of the IBA. I watched those two ancient gladiators clash over programme after programme, and found it difficult to decide which of them was talking greater nonsense.

Lord Wyatt seemed to believe that civilisation was under threat because of terrible bias and lack of impartiality, whereas Lord Thomson appeared to be arguing that under the IBA, all British broadcasting was pure, holy and impartial, for ever and ever, amen—and that all broadcasters abided by the spirit of the Television Act 1954 and the code that goes with it. The truth of the matter is that only a minority of British broadcasters have even heard of that code, let alone abided by it. Above all, Lord Thomson seemed to be saying that Lord Wyatt's suggestions were a terrible threat to free speech.

I simply could not swallow either proposition, but then Lord Whitelaw got in on the act, firing his blunderbuss in the air in confusing directions. One week he was opposed to Lord Wyatt's amendments, but then, for no discernible reason, he was in favour of them. I was not surprised that the Bill was passed by the House of Lords. I do not pretend to understand the proceedings of the other place, but after much confusing debate the Wyatt amendments were made.

What difference have the amendments made to the Bill? It is not massively different from before. There always was a code on impartiality for broadcasters, with statutory backing under the 1954 Act. It is perhaps regrettable that so few broadcasters have heard of the code or of the statuory backing, but having been in television in various guises from reporter to, rather briefly, chief executive, may I say that I had not heard of it until Lord Wyatt mentioned it.

I am not surprised that the old code was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Perhaps it is no bad thing that broadcasters should be aware of the code. Declaratory legislation shows that concepts such as fairness and impartiality cannot be effectively codified because they are matters of editorial judgment. Good broadcasting and good journalism will come not from codes or laws but from the morality, ethics and good judgment of editors, producers and senior managers.

Against that background, does it matter whether the amendment is made or not? I heard the voices of my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden), who will vote against the Bill because he thinks that the amendments are too silly, and of my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), who thinks that they offend the libertarian spirit of this country. I hold a different view from the two extremes that have been taken—that the amendments are a denial of free speech and that they will cause a new era in the impartiality of our broadcasting systems. The amendment will make a marginal difference. It is a matter of judgment whether it will make a positive or negative difference. I do not think that the existence of the signposts or headings will make any difference because the code has the kind of headlines that any sensible code would have.

British broadcasting needs not more impartiality but more professionalism. To illustrate that point, one need

only go back to the Alasdair Milne era of the BBC, when things were going wrong not because of wild bias and lack of impartiality but because of a sheer lack of professionalism. That changed under the new editor-in-chief.

We want not so much less bias as more freedom of choice. We want more peer pressure, not necessarily more pressure from peers, but these are matters of editorial judgment. By a tiny margin, the judgment of editors will be positively strengthened by the code—and by drawing attention to it rather than diminishing it and making it negative. It is not a big deal either way. It is a little bit silly, but I shall vote in favour of the amendments.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: Were Conservative Members a television company, we would have fully met all the requirements on impartiality. My hon. Friends have admirably represented both sides of the case—my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), with his typically robust and vigorous defence of freedom, my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden), with his great insight, and my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick), who put a more robust point of view in defence of the amendments. I cannot say the same for the Opposition, who were rather biased and who encompassed only one view. At least Conservative Members encompassed several views.

We were all particularly delighted that my hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) managed to drag himself away from the garrison town to share with us, in the intimacy of the House, his next newspaper article, for which undoubtedly he will be paid. He was the light entertainment for the House.

It is perfectly clear that due impartiality is what the public expect from their television broadcasting. It was universally agreed that, when there was a duopoly, it was absolutely vital. My hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills asked whether, as we have a multiplicity of television channels, there is a need for the same requirements of impartiality to be imposed. I believe that it still needs to be imposed. Although the parallel has been drawn with newspapers, we all recognise that the power of newspapers is not as great as that of television. My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister rightly said that this is still a scarce resource, and it is therefore right and proper that this most powerful medium should continue to be governed by the impartiality rules.

I want to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley in giving a couple of examples. Opposition Members find it difficult to understand why we feel exercised about these matters, so I shall cite two examples. The first is the broadcast by the BBC in May 1988 of the television drama "Tumbledown", the dramatised account of events at the battle on Mount Tumbledown during the Falklands war. The BBC argued that the film was non-political, but in a widely publicised account of the preview of it, its director, Richard Eyre, was reported as having said:

> "I would feel the film a failure if it's not deeply political . . . I don't think the film is balanced, and I hope that's considered one of its advantages, its virtues."

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) is nodding. He agrees with that, and so would I if another side of the Falklands campaign had been shown. There was another side—"The Falklands Play", which was commissioned by Alasdair Milne, the former director-general of the BBC, and written by a celebrated playwright, Ian Curteis. Alasdair Milne described it as a terrific story and a play that had enriched the BBC. Unfortunately, he felt that he could not screen it because we were in the run-up to a general election.

That is why, as my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) said, Conservative Members believe that there has been a lack of professionalism. That was acknowledged by Michael Checkland, the new director-general of the BBC, last year. He said:

> "I think there was a point in the BBC when we kind of missed what was going on, the fact that the country had moved over in the last decade to the right"

and that there had been a Conservative Government for 11 years.

Opposition Members attacked my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley for not producing examples, but it is important for the House to have examples. Clearly the director-general's prescriptions had not extended to Scotland, where there is a new twist in the concept of balance. Radio Scotland's editor of news and current affairs said in a letter in August last year to my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth):

> "I do not believe you are right when you accuse us of lack of balance. The Scottish body politic is out of kilter, and that will inevitably be reflected in our programmes."

If that were the rule on impartiality in television, there would be no case for Labour representation in the south of England, and clearly Labour Members would not believe that to be right. I hope that, in clarifying those arguments and giving those examples, I have been able to show the Opposition that there are justifications for the provision.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

7.30 pm

Mr. Howarth: I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman had a good shout, and I recognise that the House wants to move on.

The argument is not about impartiality—that is set out clearly in clause 6(1)(b). The minds of many people have been exercised by the imprecise nature of that provision. That is why my noble Friends felt that they had to pursue this matter and why they fought vigorously to incorporate the amendment in the Bill. I salute their endeavours.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South said that there are plenty of guidelines, and my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) gave some examples. In the case of my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) and myself, it was not that the guidelines did not exist, but that they were flagrantly breached. There was a lack of professionalism. Clearly we cannot legislate for professionalism in broadcasting. This is not a draconian amendment. It will spell out to the ITC firmly and clearly Parliament's intention in seeking to ensure that there is proper impartiality. The amendment is not prescriptive. It creates a framework, and Parliament is entitled to draw up that framework.

I will conclude—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."]—for my hon. Friend the Member for Aldershot has probably cast me in the role of the epilogue. I warmly welcome the Government's stand on this matter. It is up to the ITC to continue a long-established tradition of political impartiality. The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) is on dangerous ground when he would deny the public the right to challenge the ITC's decisions. I am sure that he does not believe that members of the

[Mr. Howarth]

public should not have that right, and that the commissioners should have the last word. I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman is not that much of a dirigiste that he would deny members of the public that right.

It is extraordinary to suggest that there will be a plethora of legal actions. Some of us know how costly they are—one cannot mount a legal action unless one has the necessary resources. The only people with anything to fear from the amendment are those broadcasters who are contemptuous of the traditional concerns for impartiality which have long been regarded as worth while in this country. I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr. Hattersley: I simply want to ask the Minister two specific questions and make one point before the right hon. and learned Gentleman takes, I hope, a good deal of time describing why the clause is necessary. He normally addresses the House with great courtesy and often with great persuasiveness. He owes the House something that we have not yet had—a description of why he believes the clause is necessary. In the hope that I can provoke him into doing that, I want to ask him two questions.

The hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) seemed to be labouring under the illusion that the clause applied to the BBC.

Mr. Gerald Howarth *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Hattersley: It appears that he is not under that illusion, but all his examples of partiality were taken from the BBC. The hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) did the same. The Minister for the Arts should put those hon. Gentlemen and us out our misery by telling us why, if it is imperative to have such a code with legal backing and all that that implies for independent television, it is not necessary to have such a code for the BBC. Why is this necessity so great for the independent channels and not for the public corporation? I should be grateful for an explicit answer on why this decision has been taken.

I return to a crucial question. I hope that the Minister will tell us exactly why he regards the clause as necessary —not why he regards it as trivial, superficial, or cosmetic, not why he thinks that it will do less damage than we fear, not why he thinks that it will do more good than others suspect, but why he regards it as necessary in the first place. As I believe that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will answer that question, I shall give one specific, brief example of why I regard the clause as dangerous.

Were it the clause of the emollient Minister for the Arts, we would regard it as a little triviality that added to the gaiety of parliamentary life, but the real motive behind the clause was expressed in specific terms by the hon. Member for Colne Valley. The hon. Gentleman was very close to saying that programmes that do not accept the established view of the Government of the day have to be treated as suspect and probably suppressed. The hon. Gentleman made a speech which was wholly ridiculous and which will be regarded with complete derision by sensible people, but the fact that his speech was ridiculous does not mean that there is not, underneath the absurdity, a vein of deeply disturbing and sinister attitudes towards a free society. That is the real motive behind the clause.

Mr. Riddick: That is not what I said. Broadcasters have every right to have whatever political view they wish. I am saying that they should not reflect their personal political viewpoint in their programmes. What is wrong with that? Does not the right hon. Gentleman agree?

Mr. Hattersley: I shall tell the hon. Gentleman what is wrong with that. I do not want to offend the hon. Gentleman's neighbours by overstating my criticism, but it is wrong because, first, it is not consistent with free broadcasting and, secondly, it is not consistent with good broadcasts. I shall give an example. Professor Minogue of the London School of Economics produced a series, which looked like a factual description of history, which was devoted to the concept that socialism was a disaster and had failed wherever it had been tried. The hon. Member for Colne Valley may be surprised to hear that I do not share that view. But the idea that Professor Minogue should have been prevented from making his series is preposterous.

I want to see a diversity of programmes. I do not want broadcasters to be bullied, forcing them to look over their shoulders in case Members like the hon. Member for Colne Valley are doing through the clause what they want to do, even though that may not be the intention of the Minister for the Arts. But we are to hear what the Minister's intentions are. We shall hear for the first time in the debate why he thinks that the amendment is necessary and why he has commended it to the House.

Mr. Mellor: The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was less than fair to my previous effusion, which I thought set out matters with great clarity. I shall give a shortened version, so that those who wish to proceed to a vote may do so. I sensed during the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) that there were those who wished to do so, so I shall not run the risk of wearying people too much.

I am genuinely sorry that, a number of controversial matters having been resolved during the Bill's passage, we have not succeeded in moving much closer together on this issue. I should like briefly to restate the purpose of the amendment and to set it in its context.

The first point to make absolutely clear, following a series of speeches—most recently that of the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell)—is that, when I said in January that I did not think that there was a case for any substantive change in the law on impartiality, I meant every word, and I have stuck by every word. The fruits of that are to be seen in clause 6(1)(c), dealing with requirements placed on the commission:

"due impartiality is preserved on the part of the person providing the service as respects matters of current political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy".

That is precisely the formulation that has appeared in every broadcasting statute pertaining to independent television since 1954—not a word of it has changed. That is a commendation of the Bill, not a criticism of it.

One thing has changed, for good reason. There is now a statutory requirement for a code instead of guidelines. My hon. Friends the Members for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) and for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) made speeches that expressed my views on many of these matters. */Interruption./* I am glad that my commendation of my hon. Friends has gone down so well. Perhaps I will commend a few more, in the hope that mass popularity

will follow. The IBA had guidelines and associated powers of pre-vetting and so on. As the ITC is a regulator, but not the broadcaster, it seemed appropriate that the guidance that it should give should be formalised into a code so that both the broadcasters and the public knew where they stood.

The debate has grown like Topsy. People have begun, in their enthusiasm for the fight, to take issue with points that were perfectly accepted all along. I do not mean it cynically when I say that I always enjoy the contributions of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), who speaks with great authority. It may have been a slip of the tongue, but he seemed in the end to take issue with the very idea of a code. When the Bill was last debated in this House, everyone was happy about having a code; it was not a controversial element.

Mr. Rees: Not a statutory code.

Mr. Mellor: It was a statutory code. For the first time, the code was provided for in statute. The Bill then went to the House of Lords, where, perfectly properly, their Lordships debated the Bill vigorously. Lord Wyatt put forward various amendments, such as the proposal that, when a biased programme was shown, a balancing programme had to be shown within one month and he wanted that provision to be on the face of the statute. That drew forth my remark in September to the Royal Television Society that I thought such an approach was unwarrantedly mechanistic and would not be successful. The original proposal was rejected and we ended up with an element of reassurance. *[Interruption.]*

I know that the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook can hardly contain himself. However, I am now coming to the point that he wanted me to address. Although the Labour party is terribly relaxed about all this impartiality stuff at the moment, it was not very relaxed about it when it was last in office. I dare swear that, if Labour were ever to regain office, the state of relaxation would soon change into a nastier turn of mind. We hope that this legislation will last a long time, so it has to encompass all manner of possible responses.

Mr. Corbett: You had better not do it then.

Mr. Mellor: That is the best argument against that I have heard all evening. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be as persuasive for the rest of the night so that we can have an earlier bath than most of us expect.

Some people were concerned that the code should address issues, and they wanted the answer to those matters contained in the statute. We rejected that for the reasons of principle that I have explained. However, in the interests as it then seemed—unwarrantedly, as it now appears—of spreading a bit of sweetness and light on the matter, there seemed no harm in deciding that, even if we could not give people the resolution of the problems on the face of the Bill because it would be wrong in principle, we could offer the reassurance that the code would address certain key elements.

Once again, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) that no self-respecting code could fail to address such matters. However, not everyone is as trusting as I am. It may be felt that it is better and makes reassurance doubly sure that we should put on the face of the Bill areas that the code should cover. There is nothing wrong with that in principle, as long as we do not say how the code should say it.

I cannot bring myself to say that this is the most fundamentally significant reform that has ever been brought before the House or even that it is the most fundamentally significant reform that I have embraced this week, today, or even in the past 25 minutes. However, it is one of 700 Lords amendments which has been plucked out of its obscurity because other people have chosen to get excited about it. I can say only that it is of benefit that the code, which we have all decided is useful, should cover issues that will properly go to the heart of the matter.

The ITC believes that the proposal is helpful and workable, and that it does not infringe any of the broadcaster's prerogatives. I am sorry that that is not as enthusiastic an endorsement as I could muster for other issues, but it is an endorsement with which I hope to carry my hon. Friends into the Lobby with me tonight.

Question put, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 268, Noes 181.

Division No. 342] **[7.43 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*

Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir George Young and
Mr. Sydney Chapman.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Critchley, Julian
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Hara, Edward
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey

Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Banks and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause 15

APPLICATIONS FOR CHANNEL 3 LICENCES

Lords amendment: No. 35, in page 13, line 2, after ("the") insert ("programming and other").

Mr. Mellor: I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following Lords amendments: No. 46 and the Government motion to disagree; No. 47 and amendments (a) and (b) and the Government motion to disagree; and amendment No. 48 and the Government motion to disagree.

Mr. Mellor: I am considerably reluctant to seek to disagree with the Lords amendments. The amendments are significant because they refer to the only defeat that the Government suffered in either House during the passage of the Bill. The fact that we did not suffer any other defeat was not because the Government were able, automatically, to rely on a majority to steamroller the Bill through, but because——

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): Pull the other one.

Mr. Mellor: Please do not put me off, or I shall just take longer. The hon. Lady will be proud to testify that during our discussions on important issues in Committee it was often possible to reach understandings that mitigated, in some cases removed, some of the concerns felt.

I do not want to take up a great deal of time, nor to prevent the miniature meeting of the shadow Cabinet which appears to be taking place on the Opposition Front Bench. There is a collection of excited bearded people having a conversation——

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I am not a member of the shadow Cabinet.

Mr. Mellor: Well, the time may come—it will be the shadow Cabinet, not the real thing.

I invite the House to take the serious step of rejecting the Lords amendment, not because I take issue with the intention behind it, but because I do not believe that the amendment represents the right way ahead. I pray in aid the debates in the House before the Bill went to another place. Those debates led us to put the Bill into better shape than it was when it started and certainly into better shape than it is now with the addition of the three elements that I invite the House to reject.

The key element of our deliberations is to ensure that we preserve on Channel 3 a diverse service catering for a wide range of tastes and interests. That is the statutory requirement.

We acepted the case for including in the Bill specific references to religion and to children's programmes. I accept that there was quite a strong lobby for another item, education, but——

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): A huge lobby.

Mr. Mellor: Only huge in terms of the girth of some of those advocating it. Let us say that substantial arguments were put forward by weighty figures on the subject of education.

But, generally speaking, it was accepted that the laundry list, as it came to be known, held no great attraction for most hon. Members and that it was better to place our faith in the diversity requirements, substantially buttressed, as it was, by the ITC being given a statutory power, which we gave it during the passage of the Bill, to send out, in effect, a prospectus to applicants making it clear how it thought applicants should begin. With the range of programmes currently available, applicants should not assume that they could cross the quality threshold, which we made more substantial during the passage of the Bill, without accepting that diversity meant using the existing range of programmes as a starting point.

8 pm

I lay great stress on that because I do not believe that, if any half dozen of us gathered tonight and constituted ourselves as applicants for a franchise and talked about what we should put in, any of us could confidently say, "We can leave out documentaries", or, "We can leave out educational programmes," or, "We can leave out social action programmes." It is clear from everything that has been said, from what people will have heard from the ITC and from what we now know to be the balance in the Bill between quality and price that nobody could be sure that if they left out such programme types, they would be able to surmount the quality hurdle.

I say with sincerity that I do not doubt the good intentions of those who inflicted this one painful defeat on the Government in the other place. Plainly, they wished to ensure that independent television continues to cover certain categories of programmes. We approach these issues as experienced legislators, now that we have got down to the hard core of what might be called activists. Most of the people in the House now sat through the various stages of the Bill and know what we are talking about, and the more populist figures have gone for their supper. Most of those present now would not want to call themselves populist figures—*[Interruption.]*—or would not have the capability to do so, having columns in the daily newspapers and so on.

We are left with something of a difficulty because, added to children and religion, we have documentaries, social action and education programmes. We must consider what is left out. We do not have drama, sport or —I must say this in my present role—arts programmes.

Mr. Corbett: That is the right hon. and learned Gentleman's fault.

Mr. Mellor: Let us not forget entertainment programmes. We are, after all, talking about a popular channel which must contain entertainment and all the programmes that some people do not like to acknowledge —*[Interruption.]* Some people do not want to acknowledge that millions of our citizens watch television for entertainment purposes. They do not always want to look at educational programmes.

Nobody is ever anxious, particularly at this stage of a parliamentary Session, to have, in effect, another parliamentary stage of a Bill, asking the Lords to accept our reversal of what they have done. Had it been possible honourably to accept the amendment, there would have been a compelling case, at least on business management grounds, for doing so.

I urge hon. Members who might be minded to object to what we are doing tonight to consider whether we could prefer another three subjects. Although I appreciate that there is no Rubicon of principle—we crossed that when we inserted children's programmes and religion—it is a bit perverse to say that we should have documentaries but not drama, social action but not sport, education but not arts programmes. It reflects value judgments that are understandable but are not objectively valid. Because of that, the only alternative would be to add even more items to the now quite long list contained in the Bill as it has returned from the other place. The danger then would be that one would be purporting to define what a diverse service should be.

I recall, with the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), the time when we were jointly dismissing the idea of a laundry list in relation to changes in the obscenity legislation.

Mr. Corbett: I recall that well.

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Gentleman is on good form tonight and I look forward to his speech.

A list of programme types runs the risk of narrowing the range of options that would be available on Channel 3. I do not want to speak at greater length, but that is the only reason why I am inviting the House to disagree with the amendment. We are entitled to take some pride in what we achieved in our debates. If there had been a glaring omission of the type that we are discussing, we might ourselves have spotted it—*[Interruption.]* I appreciate that some hon. Members were unhappy about some of what we did; but I doubt whether many would have chosen the list that is before us or whether they did not, by the end of our debates, feel that the quality threshold had been thickened up and that the pressure on applicants was such that we could start with the range of programmes.

Whatever hon. Members may feel about protecting certain types of programmes, I hope that they would not wish to commend the other limb of the amendment, which is about the time they should be shown. We had to be realistic during the passage of the Bill. We had to recognise that in the more competitive situation of the 1990s, it was right, with other channels coming on stream, that broadcasters should have the flexibility to schedule. If we have confidence in some of our fellow men, then many of the programmes in the lists that are before us are popular enough to be shown at peak times. But we must allow the schedulers the opportunity to schedule in what will be a competitive market and in a situation where they must be commercial.

Although it is not my main reason for wishing to delete the amendment, its policy intention was that programmes that might attract smaller audiences should have the opportunity to secure a place in peak viewing time. But the amendment, because of the way it is drafted, suggests that programmes should be shown at appropriate times having regard to the potential viewers of programmes of that type, and that might mean that a high audience programme would be scheduled at peak time and a lower audience programme scheduled at off-peak hours. That is probably the opposite to what those who proposed the amendment intended.

I do not give that as a central reason for objecting to the amendment. If it had not been otherwise flawed, we could have further amended it. But it is another good reason why I can suggest that we are not in any sense diminishing what I believe to be the clear remit for Channel 3—for the new companies to pick up where the others left off and to have a wide range of programmings.

The effect of keeping the amendment would be, for no good or proper grounds, to appear to be preferring certain programme types to others. I have given six examples, three in and three out, and I defy anyone to say that there is any logical distinction in preferring the three that have been preferred to the other three—when the danger of even adding the other three would be a list that purports to define diversity in a way that narrows, rather than broadens, the programme types that are likely to be found. On that limited but persuasive ground, I invite the House to disagree to the amendment.

Mr. Corbett: We were saddened to read in *The Times* this morning that the Minister for the Arts, so lately in office, is anxious to demonstrate that there is life outside politics. I hope that he will stay with us at least until the Bill has completed this stage of its passage.

If I should ever write about my time in this place—or, in the context of this debate, should I ever fund a very low-budget video—I shall call it, "It's a funny way to earn a living." I say that because not many minutes ago the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) and others said that, on occasions, members of another place knew more than we did about public opinion and matters concerning the populace. Coincidentally, it suited the hon. Gentleman's argument to say that.

I shall be surprised to get it, but I am expecting some consistency on the amendments because it can be said that the House of Lords, in respect of the further must-carry obligations, reflects a central matter of concern that lies at the heart of the Bill—the quality threshold. The Government set enormous store by the quality threshold when we had the trailer for the Bill as long ago as November 1988 and have done so ever since. I remember the Minister telling us on several occasions that it was precisely that quality threshold that would ensure that what had happened to Australian television would not and could not happen here.

In Australia, as we discuss the amendments, two out of three of the national channels are in the hands of receivers. Channel 10 will tomorrow sack 500 staff at all levels and switch to greater use of imported American material, precisely because those to whom that licence was sold funded their bids with funny money and junk bonds, an

got into enormous debt. As a consequence, that channel and Channel 9 are both wrecks. Down the road a little in New Zealand, the only commercial channel is in the hands of receivers.

Ministers have said that the new ITV network regime on Channel 3 will be a notch below what we now have. That nice George Russell, the chairman designate of the ITC, asserts that it will be 80 per cent. of what we have now. There is no argument between us that some types of programming that viewers have become used to seeing, especially those at peak times, will no longer be there to choose from. What matters and lies behind the all-party concerns reflected in the Lords amendments is which type of programmes are likely to be more at risk.

The fact that the Government want to remove the additions to the so-called quality threshold gives the game away. It is precisely programmes in the sectors specified by the amendments—documentaries, programmes with an educational purpose and social action programmes—that the accountants and advertisers who will control the Channel 3 licences will put most at risk.

Documentaries will be put more at risk because they are often more expensive to make in terms of research, travel and production costs, and because things do not always work out as planned in the course of making them. Shows that are tightly scripted and shot in studios are much more controllable in terms of costs and their outcome is certainly more predictable.

Education and social action programmes are at risk for another reason. Shown in peak time slots, the better to attract large audiences, they may well not produce the type of audience that advertisers want at those times. Those are the hard-nosed commercial judgments that will be made by the schedulers.

As I think the House understands, programme timing is critical to audience size, as is the channel on which a programme is shown. For example, programmes of an educational nature on the environment and third-world issues, screened at peak hours on BBC 1 or networked on ITV, command audiences of between 2 million and 5 million. Exactly the same programme shown on BBC 2 or Channel 4 at similar times attracts a much lower audience of about 1 million. Therefore, unless it is specified that such programmes must be shown and at appropriate times of the day and week, they will be unprotected in an increasingly competitive television world and much more at risk than now.

The Minister repeated tonight that he does not want any sort of laundry list. I must remind him that it was he who started to write it.

Mr. Mellor: I accept that.

Mr. Corbett: I know that he accepts that. He started to write it when he was persuaded, against a background of all-party pressure, to retain the must-carry obligations in respect of children's programmes and later religious programmes. I remember the night when we debated that because there was a bad storm and thunderbolts were bouncing off the roof above the room in which we were meeting. We are talking not about laundry lists, but simply about their length.

The Minister said again tonight that there is no need to put such matters in the Bill because the ITC will issue illustrative guidelines on the programme range and type that it expects bidders to provide.

With respect, illustrative guidelines do not have the same force as quality threshold requirements, as he and the House well know. In this context, the important point is that if it is not in the Bill, accountants will be able to say, "Yes, we understand, Mr. or Mrs. Programme Maker, what you are saying, but we simply cannot afford them," or, "We want that slot for a different type of programme because it will deliver a different kind of audience at that time, and one that the advertiser wants."

8.15 pm

Mr. Gale: The hon. Gentleman twitted me a moment ago about consistency. In the previous debate the Opposition said that nothing was needed in the Bill because guidelines would be sufficient. Now they are apparently standing that on its head and saying that the guidelines are not sufficient, we cannot trust the broadcasters, so the matter must be specified in the Bill.

Mr. Corbett: We are all sharp tonight. I generously acknowledge the hon. Gentleman's point, but we cannot treat all fish in the sea as being of exactly the same kind, weight and importance.

The Minister said earlier, although he did not use these exact words tonight, that if there is public demand for such programmes, they will have to be provided. There is no evidence for that assertion. On the basis of experience elsewhere, all the evidence points exactly the other way. There is evidence from France, what was lately West Germany, and Italy, which all started on this three or four years before we did, that in a deregulated climate exactly the opposite happens. The effect of deregulation in those countries has been a dramatic fall in the number of factually based programmes and a rise in those that are primarily entertainment led to meet commercial needs and advertisers' demands.

I shall quickly tell the House that in terms of viewer demand—what viewers want—the IBA attitudes to television survey in 1989 showed that an astonishing 66 people out of every 100 wanted more nature and wildlife programmes, 55 out of every 100 wanted more educational programmes for adults and 55 per cent. wanted more plays and dramas. Some 42 out of every 100 viewers wanted fewer quiz shows and panel games, 43 per cent. wanted fewer chat shows and an astounding one viewer in two wanted fewer soap operas. That is exactly the opposite of what we suspect is likely to happen. I am trying not to make judgments because such programmes have a place on the menu, but I am trying to make the point to the Minister that so do other programmes, especially those specified in the Lords amendments.

One of the saddest aspects of Australian television—I probably watch more of it there than I do here—is that it is the only publicly funded, multi-cultural, special broadcasting service channel that provides anything like a decent, nightly, international and national news programme, and very well done it is too, and documentaries. That is the reality of what can happen in such a climate.

The Minister may recall that he described the quality threshold—I think that there was some dispute as to whether it was the Minister or that nice George Russell who used the phrase initially—as a "Becher's Brook". That Grand National jump got its name because Captain Becher dashed into the lead at the start on his horse Conrad, charged at the first brook, was dumped on the ground and hence gave his name to that jump. That is

[Mr. Corbett]

what we fear about the quality threshold. We want it to be high, wide and firm, with every intending rider forced to jump well clear.

The Government—and we agree with them—say that we want an active democracy and an informed electorate. If they are serious about wanting more citizens to be active citizens, they must realise that that will not happen unless television plays its part in helping it to happen. That is what makes this type of programme so important.

Our former colleague, Mr. Alf Dubs, the distinguished director of the Refugee Council, puts it this way:

"television has a vital role to play in raising people's awareness of the particular problems facing developing countries. It can also make people think more about situations nearer home, and can highlight social issues."

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education tells us:

"The Government recognises that Britain needs a much greater commitment to re-skilling its workforce, and ITV has shown an ability to persuade people who have had no contact with education and training since school to follow up programmes with active study. This is a resource too precious to jeopardise."

I hope that no hon. Member would disagree.

Age Concern tells us:

"Television and radio play an important part in enabling organisations such as Age Concern England to maintain and develop communication with older people."

That is profoundly important.

"In our ageing society, communication through the media is likely to become even more important, especially for those older people who are isolated and housebound."

I hope that no hon. Member would condemn housebound and often lonely people to a diet of wall-to-wall game shows and chat shows such as the Bill threatens.

Mr. Mellor: I do not want to prolong this debate but, by reading out those submissions, the hon. Gentleman is proceeding as if we were dealing here with the only television channel. My primary point is that I believe that no one will cross the quality threshold who does not have a full range of programmes. In public service television we have BBC 1 and BBC 2, and Channel 4 with its specific remit, so I wonder whether some of those points are not seriously overstated.

Mr. Corbett: I understand that, but the Minister seems to overlook the fact that the must-carry obligations were imposed first on the BBC and then on the new independent television stations, and that is what enables us to stand up and assert that our television system is, if not the best in the world, certainly among the best in the world. That did not happen by accident. It happened because we required those responsible for running the commercial television network to carry out some of those basic functions.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I think that the Minister is trying to say that he does not want competition on quality. He wants a channel that might be regarded by, say, the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) as a trash channel.

Mr. Corbett: My hon. Friend makes the point well.

I shall finish by explaining what puzzles me about the Government's attitude. We have laws and speed limits to try to reduce accidents on our roads. We insist that every child goes to school for 11 years from the age of five. We say who can and who cannot drink alcohol and what can and what cannot be done with our processed food. Yet when it comes to television it seems that the Government say that there is no need for any guidance to those responsible for our television on what viewers should be able to see, for our national well-being and advancement. I find it unacceptable to claim that providing a lead in television is less important than it is in other areas in which the law touches on the lives of every citizen.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): I support the case made by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) in favour of the Lords amendment, and wish to speak to my two modest amendments to it. The Minister will not be surprised by them; they are consistent with everything that I said in Committe and are designed to remind everyone that when we speak of regional television on Channel 3, in the Principality and in Scotland we are also talking about nationhood and the national culture. I wish to remind everyone that the term "regional" is not a wholly accurate description of the role of Channel 3 in the Principality. It will have a responsibility to reflect a national culture as well as regional interests.

My amendments will be irrelevant if we lose the Lords amendment. In the past the Minister has been the flexible friend of the House during the passage of this Bill, so I do not understand why he is being so stiff-necked about these propositions. After all, as my hon. Friend the Member for Erdington reminded him, we have added to the list. I supported the inclusion of children's and religious programmes, but I had little doubt that the Channel 3 producers would broadcast children's programmes—they are popular and would therefore be a normal part of any programme diet. But we still felt the need to reinforce their inclusion. I think it even more important to give statutory buttressing to the inclusion of education.

The Minister intervened earlier to say that we have BBC 1, BBC 2 and Channel 4; and, in the Principality, S4C. But for many groups of people in the communities that I represent the commercial Channel 3 is the major television station; indeed, it is watched by the overwhelming majority. So the claim that because we have those other channels we do not need to impose an educational responsibility on Channel 3 is an invalid argument. A mainstream commercial channel should have a statutory responsibility to provide education.

When speaking about how strong the diversity test will be and how the ITC will apply it, the Minister fallaciously argued that if we include education we should also have to include sport and drama. No one believes that sport will not be included in Channel 3 programming. We all know that there will be a lot of sport—too much in the view of many people. No one is worried that a commercial television station will not carry sport. However, under the pressures of costs and savings there may be genuine doubts whether, unless there is a clear obligation on commercial television to continue to run educational programmes, it will do so.

Wherever we stand in the great education and training debate there is a consensus among all parties that education and training arrangements in this country are appallingly poor. We should not turn our backs on one significant means of communicating important educational and training messages to large groups of people, particularly younger people.

There is another reason why we must impose statutory obligations in respect of education. There are already tell-tale signs that, in view of projected declining advertising revenues in the 1990s, accountants, not programme makers, will start to rule our commercial television programmes. Any doubts that I had about that being a strong possibility have been dispelled because even since the Bill was last debated there is manifest evidence of it occurring on the Welsh television scene.

I hope that the Minister will be alarmed to hear about what has happened in the last week or two. All of us, including the Minister, paid tribute to Welsh television and worked together to try to make sure that S4C'c role and remit in the Bill was assured and buttressed. Its revenues depend entirely on advertising and, as it foresees a future decline in those, it has dropped a bombshell on the Welsh television scene. Last week it announced that in the first six months of 1991 it will commission only £13 million worth of programmes. It commissions programmes from HTV and the Welsh independent sector, and the cut means that they will get just £6·5 million each.

8.30 pm

The independent sector has flourished as a result of the development of S4C, and HTV has had a significant and important programme-making capacity to meet its demands and needs. Last year S4C commissioned about £40-million worth of programmes. The reduction in demand from S4C will have a dramatic effect. In February or March, S4C may feel capable of commissioning more programmes, but the shape of things to come can be seen in the effect that that announcement has had on the development of programme making in the Principality.

It is not alarmist or fanciful to express concern about the growing pressures of the 1990s. Financial pressures may develop in commercial television and we are worried about the amount of advertising revenue that will be available to Channel 3. There will also be takeover pressure in line with the new competitive spirit. As a consequence, accountants will tell the programme makers to cut everything except that for which they are statutorily responsible. The way in which S4C is revealing its problems to HTV and the independent sector about the commissioning of programmes next year because of worries about falling advertising revenue shows the shape of things to come in commercial television.

There is a powerful case for including in the Bill a statutory obligation requiring commercial television to provide education programmes. The Minister's arguments in that respect are not valid. We added children's programmes and we rightly added religious programmes and, given the climate in which commercial television will operate, it is important to send from the House the loud and clear message that Channel 3 has an educational role. The best and simplest way to do that is to support the amendments.

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): I sense that our deliberations are rather like old times, but one element is missing. It is sad that Norman Buchan is not with us, because he would certainly have taken part in the debate, as he took part in many of our debates in Committee.

As always, I listened with interest to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), who developed compelling arguments about the situation in France and Australia. I entirely agree that that should give us great cause for concern about the future of our commercial television channels. However, I am not sure that he drew the right conclusions. Arguments about what is happening in France and Australia go to the heart of why it was right to put in the Bill a proper bidding process which not only strengthens quality but discourages overbidding. It also ensures that business plans must be realistic if they are to have any chance of passing the ITC quality test and the business plan test, because within the Bill the two tests are quite separate. My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister knows that in Committee I argued vigorously for a strengthening of the quality threshold.

We should remind ourselves of three areas in which the Minister agreed to make some important changes to the tendering process. First, we should not forget the strengthening of regionality and of regional programming, which I know the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) also holds dear. Secondly, we must not forget about the strengthening of quality news and current affairs requirements in the bidding process. Thirdly, we added children's and religious programmes, which we felt had an overriding argument in their favour. We knew that by doing that we would encourage other special interest groups. Equally, we agreed that it was entirely unsatisfactory to provide a statutory requirement to broadcast a long and exhaustive list of programme types. To do so would completely undermine the objectives of deregulation, which in turn are based on a recognition of the commercial realities of the increased competition that Channel 3 and ITV will face over the next decade and into the next century.

Already in the past six months we have seen a reduction in advertising revenue, giving rise to the concern expressed by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney. I have heard no new arguments in this debate or read about any in reports of the deliberations in the other place about why we should change our position on this. The Bill already requires diverse programmes. Equally, the programme types included in the amendments draw attention to the importance of such programmes. The Minister has drawn attention to that and, like him, I can think of other programmes that I should like to see on Channel 3. I should like to see not just sport, which is commercial, but arts programmes, which are often not commercial. I should like to believe that, from time to time in the years ahead, I shall still be able to see opera on Channel 3. However, it is not right to insist upon a statutory requirement that Channel 3 should broadcast opera.

Mr. Mellor: I am enjoying my hon. Friend's speech. People will be set into a framework of existing provisions. Therefore, I am not relying purely on market forces for Channel 3. It is not without significance that BSB has already pinned much of its faith on opera for key viewing times, such as Saturday evenings. It is significant and rather encouraging that, since we last discussed these matters, Sky Television has announced quite serious plans for a dedicated arts channel. That suggests that the idea that the lowest common denominator of programming will rule is not necessarily correct.

Mr. Greenway: I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend. I was about to make a different point—that, although companies must make a commercial judgment about what they show, it does not necessarily follow that

[Mr. Greenway]

their support for, for example, the arts or opera need be through televising those events. They may well prefer to support them through sponsorship. Yorkshire Television has sponsored two productions by Opera North. I am only sorry that my right hon. and learned Friend could not come to see the recent revival of La Traviata. Yorkshire Television provides sponsorship for the commercial reason that it promotes the company in the region. However, it also does it to support the region. The regional structure, especially with Channel 3, should not be overlooked. If we place too many obligations on Channel 3 franchisees, we may put in their path requirements that, over time, they cannot match. Sponsorship could be one way to ensure that the sort of social action programmes to which the hon. Member for Erdington referred, and about which we all have strong views, continue.

The House should recognise that programming obligations must be matched by commercial reality. If we cannot—and we cannot—guarantee Channel 3's income or its financial future, we must be careful not to saddle ITV with statutory obligations that it cannot realistically underwrite over the next 10 to 20 years—which is the timescale legislated for in the Bill. As my right hon. and learned Friend said, it does not mean the end of programmes. The market place can provide quality and diversity. ITV needs flexibility, and the Bill, as drafted when it left this place, provided that. We would be wrong to over-egg the pudding. We have provided for the essential ingredients; we should trust independent television to add the relish. I know that it can.

Mr. Maclennan: I think that the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway), in the last moments of his speech, underlined our concerns that lead us to think that their Lordships made a wise move. He spoke of the difficulty for companies, in years to come, in meeting the requirement of diversity in the way that the Minister assured us he was confident they could. I suspect that none of us could predict with great accuracy what will be the financial position of those companies in three years, let alone 10 to 20 years.

I take issue with the Minister who, in an intervention in the speech of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), said that we should not overlook other matters, such as the special remit of Channel 4, the BBC's role and so on. We must be wary of that argument, because it is clear that that cornerstone of broadcasting, the BBC, is increasingly under attack, as it was attacked in our earlier debate.

One of the sticks that will be used to beat the BBC is ratings. If it broadcasts programmes to satisfy the diversity requirement—for example, educational, social action, and expensive documentary programmes—which may be of high quality but directed at a specialist audience, and therefore not attracting substantial ratings, that will be taken as a sign of weakness, and the BBC may feel that it must respond to the ratings criticism. I fear that the whole atmosphere in which programme making, even by the BBC, is developing may be changed if the ITV channels move down market.

We spent a great deal of time discussing these issues at earlier stages of the Bill. I think that the hon. Member for Ryedale was right to say that there are few new arguments to be deployed at this stage. However, the Minister cannot complain about our taking issue with him when the other place thought it right to change the balance of the Bill and the balance of the protections. We listen to its arguments, we weigh them and then we decide whether we think that it is right. I was one of those least attracted to the original concept of specification. If we specify programme content to ensure diversity, the question will arise whether that is a requirement. If it is, other programmes that are not specified will be dropped.

8.45 pm

The Minister earlier admitted that it was he who adopted the view that religious broadcasting and children's programmes should be specified. Once that happened, I took the view that certain other matters also had to be specified because they were vulnerable to the sort of arguments that I have already made. They are also vulnerable because they are distinguishable from other programmes in that they are expensive, and quite properly directed to small audiences. The Minister talked about excluding the arts. I advocated special treatment for the arts and the creation of an arts fund. However, I recognise that, even if we specified the arts, only a small audience would be interested in a particular art form. We cannot specify all the arts, so it is difficult to argue for arts specification.

The three matters highlighted for specification by another place are important and beyond argument. Social action programmes have been one of the great innovations in television broadcasting and have achieved something that could not be achieved by other means. They would be difficult to justify in commercial terms, so without some sort of obligation they might be the most vulnerable. Educational programmes are enormously important, and would probably be the last to disappear. They can attract substantial audiences, and there is a great and growing public demand for them. Documentaries are another matter because they can be exceedingly expensive to make, especially if they are shot abroad. It would be a great misfortune if they were to disappear from our screens.

I throw my weight behind the arguments deployed in another place. I have highlighted the dangers that might arise if we rejected the amendment, which I believe improves the Bill.

Mr. Walden: I want to make an intervention of nauseating piety but merciful brevity. Much of what I wanted to say has been said by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), with his Celtic fluency.

It is ironic that this country is going through a crisis in educational quality, while knowingly passing legislation that will, in all probability, lead to a decline in the educative aspect of parts of television. If we are being honest, we all agree with that. There was a flagrant contradiction in the argument made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) and by my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister. My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale said that, in all commercial realism, it could be difficult to pay for quality programmes if one did not have enough popular programmes. My right hon. and learned Friend the Minister appeared to agree with him, even though he had said two minutes earlier that things were not as bad as they looked and that we would

be seeing a lot of opera. It is permissible to have some intellectual doubt about the possibility of reconciling those two views.

I repeat that it seems to me perfectly possible to suspect that we are in the process of passing legislation that will not only run down the quality, such as it is, of our commercial television but—as the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) pointed out—will probably, in time, affect the quality, such as it is, of the BBC. I am not being a Jeremiah; those effects may take time and they may be difficult to pin down. Nevertheless, it is possible to take that view, and a lot of extremely intelligent and thoughtful people outside the House do, indeed, take that view.

In terms of education, there is an increasingly close relationship between what is broadcast and what is taught in the classroom. Let me give my right hon. and learned Friend an example. I should be interested to know whether he has been in touch with the Department of Education and Science about the amendment. If he, like me, had had the misfortune to read some of the new GCSE examinations in English literature, he would know that, to a certain extent, they are based on piddling and banal television film scripts. That is the nature of the new world in which we live, and it is the subject of another debate. But given that those film scripts are used in our examinations, and used in our schools, as texts to be "studied", it will be a sad day for education if we do anything in the Bill to make them more piddling and banal than they are already.

Perhaps my right hon. and learned Friend can assure me that he has been in touch with the Department of Education and Science and that these matters have been given the thought that they deserve. But I beg leave to express some doubts about whether that is so, and to be not pessimistic but absolutely realistic about the risks that we shall be running in the Bill if we do not do whatever we can to use the sticking plaster—that is all it is—that the amendments represent. We shall not save the day, after all, by naming three subjects. The only case for naming them is that we may thus do something to head off what I regard as an inevitable decline in quality, which will have repercussions for the BBC and, indirectly, for our education system.

Mr. Mellor: With the leave of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) knows that I am enormously fond of him and that I agree with his views on almost everything. I even partially agree with some of the views that he has expressed from time to time on this issue, as I hope has been evidenced by what has happened during our proceedings on the Bill. Nevertheless, I think that he is over-pessimistic.

I know that, in the end, it comes down to a matter of judgment. Honourable people of insight will come down on one side or the other of the argument. There are no absolutes in the matter, and I do not think that there is much room for further persuasion. But the new television channels that are completely free of any statutory intervention in terms of what they show have not proved the pessimists right. It is true that one of Sky's channels shows quite a lot of repeats, but that is also true of the BBC. Sky News is a quality product, however, and it is interesting to note that Sky is also contemplating a dedicated arts channel.

I profoundly hope that BSB will be a success. So much of its programming is based on quality. It shows many arts programmes. It has recognised that a large proportion of the public have told the pollsters that there is nothing on telly when they want to watch it, and on Saturday nights—a bit of a desert for quite a lot of us—it will be showing opera. I hope that that is a bold venture. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons, BSB wants to show children's programmes—proper programmes that it has commissioned itself. In other words, the truly commercial sector is not looking merely for re-runs of aged American soaps to pull in the viewers. It recognises that the viewers are a bit more discriminating than that.

With ITV, I believe that there is something worth preserving, although one must not join the broadcasters in total self-congratulatory complacency about the quality of British television. One hears enough of that when one goes to the awards ceremonies. I shall miss them, of course, even if I noticed that there was a bit of self-congratulation around. Nevertheless, ITV gives us some television that is well worth preserving, and I believe that the Bill will preserve it. It is a matter of argument whether it would be better preserved if we added the list in the amendment. I hope that the House will accept that I have no ulterior motive for rejecting the list beyond believing that the diversity test, the quality threshold and the pretty clear steer that the ITV will get from the ITC will be sufficient. I hope that they will be enough to see the ITV network through the next 10 years and beyond.

I must accept the argument advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway), that the commercial element of commercial television is not an optional extra. We said that time without number during the Committee stage. Commercial television is a commercial venture or it is nothing. The programming arrangements will only be threatened if the bottom drops out of the commercial market for commercial television. If that happens, no power on earth will save the programmes—whether or not they are enshrined in statute. Perhaps if we accepted all the Lords amendments—including the programming amendment—we should make it more difficult for Channel 3 to flourish because we might tie it down to a scheduling remit that it could not fulfil.

One is entitled to ask, "Why have a public service broadcaster if that public service broadcaster is not there to produce programmes of a very different kind from those which are available elsewhere?" I think that we can go further and that we can have a viable Channel 4—indeed, we have one now—and a Channel 3 that is properly diverse. There is every chance of keeping all those balls in the air, but I do not think that the Lords amendment would help us to achieve that aim. For that reason—I am sorry that it will also have the unintended consequence of destroying the amendments tabled by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands)—I hope that the House will agree that it is perfectly proper, and probably in the long-term best interests of quality television, that we should reject the amendments.

Question put, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 252, Noes 92.

Division No. 343] **[8. 57 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan	Amess, David
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Arbuthnot, James

Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carr, Michael
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trimble, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir George Young and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Armstrong, Hilary
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Ingram, Adam
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Meale, Alan

Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Richardson, Jo
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Walden, George
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Lords amendments Nos. 46 to 48 disagreed to.

New Clause

NETWORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN HOLDERS OF REGIONAL CHANNEL 3 LICENCES

Lords amendment: No. 111, after clause 34, insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) This section has effect with respect to the making of arrangements which—

(a) apply to all the holders of regional Channel 3 licences, and

(b) provide for programmes made, commissioned or acquired by or on behalf of one or more of the holders of such licences to be available for broadcasting in all regional Channel 3 services,

being arrangements made for the purpose of enabling regional Channel 3 services (taken as a whole) to be a nationwide system of such services which is able to compete effectively with other television programme services provided in the United Kingdom; and any such arrangements are referred to in this section as "networking arrangements".

(2) Any application for a regional Channel 3 licence shall, in addition to being accompanied by any such proposals as are mentioned in section 15(3)(b) to (d), be accompanied by the applicant's proposals for participating in networking arrangements made under this section; and—

(a) where a person has duly made such an application, the Commission—

(i) shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after the closing date for applications for the licence, send details of his proposals for participating in such arrangements to the Director General of Fair Trading, and

(ii) (without prejudice to the operation of section 16(1)) shall not proceed to consider whether to award him the licence as mentioned in that provision unless it appears to the Commission that any such proposals are satisfactory; and

(b) section *(Conditions requiring holder of Channel 3 or 5 licence to deliver promised service)* shall apply to any such proposals as it applies to the proposals submitted by the applicant under section 15(3)(bb) to (d).

(3) The Commission may publish, in such manner as they consider appropriate, general guidance to applicants for a regional Channel 3 licence as to the kinds of proposals which they would consider satisfactory for the purposes of subsection (2)(a); but before doing so the Commission—

(a) shall consult the Director General of Fair Trading, and

(b) if he requests them to make any change in the guidance, shall incorporate the change in the guidance.

(4) Each regional Channel 3 licence shall include conditions requiring the licence holder to do all that he can to secure—

(a) (in the case of a licence granted before the relevant date) that, by that date, networking arrangements have been made which—

(i) have been entered into by all the holders of regional Channel 3 licences, and

(ii) have been approved by the Commission; and

(b) (in any case) that, so long as he provides his licensed service, there are in force networking arrangements which have been so entered into and approved (unless there are for the time being in force any arrangements made by the Commission under subsection (5)).

(5) If—

(a) no such arrangements as are mentioned in subsection (4)(a) are made by the relevant date, or

(b) any such arrangements are so made but cease to be in force at any time before 1st January 1995,

the Commission may themselves draw up such networking arrangements as they consider appropriate; and, if they do so—

(i) they shall notify all the holders of regional Channel 3 licences of those arrangements, and

(ii) those arrangements shall (subject to subsection (6)) come into force on a date determined by the Commission.

and each regional Channel 3 licence shall include conditions requiring the licence holder to give effect to any arrangements made by the Commission under this subsection as for the time being in force.

(6) No arrangements made by the Commission under subsection (5) shall come into force at any time after 31st December 1994.

(7) Where—

(a) any such arrangements have come into force in accordance with subsection (6), but

(b) any networking arrangements are subsequently—

(i) entered into by all the holders of regional Channel 3 licences, and

(ii) approved by the Commission,

the arrangements referred to in paragraph (a) shall cease to have effect on the coming into force of the arrangements referred to in paragraph (b).

(8) Where any arrangements have been approved by the Commission under subsection (4) or (7)(b), no modification of those arrangements shall be made by the holders of regional Channel 3 licences unless it too has been so approved.

(9) Where any arrangements have been made by the Commission under subsection (5), they may (whether before or after the date specified in subsection (6)) make such modification of those arrangements as they consider appropriate; and, if they do so—

(a) they shall notify all the holders of regional Channel 3 licences of the modification, and

(b) the modification shall come into force on a date determined by the Commission.

(10) Without prejudice to the generality of their power to refuse to approve any arrangements or modification under subsection (4), (7)(b) or (8), the Commission shall refuse to do so if they are not satisfied that the arrangements in question, or (as the case may be) those arrangements as proposed to be modified, would be appropriate for the purpose mentioned in subsection (1).

(11) Where the Commission have—

(a) approved any arrangements or modification under subsection (4), (7)(b) or (8), or

(b) given with respect to any arrangements or modification the notification required by subsection (5)(i) or (9)(a),

they shall, as soon as reasonably practicable after giving their approval or (as the case may be) that notification—

(i) publish details of the arrangements or modification in such manner as they consider appropriate, and

(ii) comply with the appropriate requirement specified in subsection (12)(a) or (b).

(12) The appropriate requirement referred to in paragraph (ii) of subsection (11) is—

(a) in the case of any such arrangements as are referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) of that subsection, to refer those arrangements to the Director General of Fair Trading, and

(b) in the case of any such modification as is so referred to, to inform him of that modification;

and Schedule *(References with respect to networking arrangements)* to this Act shall have effect with respect to any reference made under paragraph (a) above and matters arising out of any such reference, including the subsequent modification of the arrangements to which it relates.

(13) In this section "the relevant date" means the date which the Commission determine to be that by which any such arrangements as are mentioned in subsection (4) would need to have been made by the holders of regional Channel 3 licences in order for the arrangements to be fully in operation at the time when those persons begin to provide their licensed services.")

Read a Second time.

Mr. Maclennan: I beg to move, as an amendment to the Lords amendment, amendment (a), in subsection (5)(b) of the new clause, to leave out 'before 1st January 1995'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following:

Amendment (b) to the proposed amendment, to leave out subsection (6).

Lords amendments Nos. 440, 441 and 501.

I have to inform the House that Lords amendment No. 111 involves privilege.

Mr. Maclennan: I express my appreciation to the Minister for the amendment, which reflects decisions taken earlier in the light of the view expressed strongly in Committee that there should be a networking arrangement reinforced by statute so as to avoid the possibility of complete chaos when the franchises are awarded. There should be additional safeguards when new companies come in. I must express regret that the Government have not thought fit to make that a continuing obligation on the ITC. The purpose of my amendments is to ensure that the obligation to have in place a networking arrangement is a continuing one.

I take this opportunity of raising with the Minister points that have been put to me by the Campaign for Quality Television about the role of the Office of Fair Trading in the underpinning of the networking arrangement provided for by the Bill. That arrangement is set out in the schedule and referred to in the new clause. It has been expressed strongly, most notably in a speech by Mr. Richard Dunn of the Independent Television Companies Association at a *Financial Times* conference, that there would be serious risks if the Office of Fair Trading were to be involved in the networking. The sort of competition criteria that might appeal to the Office of Fair Trading would not necessarily be the same criteria as would be in the mind of the ITC in putting forward its proposals. The purpose of the networking arrangements is to ensure that quality broadcasting is available across the board.

My noble Friend Lord Thomson of Monifieth said in another place that the difficulty with network arrangements in television is that

"while there is not a conflict, there are often tensions pulling different ways between the most competitive system in the terms in which the OFT is bound to look at the matter and the system that provides the viewer with the best possibility of a rich variety of programming." —[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 11 October 1990; Vol. 522, c. 493.]

I am sure that the Minister has read Richard Dunn's speech and I hope that he will address the arguments that he made. They are serious arguments. We had some debate earlier about the appropriateness of bringing the Office of Fair Trading into the regulatory process. Some of us, particularly myself, moved amendments to seek to remove the Office of Fair Trading from the oversight because that seemed to double the regulatory role. It would have taken away from the governors of the BBC their responsibility and, in this respect, would have reduced the role of the ITC. It is clear that the ITC can be overruled by the Office of Fair Trading according to the terms of the new clause. The House is entitled to an assurance that the carefully balanced quality provisions to which the Minister has devoted so much attention will not be damaged.

9.15 pm

Mr. John Greenway: I have given notice to my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister of my intention to raise a matter that was raised in the other place by Lord Boston of Faversham. It relates to the matter just mentioned by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan)—the involvement of the Office of Fair Trading. Lord Boston asked Lord Ferrers three questions; I should be grateful if my right hon. and learned Friend would put on record the substance of Lord Ferrers's reply, which was given in a letter to Lord Boston on 18 October.

First, Lord Boston asked whether the OFT would play any role in the process of selecting applicants for ITV franchises. If it did, that would clearly undermine much of the work that we did in Committee to strengthen the tender procedure and to make it rather more transparent than it has been in the past. Secondly, would any unhelpful delay result from the OFT's involvement which might prove commercially damaging to ITV companies? Thirdly, what does my right hon. and learned Friend intend to do to ensure that, should the Director General of Fair Trading feel that the agreed network arrangement is uncompetitive, exemption from the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976 will be provided?

I think that the answers given in Lord Ferrers's letter are satisfactory, but it would be helpful if the House could be told—on the record—exactly what they are.

Mr. Corbett: Opposition Members are glad that the Government have honoured the earlier undertakings to give the ITC powers to establish a networking system. I do not think that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) required anything more than a slightly more detailed explanation from the Minister.

There is no argument about the fact that those who will be bidding for licences will need to know what kind of networking arrangement is in operation before they can make their bids. Will the Minister confirm that, at present, 10 of the 15 existing ITV companies have set up a body called Netco to make network programmes, and that five have said that they do not wish to make them—although one is in a bit of a dither whether to make them or not?

I understand that a safeguard exists in that, as at present, the tariff for network programmes will relate to ability to pay, measured by advertising take. I also understand—perhaps the Minister knows more about this than I do—that Netco has yet to agree on the volume of network programme hours, and on how they will be allocated.

That brings us to the question of the involvement of the Office of Fair Trading. One suggestion is that it should be based on what has happened over the past three years. That may be the point at which the OFT will start to take an immediate interest in the matter. Its job is to ensure that arrangements do not restrict, distort or prevent

competition. If it concluded—which it might do—that the formula of basing arrangements on the practice of the past three years breached some or all of its conditions, it could have a considerable impact on the arrangements. It could impose extra costs on network programmes and in turn cut the cash available for regional programmes. That could subsequently have an impact on the ability of regional Channel 3 licence holders to meet the so-called quality thresholds, by which the Minister sets so much store, as he reminded us again tonight.

People are puzzled as to why there is a need for two referees, who could find themselves using different sets of rules on the same pitch. The hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) questioned the involvement of the Office of Fair Trading. After all, the Government appoint the members of the ITC, and to that extent are right to trust its judgment. In another place, the Minister of State described the rules specified for the OFT as a mere formality. If it will simply be a matter of sending the OFT a letter and receiving one in return, there does not seem much point to it. If it is a formality, the OFT does not seem to have got the message because it has, I understand, already set up a special unit to deal with that aspect.

I am unclear also about the OFT's powers. If it does not like a proposal, will it write to that nice George Russell saying, "We don't like this proposal. Yours sincerely, OFT", or will it be able to prevent the proposed networking arrangement on the grounds specified?

Like any other business persons, ITC members must have regard to the competition rules, and in that sense they do not need a second reminder—a watchdog or a nanny peering over their shoulders, prompting them that in making commercial arrangements they must take competition law into account.

I hope that the Minister understands that competition must relate directly to the circumstances of a particular industry or trade, and that one concept cannot be wheeled round from shop to shop and be made to apply to all situations. That point is made by the Centre for Communication and Information Studies at the polytechnic of central London, which says:

"In Germany, the Federal Cartel Office has a different regulatory policy towards broadcasting from that of the Federal Constitutional Court".

Perhaps we can learn something from the methods used in Germany, even at the risk of upsetting the right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley).

Currently, in the independent television network system cost-effective, studio-made programmes such as "Coronation Street" and "Blind Date" subsidise more expensive programmes such as "World in Action", "First Tuesday" and "The South Bank Show". I mentioned "Blind Date" because in a media survey of Back-Bench Members, it came out as top of the pops. I share the fear that the OFT might prevent such a sensible arrangement which, although it may not fit any other industry, has served independent television well. Nevertheless, it may attract criticism from the OFT, which could weaken the Bill's quality provisions. I hope that the Minister can assure the House that none of the fears that I have expressed is well-founded.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. ——

Mr. Mellor: Mellor, Mr. Speaker. I was about to say that I had forgotten the name of the chap sitting opposite me when I discovered that you, Mr. Speaker, had forgotten my name—but never mind. That serves me right for being cheeky.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It was a temporary lapse.

Mr. Mellor: We all grow older, Mr. Speaker. It is happening to me as well: At your age, Mr. Speaker, these things happen.

The House welcomed the Government's decision, announced during the passage of the Bill, that we should not rely purely on the commonsense position of there being a network, although obviously the ITV system could not operate without a network. However, because of continuing concern about the previous network and the cartel thereby created, because of what some regarded as the unconscionable amount of time that was being taken to get another network and because of dark suspicions that one or two people were delaying settling on the basis that the Bill would not address those issues, it seemed of the essence that the Bill should address those issues. They were discussed between Departments and we achieved an acceptable proposition, whereby for a transitional period there is a back-stop provision to allow a network arrangement to be imposed.

With respect to the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), this is essentially a short-term problem and I do not think that we should be justified in giving the ITC the power to impose networking arrangements in the longer term. Although I have made it clear that, where it has a right to impose, it should do so with a firm hand, it would not be right for it to impose networking arrangements over a long period without going back to what I regard as a previous generation of regulation. It needs to regulate where it is necessary to do so, and where it is not necessary we should accept that the aim of the Bill is to remove restrictions.

I have always been concerned about the transitional period. Having decided that there should be intervention, the question arises of who should do it. I noticed a certain strand to the debate—I do not say this critically, but it is an observation worth making—of hon. Members regarding the OFT as rather a boring body and asking, "What has it got to do with this?" I see the OFT as a vital public watchdog. Whatever our political differences, we surely agree that the competition policy must be enforced by a strong independent body. If a body is given an overview on competition, although one wants to give primary responsibilities to the specific specialist regulator, one cannot push the OFT to one side. Much thought, which is reflected in the schedule that their Lordships were kind enough to accept, has gone into giving the OFT a role while not usurping the function of the ITC.

Paragraph 2 of Lords amendment No. 501 sets out the competition test. It makes it clear that the OFT's role is not a formality. If the circumstances arise, it must apply the competition test, which is based on the Competition Act 1980 and on paragraph 3 of article 85 of the EEC treaty. Arrangements satisfy the test if they do not have, or are not intended or likely to have

"the effect of restricting, distorting or preventing competition in connection with any business activity in the United Kingdom."

If they do have such an effect, however, they can still satisfy the test if they

"satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 of Article 85 of the E.E.C. Treaty."

[Mr. Mellor]

That is inevitably complicated because EC law is involved, but that is the test that must be applied.

If the OFT finds that the networking arrangements fall foul of the test, paragraph 5 says that it must publish the report and send a copy to the director and to the nice Mr. Russell. He is not so described in the schedule; he is merely described as the ITC, but we know that that means the nice Mr. Russell. Paragraph 6 requires the nice Mr. Russell to ensure that, under licensed conditions, the licensees modify the arrangements in accordance with the report of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Before giving way to the chap whose name I forgot, I should say that the nice Mr. Russell is 55 years old today, so perhaps somewhat belatedly we should send him happy birthday wishes.

Mr. Corbett: I willingly join the Minister in extending happy birthday wishes to that nice Mr. Russell.

Can the Minister give the House an assurance that, in looking at the proposed networking arrangements, he will look at the specific needs and requirements of the industry against the general background of the OFT's requirements rather than use a blanket approach? That is the point in a nutshell.

9.30 pm

Mr. Mellor: The OFT has to apply a competition test that relates to the industry under consideration. That may be why it is necessary for someone to have some specialist awareness within the OFT. I appreciate that it is possible to criticise those arrangements. Obviously, it is possible to criticise any arrangement. If we isolated the OFT, people would ask, "What is the point of having a competition body such as the OFT and pushing it to one side, not giving it a role even though specialist competition issues are involved?"

Our starting point is the fact that, had we not made any of those provisions, the networking arrangements would have been caught by the restrictive trade practices legislation, under which the Director General of Fair Trading and the restrictive trade practices court have a role. The Bill is permissive because it exempts approved networking arrangements from those provisions to ensure that they do not unnecessarily constrain the development of a network. We thought that it would be unjustifiable if, at the same time as removing the provisions of the restrictive trade practices legislation from this area, we also removed the role of the DGFT, particularly bearing in mind his wider competition responsibilities, which I mentioned.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) mentioned the Netco proposals. I understand that they are still under discussion by the ITV companies. As far as I am aware, they have not yet been agreed or approved by the IBA. I understand that the chairman of the ITV association may be having informal discussions with the OFT. That is the process that would have to be followed through.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) mentioned some comments that Lord Boston made in another place, which were the subject of a letter from my esteemed colleague, Lord Ferrers. I shall deal briefly with that matter, but I shall happily let my hon. Friend have a copy of the letter. Three points were raised, the first of which concerned applicants' proposals for participating in networking being sent to the Director General of Fair Trading. He certainly will not play any part in the selection process for applicants for a Channel 3 licence, which I think was Lord Boston's concern. Lord Boston was concerned also about delay because of OFT approval. I repeat Lord Ferrers' assurance that there is no need for any delay. The ITC will have to refer networking arrangements to the OFT, but they can be implemented pending OFT consideration, so there should not be any delay.

There was concern that the competition test went a bit too wide. I set out what the test is. Lord Boston suggested that this should be restricted to the provision of licensed services and services connected with them. Lord Ferrers' view was that, in practice, that is probably how it will work out. That was his judgment on advice. It is unlikely that any networking arrangements will have any outside effects. In so far as they do, it is probably right that the OFT should be able to take them into consideration, but that is an unlikely proposition.

I have done my best to respond positively. I feel that in agreeing with the Lords amendments—as I hope we shall —we are closing what some people at the beginning thought was a major gap in the Bill because no provision was made for imposing a networking arrangement. I am glad to have played a part in ensuring that that should happen. What we have done is in accordance with the spirit of the Bill, doing what is necessary, but not doing more than is necessary.

Mr. Maclennan: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment to the Lords amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Clause 164

DUTY TO PROVIDE ADVANCE INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMMES

Lords amendment: No. 399, in page 127, line 43, leave out ("schedules of and other")

Mr. Mellor: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this we may take Lords amendments Nos. 400 to 406, 641 to 649 and 675.

Mr. Mellor: The substantive amendments relate to the extent of the information that broadcasters will have to make available and to the timing of the release of that information. Lords amendment No. 401, in most people's view, is the lead amendment in the group. It requires broadcasters to make information available at such a time as a publisher "reasonably requires it" and to make it available to all publishers simultaneously. However, broadcasters will not be required to make available a complete schedule for any one-week period more than 14 days before the first day of that week. The 14-day limit can be varied by order.

Concern was expressed in Committee that some organisations with both television and newspaper interests might want to take some competitive advantage by getting hold of somebody else's schedule and then rescheduling their own programmes to meet it. The 14-day period is the

lowest possible lead time for a weekly magazine for the public dealing with listings on a week-long basis. It is a tight but fair target, which will protect the broadcasters' interests and, at the same time, allow a long overdue reform—the opportunity for freely available information about programme listings subject, of course, to proper negotiations about a payment for copyrighted material.

Mr. Corbett: I am sure that the Minister will be able to clear up a couple of small points, especially as the letter of which I have a copy was sent from his office. Will he confirm that there is no obligation on broadcasters to supply television listings information about programmes that are scheduled to be broadcast before 1 March 1991?

Mr. Mellor *indicated assent.*

Mr. Corbett: I am glad that the Minister is able to do that.

The second point has also been raised with the Minister's office. Negotiations between the copyright holders of the listings can open from 1 January, although the listings cannot be published until after the first programme is running after 1 March. There are fears that not only rogue publishers, but French, Italian and German publishers with a big interest in this market may be tempted to jump the gun in the initial two months. If that happened, and in the absence of an agreement, what would be the position of the holders of the copyright?

Those of us who were members of the Committee will remember that there was great excitement about the next point. During the last sitting, the Minister found a relevant piece of paper in his red Dispatch Box to enable him to make some moves on listings. The House will be interested to know that Independent Television Publications Limited, which bought and holds the copyright to the ITV programmes, has made it clear that the proposal meets an expressed wish of Mr. Tony Elliott of *Time Out*. ITP has decided to make the information available to publishers free of charge once an initial licence fee has been established and the publisher has been registered as a licensed user. That is a bold and sensible move.

I hope that the Minister can clarify the points that I have raised.

Mr. Simon Coombs (Swindon): My right hon. and learned Friend is aware of my appreciation of the way in which he has carried out the negotiations on this difficult matter and balanced the interests of publishers and copyright owners.

I believe that the House has now got it about right, but there are still some lingering fears among copyright owners, such as IPC Magazines, that the negotiations between themselves and publishers might be protracted and difficult. They believe that there might be a temptation on behalf of would-be publishers to try to delay settlement of the negotiations so as to obtain an unfair advantage from them. I know that my right hon. and learned Friend has been in receipt of correspondence on this matter this week from IPC Magazines. It would be helpful if he could reassure those who have written to him to express their concern.

Once a copyright tribunal is established, such negotiations between copyright owners and publishers will be settled. It is inevitable that that tribunal would make a judgment on the responsible handling of the negotiations by the interested parties. The negotiations, however, might be protracted and it is possible that the copyright owners will suffer a considerable commercial disadvantage. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will be able to reassure them.

Mr. Maclennan: The Minister will be aware that I share the concern that has already been expressed. I took an initiative on this matter earlier in our proceedings, and I am grateful to the Minister for his response then.

Mr. Mellor: I agree with the first proposition advanced by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett). The hon. Gentleman also expressed concern about people jumping the gun, but the situation is exactly the same as it would be if somebody purported to publish a rival magazine now. A copyright owner has a legal remedy, which includes an injunction against publishers, distributors and so on, to protect his interests. I cannot precisely anticipate the relief the courts would give, but protection does not run out until the statutory arrangements come into force. Until that time, copyright owners are protected.

I am grateful that my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) recognises that I have gone to some trouble to try to resolve differences with copyright owners. We do not want litigation to arise from this. We want to move into another era, amicably if possible. I am glad to say that, by and large, that has been achieved. I am grateful to John Mellon of IPC Magazines for his positive approach to the negotiations. We are keen to respond to the issues he raised.

On unnecessarily protracted proceedings, it is true that we decided, on Report, to delete the provision in what was schedule 15 that would have allowed the copyright tribunal to award costs against any publisher who, in exercising his statutory right to publish, fixed the fee at less than a reasonable cost. We thought that a provision to this effect in the Bill was unnecessary, since the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 already contained such a provision. We therefore decided that that in the Bill did not have any practical significance.

My noble Friend the Earl Ferrers made some other remarks about timing, which are reported in the *Official Report* of the other place. Although I believe that the timing is tight, there will be enough time for the necessary negotiating procedures because there will be an incentive for everyone to make the negotiations effective. Although I appreciate that there is two months between the negotiations and their implementation, the only alternative would have been to delay the start of the statutory arrangements until after 1 March. That would not have been justified, having regard to the pressure that has existed for a long time to remedy the situation.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Schedule 2

RESTRICTIONS ON THE HOLDING OF LICENCES

Lords amendment: No. 466, in page 146, line 21, leave out from ("corporate,") to ("and") in line 27 and insert ("shall be construed in accordance with sub-paragraph (2A)")

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take amendments Nos. 467 to 477 and 483 to 499.

9.45 pm

Mr. Maclennan: At an earlier stage my hon. Friends and I sought to reduce the number of local radio stations that a company could own from six to four. The Minister will not be surprised to hear that I oppose a system that would allow as many as 20 stations to be owned. It runs a risk of creating something like a game of monopoly, with the companies racing about bidding for the plums. It poses the possibility of large private monopolies being created to the detriment of small local stations and it could make a mockery of the bidding process. Why have the Government agreed to amendment No. 484, to leave out ("six") and insert ("twenty")?

Mr. Mellor: The hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) gives me an opportunity to deal with a point that was not always clear from the debates in the other place. Indeed, it was not always clear to me until it was spelt out to me, so I am not assertin great superior insight into the subject.

There is a crucial distinction here. We have changed the rules in a more significant way than just numbers. In the early stages, we were referring to stations. We are now referring to channels. Some independent radio stations in rural areas operate now on up to six channels, because different channels may be required to reach the whole area. A metropolitan example of that is LBC, which has one station with two channels.

We are not talking about 20 stations. At present, there are already over 130 channels in the system, so the limit of 20 gives nobody, on the face of it, more than 15 per cent. It is less than that. But the number of channels is set to expand rapidly, so we shall not be creating a monopoly.

We came up with an ownership system that people thought was crude and not convincing. The Radio Authority came up with another system that we felt needed modification to be acceptable. We suggested, in the spirit of open government which the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland would commend, that the AIRC and the Radio Authority, in the light of certain guidance that we sent to them about our response to the Radio Authority's original proposals, should examine our guidance together and come back to us, when we would try to agree to their proposal.

There are undercurrents here. While we do not want monopolies—the Bill is strong on control; it is only in relation to the non-DBS satellites that we have been remotely criticised for not being rigorous—we must remember that we are dealing with small battalions, so there is every advantage in allowing some element of multiple holding. What is left is still small in the context of enterprises outside of television companies. I hope that, in moving from stations to channels, and in due course promulgating—as we shall do by laying an order—the full details of the ownership arrangements, we shall have an arrangement with which the industry feels happy. I want the industry to be confident about the future and believe that it will be much more confident about it if it believes that it has shaped a crucial sector—the ownership requirements.

In further proving that there is life after death in this instance, I gather that I shall have the privilege of dealing with the order when it comes forward. I look forward to then being able to justify what has been done.

Mr. Maclennan: I am grateful to the Minister, who made an extremely helpful intervention.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 478, in page 148, line 43, at end insert ("or the Authority")

Mr. Mellor: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Speaker: With this we may take Lords amendments Nos. 479 to 482, 16, 21, 134, 171, 173, 254 and 256.

Mr. Mellor: Both Houses have made a great effort to try to ensure that a rigorous but fresh climate for religious broadcasting is established under the Bill. I gather that there may be one or two residual problems, so I may intervene later if there are points that I need to pick up.

Mr. Fisher: As the Minister says, many of these matters are technical and, although there are about 700 amendments to come, we are content to accept most of them as technical and will not delay the House. However, I should like the Minister to explain one or two more aspects of this group of amendments, particularly amendment No. 482, which requires the ITC and the Radio Authority to bring into force guidelines.

The Minister will know that hon. Members have received a great deal of correspondence on that matter. The constituency of the hon. Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) includes Vision Broadcasting and my constituency contains UCB. Both of us have been exercised by the representations of those two organisations on the guidelines, which are currently drawn up by the Radio Authority. The ITC is beginning work on its guidelines.

Both sides of the House are at one in their general aim to prevent American-style, charismatic, evangelistic broadcasting in this country. We do not want the sort of broadcasting where the power of the medium is used to extract a great deal of money with emotional force and all the other sordid elements that have crept in in the United States.

However, many people are, with some justification, concerned that the draft guidelines on which the Radio Authority is working at present may, in one or two particulars, be going too far, especially in relation to restrictions on appeals and donations and exactly what is meant by proselytising. The religious churches that might apply for the licences are perfectly happy to accept the restriction not to appeal on the air for money, but the guidelines on which the Radio Authority is presently working state that no other literature can be produced in support of their activities. That seems to put the churches at a disadvantage in relation to other charitable organisations. It is one thing not to use the power of radio or television to ask for money, but if organisations such as Vision Broadcasting or UCB cannot put out leaflets in support of their activities or ask people to support them in door-to-door campaigns, that seems to be going extremely far, and I am not sure that that is the intention. I should

be grateful if the Minister would give his views on that and some guidance, both to the Radio Authority and the ITC, which are currently drafting their guidelines.

It is difficult to define proselytising—*[Interruption.]* The Minister has a definition to offer from a sedentary position and I look forward to hearing it later, but hon. Members who do not consider themselves a walking thesaurus would say that it meant to propound and propagate religious beliefs, which is explicitly allowed under this set of guidelines. However, the next sentence in the guidelines says that companies may not use any material

"to proselytise or recruit members."

Once again, this is a matter of using written material which companies may want to circulate to members of the public in support of their claims.

There seems to be some confusion here and it would be helpful if the Minister gave some guidance to the Radio Authority and the ITC to clarify the matter.

We are content with all other aspects of the amendments.

Mr. Michael Alison (Selby): I should like to carry forward the expressions of anxiety by the shadow Minister for the Arts about the draft codes of conduct and of programme content that are beginning to appear.

I had occasion to write to my right hon. and learned Friend about this a few days ago, so he is well apprised of the situation. There is no doubt that the new regulatory bodies, the ITC and the Radio Authority, which are the very creatures of this Bill, are arrogating to themselves powers of interpretation and discretion which are all weighted in the direction of restrictions that are the very reverse of the Minister's own liberalising and expansionist philosophy on religious broadcasting. So much is certainly beginning to come through in the draft to which the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) referred.

I want to give the Minister the flavour of what I am complaining about. On 18 October last the new draft broadcasting, advertising and sponsorship codes on religious broadcasting were made available for comment. In a letter accompanying the draft codes the controller of advertising at the IBA wrote:

"After very careful consideration both the shadow ITC and Radio Authority have concluded that there is not a sufficiently persuasive case to prohibit programme sponsorship by religious organisations".

But my right hon. and learned Friend will recall that as long ago as April he wrote to parliamentary colleagues as follows:

"Religious organisations will be allowed to sponsor programmes and to advertise on both TV and radio".

So who is running the country, to ask a rhetorical question? I hope that the Minister will confirm that the controller of advertising at the IBA had no discretion or any option other than to reflect the Minister's decision as conveyed to colleagues in the House on this matter.

This is not a nit-picking point. As my right hon. and learned Friend will know from the letter that I sent him on 24 October and from representations that he has received from other colleagues, the two broadcasting organisations already mentioned by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central; United Christian Broadcasters—the Stoke-on-Trent radio station—and Vision Broadcasting cable television from Swindon, both approved and authorised to operate by the present Cable Authority, would be threatened with closure and extinction if the draft programme code circulated by the new Radio Authority were to be implemented, and if it were to be echoed, copied and reflected in the parallel television code, which would affect Vision television.

My right hon. and learned Friend will have noted from the material that I sent him that the UCB station at Stoke-on-Trent falls foul of the new draft code in at least eight identifiable and separate particulars. Yet that very station is warmly commended and authorised by the present Cable Authority. I remind the Minister that, judging from references that he and the Prime Minister have made in correspondence with me and Lord Halsbury, Vision television and UCB are regarded in Downing street and in the Home Office as acceptable and desirable bodies whose future is to be safeguarded and enhanced.

The liberalising regime that my right hon. and learned Friend has sponsored and provided for in the Bill is designed not to mutilate but to multiply groups such as United Christian Broadcasters and Vision Broadcasting. We look to my right hon. and learned Friend for firm assurances that no code will be acceptable to the Government that cannot accommodate and secure the future of UCB and Vision Television.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central mentioned the difficulty that we have already encountered in paragraph 7.7 of the draft code——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Ways and Means Motion and the Lords Amendments to the Broadcasting Bill may be proceeded with, thought opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Kirkhope.]*

Lords amendments again considered.

Question again proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Alison: The draft paragraph is headed "Proselytising" and it seems quite extraordinary that the draft Radio Authority should seek to ban and bar what it calls proselytising, which means exactly the same as evangelism. One has only to read the gospel of St. John the evangelist on television or radio and one is evangelising. However, proselytising, which means making converts to a religion, is apparently to be proscribed. I cannot believe that such nonsensical random drafting by a body that is itself a creature of the Bill can be allowed to continue unchecked. My right hon. and learned Friend must intervene and put a sharper definition, regulation and control on such drafts. Above all, he must provide that bodies such as UCB and Vision will be able to survive, persist, multiply and flourish under the new regime that he has pioneered. We are profoundly grateful to him for the imaginative, outward-looking and constructive way in which he has approached the whole question of religious broadcasting. We look to him to persist with that matter in the oversight that he exercises on the new codes of practice.

Mr. Simon Coombs: I shall start by assuming that the Government and my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister for the Arts are fully committed to the continuance in operation of the two organisations to which reference has been made in the debate—United Christian Broadcasters, which in Stoke has the advantage of a Dispatch Box speaker, the hon. Member for

[Mr. Simon Coombs]

Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), on its side, and Vision Broadcasting in Swindon, for which I should like to speak.

The Minister has made it clear in previous debates and in Committee that he agrees that these bodies are doing a good and useful job and that their future should not be threatened by any legislation, or codes or guidelines drawn up under the legislation. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will tell the House that it is too early to assume the worst. I would be happy to feel that I need not assume the worst in these matters. The problem is that, on 1 January, the new ITC and Radio Authority will be in office. They will then have, as it were, the power of life and death over organisations such as those that I have mentioned.

It is important for those of us who wish those organisations to continue to operate after 1 January to be reassured that that will be possible and that nothing will happen to prejudice their chances of survival. The Radio Authority's draft programme code and the shadow ITC's draft code on sponsorship and advertising contain indications that cause considerable concern.

As has been said, in its draft code, the Radio Authority has produced suggestions that would simply close down UCB in Stoke. There can be little doubt about that. Of course there will be consultations about those draft guidelines and objections will be raised. What happens if those objections are overruled and the guidelines are the same on 1 January? We want to know. What happens if the shadow ITC's draft guidelines on sponsorship and advertising are adopted? To be fair, it does say:

"The shadow ITC would welcome views on how far the draft rules should apply to advertising on specialised religious channels."

What if, at the end of the consultation exercise, it decides that those rules should apply? As I understand it, on 1 January, Vision Broadcasting, for example, would be taken out of action. We do not want that to happen. I believe that the Government do not want that to happen, and I have been assured by my right hon. and learned Friend that he does not want it to happen—but the signs are that it could and probably will happen.

In another place, the noble Lord Viscount Buckmaster called me to order and said that he hoped that

"the Conservative Member of Parliament for Swindon will pursue vigorously the cause of the broadcasting installation"

in his constituency. He also said:

"I hope that your Lordships can appreciate the nervousness, especially at Vision Cable, because in recent years the IBA religious broadcasting department has blocked the broadcasting of a number of Christian programmes, as was mentioned on earlier stages of the Bill in your Lordships' House. It blocked them for a number of reasons . . . Virtually all of those programmes have in the end been broadcast, with some editing or modification . . . but from 1st January 1991 Vision Cable will be subject to the ITC and the authority of members of the same IBA religious department as originally refused broadcasting permission for those programmes."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 October 1990; Vol 522, c. 1221.]

The problem is that those individuals have, for whatever reason, previously demonstrated a dislike of or a hostility towards the sort of programmes being transmitted. We have reason to be concerned about what may happen on 1 January—and on that date it will be too late, unless matters have been clarified and the Government have made it clear to the shadow Radio Authority and the shadow ITC that they will not tolerate the sort of codes and guidelines that are beginning to appear, and which may multiply and take force on 1 January.

My usual feeling is that codes and guidelines should be kept well away from Government and Parliament. We set up bodies and expect them to act reasonably on our behalf. What happens if one or two bodies act in a way that has an effect diametrically opposite to that which has clearly been stated as desirable by my right hon. and learned Friend and by Parliament? I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will give us the answer to that. I hope that, before 1 January, he will ensure that any threat to religious broadcasting organisations is well and truly removed for good.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I join in this part of the debate with some humility because I wanted, like my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to be a member of the General Synod—but unfortunately, as a Conservative standing in Southwark, I failed to be elected. I regard myself as a member of the Synod, failed.

I stand firmly on the ground advocated by David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool. I recommend an article that he wrote in one of today's newspapers, in which he said indirectly that the most important part of religious broadcasting was the broadcasting and not the narrow casting that will come on cable.

Millions of people watch "Highway", "Songs of Praise", and the BBC's "Everyman". Such programmes reach far greater audiences than any of the specific religious Christian broadcasting channels are ever likely to reach. If the promotion of opportunities for radio broadcasting on specific religious channels and cable television lead to the major broadcasters—independent television and the BBC—dropping their God slots and goodness corners, the loss to the people will be great.

We may not be faced with that choice—I do not have sufficient knowledge of the matter—but I do know that the fight for Radio 3 and the broadcasting elements for Christian and other great faiths has meant that people do not watch or listen only to the listings of their choice, but can come across elements of broadcasting almost as a surprise—and faith may do the same, not as the result of evangelism, but as a part of our national life.

Large-scale national religious broadcasting is vital. I cannot speak for the organisations in Stoke or Swindon. I have not listened to their output and I am not sure that I have read what they have sent to me—if, indeed, they have sent me anything. I respect my right hon. and learned Friend and my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) because they know what they are talking about in speaking up for the modification of the draft code, but I do not want the code to be modified so that, although we may gain a spread of local religious channels and stations, the national radio and television broadcasters will drop what is important to those of us who have or seek faith and who want religion to be reflected in national broadcasting.

Let us look at the United States and its three major national networks. There is an absence of what we in this country take for granted.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Why does my hon. Friend think that it is an either/or situation; we can have both.

Mr. Bottomley: I am not sure that my hon. Friend can have been listening to me. I did not say that it would necessarily be an either/or situation.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: It is not.

Mr. Bottomley: In all humility, I should like to develop my own speech. I may be wrong, and my hon. Friend may be right. I merely want to ensure that we do not debate the matter without recognising the major influence of the hours of broadcasts that are valuable to all of us. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) would agree with that. I doubt whether Twyford high school would have been converted to a Church of England school without the background influence of national broadcasting, even though the majority of children at that school are not necessarily of a Christian denomination.

That important element, and the work that the Bishop of Liverpool does with the Central Religious Advisory Committee, should get more attention. I hope that, as the months go by, people will listen to the chairman and members of that committee, who do have a broad knowledge of what is going on. They may be able to prevent us from falling into the idea that religion is a minority interest rather than a most important part of our national life and our national broadcasting network.

Mr. Mellor: I am grateful to hon. Members on both sides of the House for their commitment to making progress with the Bill, and for their co-operation in achieving that aim. Perhaps it would be for the convenience of the House if I moved future amendments formally—not to avoid debate, but to avoid unnecessary debates. If there are then points on which I can assist the House, as I am sure there will be, I can respond to them. That may be preferable to my introducing at any length questions on which, given the consideration the Bill has already received, hon. Members may be perfectly content.

Hon. Members *indicated assent.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): From all the heads that are being vigorously nodded, I get the impression that that is a most welcome suggestion.

Mr. Mellor: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is a good start.

The constituents of the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) get a bit of balance in their lives, being represented by him in Parliament and having religious broadcasters in their midst as some compensation. When we set our hand to an expansion of responsible religious broadcasting, we did so advisedly, believing that some broadcasters would view responsibly the expansion that had been made possible, but knowing that there are some other groups—cults and American-style broadcasters, for example—that we would not want broadcasting here and for which the Bill provides no mandate. That is why the Bill is carefully drawn to permit the expansion of responsible Christian broadcasting while at the same time preventing irresponsible or exploitative broadcasting.

Unfortunately, these are not self-defining passages. They require sensitive work on the part of the regulatory bodies—in this case the ITC and the Radio Authority. Frankly, I do not envy either of those bodies their task, but I believe that they are doing the best that they can to consult widely on their guidelines. I imagine that the reason why the Radio Authority has produced guidelines—guidelines that neither I nor the Government have seen, but upon which comments have been made—is to ensure that, if they are unreasonable, they can be corrected before they are promulgated formally. If it is thought that the authority is being unreasonable even when the guidelines are promulgated, much as I am reluctant to call upon the assistance of my learned friends in these matters because I do not want to add to their work with this Bill, it would be a fitting matter for judicial review.

If it is any help, we obviously considered these matters. It is not our job to be a regulator—I say that on constitutional grounds—but obviously, if something seems manifestly unfair, I dare say that comments to that effect would not be improper, if they were privately expressed.

10.15 pm

On the whole, we should have some sympathy with the regulators in their task. After all that we have been through, I do not believe that either UCB or Vision Broadcasting will find things very difficult. I am anxious that they should not—to use the old boxing parlance—squeal before they are hurt. We have to bear in mind the fact that the ITC has not yet even published its draft guidelines. Frankly, I cannot be expected to give reassurances about a problem that has not even arisen.

As I have already said, while I cannot anticipate the ITC's individual licensing decisions, I am quite sure that Vision Broadcasting will have nothing to fear under the new regime on programming grounds if its religious broadcasting is responsible and not exploitative. So far, I have no reason to believe that its output has been anything other than responsible, and it has not been exploitative.

Some of my hon. Friends are very keen, either because organisations are located in their constituencies or because they are involved with new and exciting opportunities, as is my right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison). We must also bear in mind the cautious words of my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) and of the Bishop of Liverpool, with whom I have discussed this topic. There is another view, which is that there are real dangers in allowing expoitative religious groups in by the back door. We have to accept that there is a role for the regulators in distinguishing one from the other.

I am keen to be absolutely sure that the regulations work properly. I am satisfied in my own mind but, by setting about the process of consultation with such care, in the end it will be possible for sensible people to come to terms on the matter.

Mr. Fisher: Hon. Members on both sides of the House are agreed that we do not want the high-pressure charismatic broadcasting that disfigures the American scene; we are at one with the Minister on that.

The Minister must accept that his Bill places a responsibility on the Radio Authority and the commission to introduce guidelines. By taking the arm's-length view of the guidelines—that he has admitted to in his replies—he is distancing himself far too much from the creature and from the responsibilities that he has set up.

I am sure that the Minister has listened carefully to the debate. The speech by the right hon. Member for Selby (Mr. Alison), speaking as a Church Commissioner, and

[Mr. Fisher]

those of other hon. Members should give him some cause for concern. Many of the guidelines that the Radio Authority and, probably, the ITC are working on are quite correct—for example, those on appeals for money on the air, on not denigrating other religions, and on limiting programmes about phenomena. It is not that all the guidelines are wrong. But I should have thought that the Minister would have heard enough in this short debate to realise that there is genuine concern about appeals, donations and the problem area of proselytising.

The House would be reassured if the Minister gave an undertaking to get in contact with the Radio Authority and the ITC. He has required them to set up guidelines. If he entered into a dialogue at this stage, we could get things right before 1 January. That is not asking a great deal of the Minister. He has brought the guidelines and responsibilities into force, so he owes it to the House to take a little more interest in them, and to ensure that they are the sort of guidelines that all hon. Members want.

Mr. Mellor: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, but may I say to him in all kindness—and I mean that—that he must not allow the fact that one of these organisations is located in his constituency to blur his wider judgment. If I started to meddle with the regulatory bodies on other issues, he would be the first to leap up and say that that was constitutionally improper. As it happens, I believe that this is a perfectly proper matter on which I dare say we shall have discussions, but we must not be thought to be trying to lean on the regulatory bodies to prevent them from dealing sensitively with a difficult matter. I do not want worthwhile broadcasters to be trampled on. That will not, I believe, be the consequence. With great respect, however, to all concerned, since the Independent Television Commission has not yet published its draft——

Mr. Fisher: There is also the Radio Authority.

Mr. Mellor: That is a separate body.

I return to the point that we have set our hand to expanding religious broadcasting. My right hon. Friend the Member for Selby (Mr. Alison) was kind enough to say that I have done it, but in five or 10 years' time, I do not want bitterly to regret having done it because we had levered the regulatory bodies into a position in which they were afraid to stand up against exploitative religious broadcasting.

I do not suggest that either of the organisations is exploitative; I am perfectly satisfied that they are not. Anyone standing in my position, however, would be well advised not to say too much to the regulatory bodies that will be doing their best to deal with the problems they encounter. Nevertheless, in so far as there are words that with advantage might be changed to softer or better words, in accordance with the principles that we have followed throughout our consideration of the Bill, the officials will want to have discussions about them. I do not wish to appear to be condemning prematurely regulatory bodies that will be doing their best, but I shall convey with pleasure both to the ITC and to the Radio Authority the points that have been made in the debate.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

Mr. Mellor: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that we missed Lords amendment No. 110 to which the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) wished to speak.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I had put the Question on that amendment but, in view of the speed at which I was moving, I shall gladly reverse engines and allow the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) to speak.

New clause

PROMOTION OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN RELATION TO EMPLOYMENT BY LICENCE HOLDER

Lords amendment: No. 110, after clause 34, insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) Any Channel 3 licence or licence to provide Channel 4 or Channel 5 shall include conditions requiring the licence holder—

(a) to make arrangements for promoting, in relation to employment by him, equality of opportunity between men and women and between persons of different racial groups; and

(b) to review those arrangements from time to time.

(2) In subsection (1) "racial group" has the same meaning as in the Race Relations Act 1976.")

Mr. Fisher: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment. I understand that with this we are discussing Lords amendments Nos. 124 and 310.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the Minister for your courtesy. The amendments were moving like a blur before my ears. I do not want to detain the House for long, but it is important to record the thanks of a great many people for the Minister's commitment on Report to deal with equal opportunities. In view of his doubts about that in Committee, it reflected well on the way in which he listened to the debate and considered it. Many people were extremely grateful to him.

The Minister received a delegation from myself and others including Cherry Ehrlich, the BBC's equal opportunities officer, Christina Driver, the industrial officer of the Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance and Sophie Balhatchet of the Independent Programme Producers Association. He listened, as is his wont, very attentively. We put it to him that a generalised commitment to equal opportunities would not achieve what he had sought to give as a commitment on Report. We told him that we were seeking a definite statement that Channel 3 companies should have a policy on equal opportunities and that it should cover employment, promotion and other training issues. We said that in order to ensure that the policy was effective, we would at least need to monitor the progress of each company and for it to publish its progress in its annual report. The Bill requires the companies elsewhere to produce annual reports. That would not be an onerous responsibility and would ensure that there was some accountability to the public and the work force that progress was being made.

The Minister heard our submission with great attentiveness and we went away believing that he was sympathetic to it. Therefore, it was disappointing to receive a letter from the Minister three or four weeks later saying that after further consideration and discussion with the shadow ITC he felt that this could best be achieved by a generalised statement in the Bill and guidelines from the

ITC that would have non-statutory force. The shape of that argument is ironic when it is the reverse of the argument on impartiality that we had earlier in the evening. Perhaps such inconsistencies are a feature of these debates.

I should be grateful if the Minister could put on the record why he feels that the very loose and generalised statement presented in Lords amendment No. 110 is satisfactory, and how the guidelines will achieve what I took to be his intention that each company should have an equal opportunities policy, monitor the progress of that policy and publish the results annually. That does not strike me as an expensive or arduous commitment; it would also promote the skills of women, members of the ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. That last group seems to have disappeared from the clause, although the original intention was to include them. All three groups, however, have many skills to offer independent broadcasting—skills that are not being fully represented now.

10.30 pm

The Minister knows the statistics; they do not need to be laboured. Let me point out, however, that this is not simply an argument for equity and justice: if the skills that those groups have to offer are muted or unrealised, not only will the people concerned be disadvantaged or prejudiced against, but the rest of us will suffer too. We shall be the losers, because broadcasting will be less strong, skilful and various than it would otherwise be.

I suspect that the Minister has considerable sympathy with the case that I am making. My point is that the Bill and the guidelines are unlikely, in their present form, to have the impact that we understood him to intend following the meeting in his office.

Mr. Mellor: I think that the key remark made by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) came at the beginning of his speech: having been rather dubious about it, we have put a clause clearly on the face of the Bill. There is, of course, always the danger of being outbid—we cannot do everything that people want—but, having read the clause again while the hon. Gentleman was speaking, I feel that it represents a very real commitment. I am sorry if it did not emerge plainly enough at the meeting that what I envisaged would be couched in general terms, but I feel in any event that the best must not be the enemy of the good. This is, I think, a significant step forward.

Licence holders—that is, holders of licences for Channels 3, 4 and 5, domestic satellite services and national radio services—will be required to make arrangements to promote equal opportunities for men and women and for people of different racial groups, and to review those arrangements from time to time. The ITC and the Radio Authority will enforce the provisions through the licence conditions that they impose under the new clauses. They may require the applicants to set out their equal opportunities policies, and successful applicants would then be subject to an equal opportunities condition in their licences. That condition would take account of any undertaking that the applicant had made, and—this is relevant to one of the hon. Gentleman's points—the IBA has undertaken that the licence conditions should include a requirement for the holder to review progress on equal opportunities in the company's annual report.

I recognise the strength of the case for the involvement of disabled people. I discussed the matter with the Department of Employment. The Department's view was that—as it is reviewing discrimination against disabled people, and has recently issued a consultation document, "Employment and Training for People with Disabilities", and as that consultation period does not expire until the end of the year—it would not be right to pre-empt the outcome of the review by carrying out a specific review relating to broadcasting. We have no sinister motive for not including such a provision; we simply wanted to have regard to the fact that consultation is in progress.

I hope that what I have said about the way in which the regulatory bodies propose to deal with the matter strengthens the case for the clause, and convinces the hon. Gentleman that we are making a genuine effort. Even if it falls short of the ideal, it is still not bad.

Mr. Fisher: I accept that there are encouraging elements in what the Minister said, although he will understand that, when it is a question of the difference between "may" and "should", there is the possibility of misinterpretation. I hope that the right hon. and learned Gentleman will do all that he can to encourage the ITC to fulfil those aspirations and to introduce an appropriate requirement as part of the licence application.

People with disabilities will genuinely be disappointed with the Minister's remarks. They have few opportunities and are permanently discriminated against not just by the Government but in all walks of life, yet the Bill's equal opportunities clause excludes them. It is not good enough for the Minister to argue that because the Department of Employment has initiated a consultation exercise and produced a document—although it is not a bad document—there is no need to make provision in the Bill for people with disabilities.

Even if the Minister has not gone as far as we want, he has taken an important step forward by putting equal opportunities on the face of the Bill, and by placing a duty, albeit couched in gentle terms, on a particular group of employers. Still, to have missed the opportunity to represent the interests of people with disabilities will be gravely misinterpreted by them. I urge the Minister to think again, even at this late stage. That apart, I welcome the encouraging signs that he has given, and hope that he will pursue the point more fully.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to, [Some with Special Entry.]

Clause 79

REGULATION BY AUTHORITY OF INDEPENDENT RADIO SERVICES.

Lords amendment: No. 228, in page 66, line 39, leave out ("within a particular institution, or at")
and insert
("for a particular establishment or other defined location, or").

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 229 to 235, 239, 240, 250, 251, 277, 300 to 309, 311 to 314, 333, 334 and 338.

Mr. Corbett: I shall not detain the House, but I wish to make a small point on amendment No. 313. We could spend many hours on the difference between "shall" and "may", but we will not do so.

The amendment applies to when an announcement must be made about the results of a finding. The Minister accepted in Committee that a radio station should explain why an announcement was being made. I am interested, if he is able to help me, to know why their Lordships felt that they had to change "shall" back to "may". If he can assure me that the effect is the same, we can move on.

In Committee, the Minister was kind enough to be persuaded that we should make this mandatory and that we should use "shall" in that context. I wonder what has persuaded him to change his mind since Committee.

Mr. Maclennan: I have another point to make, although I should like to return to amendment No. 313.

Amendment No. 306, if I read it right, would permit companies that did not want to or were unable to live up to their service responsibilities to abandon them. The use of the word "substantially" is much too strong; it allows considerable watering down of the schedules. Some explanation of that is called for, even at this hour.

I noticed the change, to which the hon. Member Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) referred, from "shall" to "may" in amendment No. 313. I am seeking to protect listeners' rights. If an announcement is made, listeners are entitled to know whether the Radio Authority has found a station to be in error, to have done something that is unacceptable and, indeed, whether it is censoring the station. The listener can then make up his mind whether that is an effective remedy for a transgression.

I think that by this time there is a fair chance that the Minister will have a view about that.

Mr. Mellor: Yes, I have managed to acquire a view, and I am only too happy to give it to the House.

I begin with what the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) said about amendment No. 306, which allows the Radio Authority more flexibility to let stations drop unpopular programmes or strands of programmes that have gone out of fashion. It makes it clear that the fundamental character of the station may not change, and I attach importance to that. I said in a public speech not long ago that it is very important that stations that have been given a licence on one basis should not be allowed to slither rapidly towards the middle of the pop market and stay there so that every time a listener flicks across the airwaves he finds the same old stuff.

Mr. Corbett: What is pop?

Mr. Mellor: I am reliably assured by my noble Friend Lord Ferrers that pop is something that goes thump, thump, thump. That was said not to be sophisticated enough for drafting, but for my purposes it seems absolutely right. In my long reign as Minister for the Arts, I intend to use that definition with monotonous regularity.

Amendment No. 314 gives the authority the ability to impose a fine on licensees who fail to observe their promise of performance. That shows that no leniency is intended, but sometimes there will be a good reason why one set of undertakings is not appropriate. However, no one will be allowed gratuitously off the hook and, like the hon. Member for Erdington, I attach much importance to that fact.

I am afraid that there is a problem with amendment No. 313. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) did rather well in Committee on 27 February. Nothing in his ensuing career has been anything like as glorious as that afternoon. The hon. Gentleman may recall that he was on something of a winning streak when, in one of our briefer exchanges, he proposed that "may" should be amended to "shall" and I said, "Why not?" I am afraid that when the matter got to the other place and the inconsistency between the television and radio provisions was tackled, the latter, rather than the former, was changed. I am sorry about that. Perhaps good comes out of bad, in the sense that we could have ended up with the right policy by going consistently the other way.

10.45 pm

On 27 February, the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland said:

> "If a licence holder says that he has apologised because he must do so, that is a less powerful apology than one that simply states, 'I am apologising.'"—[*Official Report, Standing Committee F,* 27 February 1990; c. 1072.]

There is something in that point. There is also the more general point that, under the Bill, the licensee is responsible for his programming output, as the ITC and Radio Authority are not broadcasting bodies. It is arguably more consistent on this principle for the licensee to be able to decide whether he should say that an apology or correction is being broadcast as a result of a regulatory direction.

I am sorry. By and large, this is the only occasion when something has gone wrong with an undertaking. We have honoured dozens of undertakings. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will allow me to slither off this hook.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lord amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

Clause 122

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO IBA'S BROADCASTING SERVICES AND TO EXISTING CABLE SERVICES

Lords amendment: No. 344, in page 98, line 13, leave out ("and") and insert—

("(aa)) for the purpose of the regulation by the Commission after the end of that period of services provided in succession to the DBS services provided by them during that period; and")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 345, 346 and amendment (a) thereto, 347 to 359, 512 to 515, 521 to 542, 543 and amendment (a) thereto, 544 to 554, 555 and amendment (a) thereto, and 556 to 574.

Mr. Maclennan: I should like to speak to Lords amendment No. 347. We strongly welcome the Government's decision to allow for a continued pooling of transmission expenses. However, once again, the Bill provides only for an interim period. Despite the Minister's reassurances, there is no protection in the Bill for the sparsely populated areas and areas of difficult terrain on a continuing basis. This gives rise to concern in companies such as Grampian Television that they may be forced out of business and be taken over by geographically more fortunate franchise holders.

I had understood that the Minister's commitment was to provide for a system that would not be brought to a conclusion at the end of the interim period. I am therefore surprised to see the provision in this form. I know that the Minister will be prepared at least to repeat his earlier assurances.

Mr. Mellor: I repeat those assurances. This is not an easy issue. The previous Home Secretary announced in July last year that there would be a uniform tariff for Channel 3 companies. The announcement also made it clear that those cross-subsidy arrangements would be reviewed. Of course, one stands by that.

As for radio, there is a transitional period. Because of the nature of the radio system, it was decided that the kind of elaborate arrangements that might have been appropriate for television were not appropriate for perpetuation in the radio system. Some radio companies are dismayed about that and a long and honourable battle has been waged by Mr. Prag of the Moray Firth radio station. I made it clear to him throughout that I did not think that I could improve on the position that I had inherited and that I was under great pressure from the Association of Independent Radio Contractors not to do so.

We have not moved any goalposts in the amendments, but I understand that we have not gone as far as some other interests would have wished us to do. I can only regret that, but say that I have done so on the best advice from others within the industry.

Mr. Maclennan: I cannot say that I am surprised by the Minister's remarks about radio because they conform to what he has said throughout. I may have misread Lords amendment No. 347, but I thought that it referred to television and I wanted to draw attention to it for that reason. I have been advised that some of the companies are concerned about the provisions. It is, of course, for the smaller companies, such as Grampian Television, which serve areas of sparse population, that the arrangements are to be made only for an interim period. There will not be a continuing guarantee of cross-subsidisation.

Mr. Mellor: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. At the end of a long evening, I see the point. The break in the mid-1990s was raised on Report. It is necessary to review these matters from time to time, but I cannot conceive that anything is likely to change as the case for these measures will be as compelling then as it is now. It is simply that, following consultations with other Departments, it has not been open to us to put in place a perpetuity arrangement. We are concerned about transmission systems being far more complex in some areas than in others.

On Report, there was petitioning from the west country. My hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) said that there were 30-odd booster stations in his constituency alone. The best that I could do then—it was quite considerable—was to say that, while there has to be a review period, I personally doubted whether the basis of the argument would have changed materially to allow any different result from that which we already considered to be conceivable.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central) *rose*—

Mr. Mellor: I believe that I am technically intervening in the speech of the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland, so I had better sit down and allow him to finish so that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) can say his piece.

Mr. Maclennan: I am only too happy to rise to my feet again to allow the hon. Gentleman to intervene.

Mr. Darling: I wanted an undertaking from the Minister rather than an undertaking from the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) who, I suspect, is not in a position now—nor, with due respect, is likely to be—to give me such an undertaking.

I understand what the Minister is saying. However, it might be helpful—and would be appreciated by those who live in areas that are served by many transmitters—to obtain an undertaking from the Government to keep the situation under review. There may be an opportunity to look at the position again in the mid-1990s, but the worry is that something might happen fairly quickly in the interim which meant that Parliament was unable to respond to developments. If the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland could continue his speech to allow the Minister to intervene to give that undertaking, I should be happy.

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): I rise in support of the points made by the hon. Members for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) and for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling). Of all the complexities that are described in the Bill, that of the transmission system—its maintenance, its ownership and its effectiveness—is the area of greatest weakness, in my humble estimation. It is at its greatest weakness in the provisions for outlying areas that require many subsidiary transmitters, which add substantially to capital and to operating costs.

My right hon. and learned Friend would be unwise to assume that it was purely a matter of rural areas. It is at its most obvious in rural areas and in the Celtic fringes. However, even in some more populated parts, there is considerable difficulty in obtaining adequate transmitters to fit the existing regional contractors' marketing purposes. My right hon. and learned Friend knows perfectly well that large portions of Yorkshire, for example, are omitted from receiving signals from Yorkshire Television and are included in the north-eastern regional station. Those are obvious quirks of geography.

The review of the transmission system under the new regime will require even greater resources than do the reviews under the current system. I beg my right hon. and learned Friend to agree that there will be frequent reviews of the transmission system in the early stages of the ITC

[Sir Giles Shaw]

Channel 3 operation with a view not only to dealing with the problems raised by those in Scotland and in Wales, but to reviewing the system in the rest of the country.

Mr. Mellor: I appreciate the argument advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw). The present cross-subsidy arrangements subsist until 1992 and the new cross-subsidy arrangements will operate from 1993 to 1996.

My hon. Friend asked about the technical capabilities of the system. We discussed that exhaustively in Committee when I was happy to state that we were committed not only to maintaining the existing system, but to improving it for the benefit of those in the so-called black holes of the transmission system. At present, 99·4 per cent. of the population is covered by the system, but we aim to improve on that. In the course of a privatisation there would be no question about that. Obligations would be set to ensure that there was no deviation from the perpetuation of an efficient and effective system covering existing transmission areas. We hope that that would be accompanied not only by further improvements in transmission to areas already covered by the system, but by an extension of the system into some of those black holes. Such improvements are firmly in our sights.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Mellor: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unless I am misinformed, I understand that no other hon. Member has given notice of wanting to intervene on any of the subsequent amendments.

Mr. Fisher: I intended to speak to Lords amendment No. 432.

Mr. Mellor: That is not on my note. I had hoped to be able to suggest that we might be able to put all the other amendments to the House en bloc.

Mr. Fisher: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On amendment No. 432, could the Minister say something about the sort of sum——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister cannot do that. First, we should deal with the proposition that we should take the rest of the amendments en bloc. Is there any hon. Member who disagrees with that proposition?

Mr. Cryer: Yes. Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not sure what en bloc means. Does the Minister mean a select group of amendments or all the amendments? Even though we appear to rush through amendments, our practice gives hon. Members an opportunity to intervene when they so wish. I am opposed to dealing with the subsequent amendments en bloc.

Mr. Simon Coombs: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I welcome maximum speed in our deliberations where possible, but there are two groups of amendments on which I should like to intervene briefly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I accept, of course, the points that have been made by the hon. Members for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) and for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer). We shall proceed as we have hitherto.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

Clause 163

USE AS RIGHT OF SOUND RECORDINGS IN BROADCAST AND CABLE PROGRAMME SERVICES

Lords amendment: No. 387, in page 124, line 18, leave out from ("licence") to ("terms") in line 19 and insert—("(a) whose").

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

11 pm

Mr. Simon Coombs: This amendment deals with the delicate balance that has always been struck and maintained between the interests of the music recording industry and of broadcasters, particularly in radio. I urge caution on the Government before they do anything to change that delicate balance.

I am pleased to note that the issue was thoroughly aired in the other place and that assurances were given. I need not detain the House at this stage, apart from urging my right hon. and learned Friend to be keenly aware of the concern in the music recording industry about the fact that a small change in legislation could have a big effect on a major British industry that has always been a successful contributor to the British balance of payments. In that light, I hope that he will recognise the need for caution and will do nothing to upset that delicate balance.

Mr. Mellor: I accept what my hon. Friend says. It is a responsibility, I am almost happy to say, of the Department of Trade and Industry, and I shall make sure that that Department is made aware of my hon. Friend's view, of which I am well aware from representations made to me.

Mr. Gale: Will my right hon. and learned Friend also convey to the Department of Trade and Industry the fact that as there is now no format protection in the Bill, any format programme from television can be pirated and run on radio without any payment whatever?

Mr. Mellor: That is the Hughie Green case that we discussed at length. It all turns on whether it is an idea or whether it constitutes a fully worked through, written document of a kind that can attract copyright protection. I regret that there remains dissatisfaction on that issue. I shall convey that dissatisfaction to my colleagues at the Department of Trade and Industry, all of whom are prudently absent from the House at this hour.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

New Clause

UNAUTHORISED DECODERS FOR ENCRYPTED SERVICES ETC.

Lords amendment: No. 407, after clause 166, to insert the following new clause—

(" .—(1) In the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 the following section shall be inserted after section 297—

"*Unauthorised decoders.*

297A.—(1) A person who makes, imports, sells or lets for hire any unauthorised decoder shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

(2) It is a defence to any prosecution for an offence under this section for the defendant to prove that he did not know, and had no reasonable ground for knowing, that the decoder was an unauthorised decoder.

(3) In this section—

"apparatus" includes any device, component or electronic data;

"decoder" means any apparatus which is designed or adapted to enable (whether on its own or with any other apparatus) an encrypted transmission to be decoded;

"transmission" means any programme included in a broadcasting or cable programme service which is provided from a place in the United Kingdom; and

"unauthorised", in relation to a decoder, means a decoder which will enable encrypted transmissions to be viewed in decoded form without payment of the fee (however imposed) which the person making the transmission, or on whose behalf it is made, charges for viewing those transmissions, or viewing any service of which they form part."

(2) In section 299 of the Act of 1988 (fraudulent reception of programmes broadcast from countries or territories outside the United Kingdom)—

(a) subsection (2) shall cease to have effect; and

(b) in subsection (5), after "297" there shall be inserted "297A".")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

Mr. Simon Coombs: The House will be aware that I took considerable interest in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. That measure, among many other things, prohibits satellite signal theft and gives satellite service providers certain remedies against the manufacture, importation and sale of unauthorised decoding equipment. But the provisions apply only to signals uplinked from the United Kingdom. Signals uplinked from abroad enjoy no legal protection. That means that there is no legal remedy against the growing proliferation of pirate decoders. About 30 per cent. of United Kingdom homes with authorised decoding equipment are now estimated to have unauthorised decoders provided by Filmnet. That has caused, and will increasingly cause in the future, serious economic loss to United Kingdom satellite services and their programme suppliers. Therefore, we need an amendment to the 1988 Act to enable the Government to extend legal protection to all signals originating from abroad, not just—as the present law provides—signals from countries that already have laws against satellite signal theft.

The recent case of BBC Enterprises *v.* Hi-Tech Xtravision suggests that it is not dishonest within the meaning of the 1988 Act, and therefore not illegal, to buy unauthorised decoding equipment that is available more cheaply from someone other than the broadcaster and to use it to receive encoded satellite signals. That interpretation, if followed by other courts, would render the satellite signal theft provisions of the current statute almost unenforceable. Therefore, an amendment is needed to the 1988 Act to make it clear that an offence is committed whenever a relevant transmission is received with intent to avoid payment, without requiring a further showing of dishonesty.

Although the Court of Appeal in the BBC case that I mentioned found that the 1988 Act establishes both a primary right and a corresponding remedy in respect of the manufacture, importation and sale of unauthorised decoding equipment, there was almost unanimous agreement among the judges who considered the case that the current statute is not nearly as clear as previous law in establishing the primary right. Therefore, the 1988 Act should also be amended to clarify that point.

The Broadcasting Bill could be an appropriate vehicle for those amendments to the copyright law. In July, in the other place, Lord Lloyd of Hampstead introduced amendments that would have achieved the desired effect. The Government, in the person of Lord Saunderson of Bowden, said that they were considering the matter and would introduce amendments on Report. But the amendments before us have not met the requirements, as I said. The new clause does not provide the protection asked for.

Among the companies that fear that, in all probability, they will lose heavily financially are the BBC, British Satellite Broadcasting, Sky Television, the Federation against Copyright Theft, the British Video Association, the British Screen Advisory Council and the Motion Picture Export Association of America. I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Minister and the House will recognise the seriousness of the matter, which is why I have sought to detain the House at this late hour.

I appreciate that at this late stage of the Bill's passage it is too late to amend the legislation to deal with those problems. But I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to reconsider the matter and, if necessary, be prepared to return to the issue before this burgeoning and important industry in the United Kingdom is severely, and perhaps irreparably, damaged.

Mr. Mellor: These are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to whom I shall certainly convey the views of my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs). I appreciate that there is a problem in relation to Filmnet. The suggestion that emerged from the debate in the House of Lords was that those who sell film rights should, in all conscience, ensure that they sell them only to people who have some interest in ensuring that they cannot be readily pirated. The fault lies not with the Government, but with Filmnet for using relatively crude technology that can be so easily broken into.

I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will be only too happy to become further engrossed in those matters in due course. I, as Minister for the Arts, will not have a continuing role in all this.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 408, as amended, agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

New Clause

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS MAINTENANCE OF NATIONAL TELEVISION ARCHIVE.

Lords amendment: No. 432, after clause 170, insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) The Commission shall, for the financial year which includes the commencement of this section and each subsequent financial year, determine an aggregate amount which they consider it would be appropriate for the holders of Channel 3 and Channel 5 licences to contribute, in accordance

with this section, towards the expenses incurred by the nominated body in connection with the maintenance by it of a national television archive.

(2) In this section "the nominated body" means such body as may for the time being be nominated by the Commission for the purposes of this section, being a body which—

(a) is for the time being a designated body for the purposes of section 75 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (recordings for archival purposes), and

(b) appears to the Commission to be in a position to maintain a national television archive.

(3) A Channel 3 or Channel 5 licence shall include conditions requiring the licence holder to pay to the Commission, in respect of each of the financial years mentioned in subsection (1), such amount as they may notify to him for the purposes of this section, being such proportion of the aggregate amount determined for that year under that subsection as they consider appropriate (and different proportions may be determined in relation to different persons).

(4) Any amount received by the Commission by virtue of subsection (3) shall be transmitted by them to the nominated body.

(5) In this section—

"the Commission" means the Independent Television Commission; and

"Channel 3 licence" and "Channel 5 licence" have the same meaning as in Part I of this Act.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

Mr. Fisher: I should be grateful if the Minister would say something about this because he will agree that it is an extremely significant development. We have a large but by no means complete television archive, which represents an important cultural collection, and it would be helpful if the Minister told us about the size of what is called the "aggregate amount" and about the cost to franchise applicants. He should also express his encouragement for the enterprise.

Will the Minister also say a little about the nominated body? In subsection (2) of the Lords amendment, that body is mentioned but not specified. There are a large number of different archives in existence, and there are problems to do with compatibility, format and handling. Who will compose the nominated body? How will the commission come to that decision? How will it reconcile the different archives? What sums of money will be involved?

This is an important provision; we trust that it will coherently lay down the sort of archive that the industry needs for the future.

Mr. Cryer: I also welcome the Lords amendment. It represents one of the many commitments made by the Minister in Committee to some sort of national archeive. Film going back to before the turn of the century in the Weintraub archive at the Associated British Picture Corporation as was, now Goldcrest at Elstree, has been sold to the United States, so valuable historic documentation of how people then lived, in animated picture form, is no longer in United Kingdom ownership.

The Government might say that as long as the film can be seen, it does not really matter who owns it, but there is obviously a greater interest in this country in preserving that sort of footage than there is in the United States, where an owner might see some commercial advantage in disposing of it to yet another owner. I recall that, of the silent British feature films made at the studios of Cecil Hepworth in the 1920s, all bar one—"Coming through the Rye"—were sold to be dissolved to make dope for covering the canvas aircraft fuselages of the time. So we lost a valuable historic collection for relatively small commercial considerations.

I echo the questions asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher). How much money is envisaged? What sort of costs are likely to be involved? I welcome the fact that the archive, under public ownership and control, cannot be sold off at the whim of some takeover merchant, as happened when the Associated British Picture Corporation studios and film vaults were sold to Cannon—and in turn sold off by Cannon.

Elstree Studios could survive on the income derived from lending films from the archives without making any pictures in the studios. It did that as well, thus adding cream to the cake, but that was stopped, not by any decision by film makers in the United Kingdom but by a decision by Cannon, as it then was, simply to maximise the real estate value of Elstree Studios to offset the financial difficulties in which Cannon found itself in the United States.

11.15 pm

I welcome the clause. It would be interesting to know what the Minister had in mind during any discussions. It is not the Minister's decision, but at least he must have had some discussions about the sums involved, how long it will take the nominated body to set up the archive and what sort of material is currently available. I suspect that the cost of storing video material is lower than the cost of storing film. However, some records must be on film, which must be stored in carefully controlled conditions.

Mr. Mellor: I am glad that our decision to put these matters on a statutory basis has met with the approval of the House. I agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) that it is a shame when irreplaceable art heritage items are wilfully destroyed. I am glad that he mentioned the institute at Bradford, which is part of the Arts Council's drive for more inner-city arts activities. It is proud of the museum in Bradford, which I gather is important not only for what it achieves but as a centre for visitors who come a long way to see it. That rather proves the advantages of the arts in inner cities because it makes those areas places to which people will go. I found that the other day when I visited the Tate gallery in Liverpool.

I was asked about who would keep the archive. The body has yet to be nominated, but I do not think that it is any secret that I think that it will be the British Film Institute, which is obviously well qualified to do that and is already doing it. We wish to keep up the level of payments in real terms, which will be about £200,000 per annum at current prices from the ITV companies. I am glad to say that, although we have not placed a statutory requirement on Channel 4, it has confirmed its willingness to continue to contribute to the archive and will contribute a further £100,000.

As is always the case, such organisations would like a bit more, but I think that everyone understands that £300,000 is enough to maintain an archive that is properly representative of British television for the years in question. Although the change is not earth shattering, it is one of the useful changes made during the progress of the Bill.

Mr. Fisher: How will the provision operate retrospectively? As I understand it, the provision refers only to the new franchise holders, and the important existing archive of current ITV companies will not be covered. The British Film Institute keeps some but by no means all of the archives. Perhaps if I talk for long enough, the Minister will get some sort of steer on the matter. He appears to be none the wiser and is obviously superbly well informed already. What is the scope of the British Film Institute's present activities and how will those activities link with future commitments?

Mr. Mellor: My advisers told me the bit that I already knew. They do not know the bit that I should like to know. They have confirmed that what I know is right. It was once said of Ronald Reagan, "It ain't what he knows that bothers me, but what he says he knows that ain't so." At least what I know seems to be right, which is that the ITV companies already contribute voluntarily to the BFI. The hon. Gentleman asked about their existing archives and whether there are any plans to pool them in a central point. I do not know the answer to that, but I shall try to find out and inform the hon. Gentleman.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendment agreed to.

Clause 173

POWER TO GIVE BROADCASTING BODIES ETC. DIRECTIONS RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Lords amendment: No. 434, in page 136, line 39, after ("may") insert ("by order")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Mellor.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendment No. 435.

Mr. Cryer: I welcome the amendments because they fulfil another commitment made in Committee. They translate a direction by a Minister into a statutory instrument subject to annulment by either or both Houses of Parliament. That is a slight improvement in the accountability of Ministers because they have to present a statutory instrument that is subject to perusal by the House.

In case we are carried away by the work done by the people down the Corridor, I should point out that many of these proposals were made in Committee and the Minister found it convenient to introduce them in another place. It shows that there is nothing that a revising committee could not do if, on some happy future date, the House of Lords happened to be replaced.

Mr. Tony Banks: I welcome the amendments. However, I should be grateful if the Minister could refresh failing memories on the implications of clause 173, if amended. For those hon. Members who are not closely following the Bill, the clause, as amended, would state that the Secretary of State may by order direct certain bodies to carry out functions

"for the purpose of enabling Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to give effect to any international obligations of the United Kingdom."

The clause does not specify broadcasting obligations. It lists all the broadcasting authorities—the BBC, the ITC, the Welsh Authority, the Radio Authority and the Broadcasting Standards Council. I assume that

"any international obligations of the United Kingdom"

means, for example, that if we have international obligations under the resolution of the Security Council with regard to the presence in the Gulf, the Secretary of State might seek, by order approved in the House, to direct the broadcasting authorities to carry certain messages, or whatever he may determine.

I want the Minister to confirm whether that applies purely to broadcasting obligations under international agreements——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): It is a blank cheque.

Mr. Banks: As my hon. Friend suggests, is it a blank cheque for the broadcasting authorities, by order, to carry out any obligations—military or whatever—that the Secretary of State of the day may determine? Will the Minister refresh our memories?

Mr. Mellor: I am happy to confirm that it means only obligations relevant to the broadcasting authorities in question. We are not fundamentally changing their nature to get them to do other things. It is a tempting thought, but one that must be resisted.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

Committee appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to certain of their amendments to the Bill: Mr. Anthony Coombs, Mr. Alistair Darling, Mrs. Llin Golding, Mr. Greg Knight and Mr. David Mellor.

To withdraw immediately.

Mr. Mellor: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before withdrawing immediately, I should like to express my appreciation to the whole House for the businesslike way in which we have been able to discuss the amendments tonight. I am most grateful to all concerned.

Mr. Corbett: Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Had it been possible for the House to leave alone those who have lived with the Bill for nigh on a year, we should probably have made even better progress, and we should not, perhaps, have experienced some of the hiccups that I am told occurred last week. Happily, I was not concerned with those, because at the time I was standing on my head in Australia.

Although there were a large number of amendments, the overwhelming majority were technical. When they were not, they fulfilled pledges which had been given in the House or in the other place.

Mr. Cryer: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) takes a very great interest in matters of privilege. I am sure that the Committee, which seems to have been a fix-up between the usual channels, would benefit from his advice, because he takes a deep interest in such matters. If you would like me to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should be quite happy to provide a manuscript amendment to whatever resolutions are passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Perhaps I can have the last word on this matter. It is always a great privilege to preside over the House, but it is especially so when the House is in such a constructive and happy mood.

Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords amendments reported, and agreed to; to be communicated to the Lords.

BROADCASTING

Ordered,

That—

(1) the Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House (to be called henceforth the Select Committee on Broadcasting etc.) shall have power to give directions and perform other duties, relating to the broadcasting of proceedings of the House and matters ancillary thereto, in accordance with the Resolutions of the House of 26th July 1977 and 19th July 1990;

(2) unless the House otherwise orders, those Members presently nominated to the Committee shall continue to be members of it for the remainder of the present Parliament;

(3) save as superseded by the provisions of the preceding paragraphs of this Order, the temporary Standing Order made on 29th March 1988 relating to the Committee shall continue to apply thereto;

(4) the Committee shall have leave to confer and to meet concurrently with any committee of the Lords on Broadcasting for the purposes of deliberating and of examining witnesses; and

(5) this Order be a Standing Order of the House until the end of the present Parliament.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

SOUND BROADCASTING

Ordered,

That Standing Order No. 129 (Select Committee on Sound Broadcasting) be repealed.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

Statutory Instruments, &c.

INTERNATIONAL IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

That the draft European Commission and Court of Human Rights (Immunities and Privileges) (Amendment) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 13th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

Question agreed to.

HOVERCRAFT

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.)

That the draft Hovercraft (Application of Enactments) (Amendment) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 17th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

Question agreed to.

Roads (Kirklees)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Wood.]*

11.31 pm

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): I am grateful to Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to raise matters concerning roads in Kirklees, which are of great importance to my constituents. I am also most grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for Aviation and Shipping for being with us at this late hour—although it is not quite as late as he and I feared earlier in the evening.

The issues that I shall be raising in the debate are not great matters of state, but bread-and-butter matters affecting the ordinary day-to-day living of just about everybody in my constituency, and within Kirklees, who drives a motor vehicle.

Visitors coming to Kirklees and residents returning are made only too well aware of when they have entered our district. It is not just the reassuring signs which tell them that they have entered a nuclear-free zone, but rather the state of the roads which become markedly worse.

I have received a regular flow of complaints from constituents about the state of the roads in Kirklees. I can confirm from my own experience of driving round the constituency that they leave an awful lot to be desired. It is fair to say that the state of the roads in Kirklees is an absolute disgrace.

All too often when complaints are made about the state of local services, the parrot cry is, "We need more money." My hon. Friend will be pleased to hear that I do not intend to go down that road this evening.

Kirklees council budgeted for spending more than £10 million on road maintenance last year, although it is my understanding that about £800,000 of that budget has not been spent. That seems a little surprising. Lack of resources is not the root cause of the problems that I have outlined. According to information provided to me by the highways department of Kirklees council, the utility companies create on average about 29,000 holes or openings in the roads in Kirklees every year. The problem lies in the interaction between Kirklees council and the utility companies.

When I first voiced concern in the local press about all the potholes, local Labour councillors, including the leader of the council, tried to put all the blame on the utility companies, and suggested that there was lack of funding to carry out proper repairs. Both claims fall short of the mark. Local authorities have the power now to carry out the permanent reinstatement of the initial temporary reinstatements carried out by the utility companies when they first fill in the hole that they have dug.

Councils have a choice. Either they can require the utility companies to carry out the permanent reinstatement work, or they can do the work themselves. Kirklees council—like, I believe, many other councils—has elected to carry out the permanent reinstatement work itself. The council therefore has the power to ensure that potholes are properly and efficiently repaired. It also has the power to charge the costs of the work direct to the utility companies. That ensures that local community charge payers do not have to bear the cost.

Regrettably, it appears that Kirklees council is not carrying out that function properly. Certainly it is the view of the Mirfield road safety committee—Mirfield is in

Kirklees but just outside my constituency—that the council carries out very little reinstatement work. Earlier this year I raised with the highways department the poor quality of two roads in the village of Slaithwaite in my constituency. It told me that the permanent reinstatement work had been carried out. I discovered later that it had not been carried out, which suggests some confusion and perhaps a lack of co-ordination.

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): My hon. Friend is dealing with issues that are of the greatest importance. It is typical of my hon. Friend's devotion to constituency issues that he is doing so. I want him to understand, however, that the problems that he raises are shared by all districts in west Yorkshire. Both my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) and I agree that the great problem of lack of co-ordination over reinstatement must be properly addressed and that local authorities are reneging on their civic duty properly to maintain roads.

Mr. Riddick: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's comments. Some people in Kirklees imagine that their roads are the worst in the country, but there appear to be problems in other parts of Yorkshire. I am grateful, too, for my hon. Friend's kind comments about my work as a constituency Member of Parliament. I have tried to follow the excellent example that he set in his constituency.

My constituents are fed up with the state of their roads. I believe that the time has come for the Government to grasp this nettle. Utility companies must be made properly responsible and accountable to the local highways department for the work that they carry out. Highways departments must ensure that the state of roads generally is kept at a high level.

The Horne report was published in 1985. Professor Horne and his team were asked to review the working of the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 to see whether the law needed to be updated and clarified. As the Minister knows, the Horne committee made a number of recommendations. I take this opportunity to urge my hon. Friend to ensure that legislation is brought before the House in the next Session of Parliament to implement the recommendations of the Horne report. The Horne report recommended that the responsibility for reinstating roads should be placed fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the utility companies. Experience in Kirklees proves—fairly conclusively, I think—that the current system is not working. Therefore, I support such a move.

Clearly, however, we should have to ensure that a cast-iron system was established that did not allow the utility companies to evade their responsibilities. Strict national standards would have to be put in place to cover the quality of the work, specifications and workmanship and the time scale within which the reinstatement work must be carried out.

There are two other vital factors. There is nothing more frustrating than to see a new surface put down only to have a utility company come along a few months or even a few weeks later and dig it up again. I believe that an effective—probably computerised—system of notification by the utility companies about future excavations is essential. The highways authorities should be given the rights of inspection over all the work carried out by the utility companies.

It is vital to have a proper system of monitoring and of penalties for failure to carry out proper reinstatement. On the apportioning of costs, I see no reason why community charge payers should have to bear the burden of the excavations carried out by the utility companies. After all, the excavations are done to help the customers of the utility companies. Therefore, it is right that the customers should bear the cost of such work.

I recently met some people who work for British Gas, one of the utility companies that often digs up our roads. They made it clear to me that British Gas and the other utility companies are keen that all recommendations are implemented into law so that a proper system can be introduced. They believe that the utility companies are the most appropriate bodies to carry out that work.

I reiterate my strong hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will win his and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's battle to obtain legislative time for a transport Bill next Session. An editorial in my local newspaper, the *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, suggested recently that I will need all the luck I can get if anything is to be done about the roads in Kirklees. It is not luck I need but legislation.

The appalling potholes that I mentioned present a serious danger to drivers, particularly drivers of motor cycles. I understand that during 1989 60 accidents, some more serious than others, were caused by vehicles going into potholes. It is difficult for drivers to obtain proper compensation for personal injuries suffered or for damage to vehicles. I wonder whether my hon. Friend the Minister will look at that part of the law to see whether it needs to be tightened up.

Finally, may I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to look at the problem of unadopted roads? Within Kirklees there are hundreds of unadopted roads. That means that local residents have to maintain them and some of them are in an appalling state. In many cases, the local residents cannot afford to carry out proper repairs. I recently visited Coldwell street in Linthwaite which has had particular problems that have been exacerbated by large lorries delivering to a supermarket. Whether a small local road is adopted or unadopted is simply an accident of history. However, residents who find themselves in that position still have to pay the same community charge as everybody else in the area and many of them consider that to be unfair. Currently, Kirklees council will adopt a road only if it is up to a certain standard. I suggest that a system should be put in place to ensure that councils adopt a certain number of roads each year. Obviously, the number would depend on local circumstances.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for staying up till this late hour to answer the debate, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) for being here with us. He is an assiduous attender in the House. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to give me some positive answers to some of the issues that I have raised. Many of my constituents are fed up with the state of the roads in Kirklees, and my hon. Friend the Minister is the best hope that I have for getting something done about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Perhaps I should make it clear that it is not in order for hon. Members to ask for legislation during an Adjournment debate. I am satisfied, however, that the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) was asking the Government to act, which is perfectly in order.

11.44 pm

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick McLoughlin): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) on drawing attention to the problem affecting his constituents. I know what a problem it is for him; he has told my colleagues and me many times about it, and I hope that—while remaining mindful of the caution that you have just given us, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I can go some way towards explaining what can be done.

Kirklees is a metropolitan district in the west Yorkshire conurbation. Two of the region's most important motorways—the M1 and M62—pass close to its boundaries, giving Kirklees excellent road links to the south, eastwards to the Humber ports and the A1 and westwards over the Pennines to Manchester and Merseyside. Improvement of the M62 has already begun, and climbing lanes have already been provided on some of the more difficult gradients. The length within Kirklees was completed in 1988 at a cost of £3 million.

The White Paper "Roads for Prosperity", published last year, announced proposals to widen the 17 miles of the M62 over the Pennines between junctions 18 and 24 from dual three-lane to dual four-lane at a cost of £125 million, and proposals to create a new 12-mile dual-carriageway trunk road across Kirklees district, linking the M1 to the M62 at a cost of £54 million. By trunking the M606 local authority motorway from the M62 into Bradford in 1989, we were able to relieve Kirklees council of the financial responsibility for the one mile of the M606 within the district.

The Government have also been supporting the improvement of local authority roads in the district. As part of our "action for cities" initiative, Kirklees has two inner-city target areas. I am pleased to see that Kirklees council and private developers in the area have been making good use of the grants that the Department of Transport offers under section 13 of the Industrial Development Act 1982. Those 30 per cent. grants are available in assisted areas such as the northern end of the district, adjacent to the M62 junctions 26 and 27, which lie within the Bradford travel-to-work area. In recent years, IDA grants in Kirklees have supported roadwork schemes costing £1·5 million, helping industrial development and enabling the creation of 2,350 new jobs.

The main source of Government support for the improvement of local authority roads is the transport supplementary grant. It is designed to recognise that many local authority roads are also roads of more than local importance, complementing the national road network. TSG is a 50 per cent. grant towards programmes of expenditure on accepted schemes. The other 50 per cent. is supported through the credit-approval system, which attracts extra revenue support grant, enabling local authorities to build accepted schemes at virtually no cost to their community charge payers. TSG settlements are announced annually, and local authority schemes must compete for priority for the funds available.

In the case of Kirklees, only two major schemes have been put forward for TSG support in transport policy and programme bids since Kirklees council became a highway authority in 1986, when the metropolitan county councils were abolished. The Dewsbury ring road, already under construction in 1986, cost just over £7 million. It was supported by TSG, and was completed in 1987. Mold Green relief road was proposed by Kirklees council. It was accepted for TSG and completed in 1989 at a cost of £3·1 million.

Kirklees' transport policy and programme for 1991-92 includes a bid for TSG support for a large reconstruction scheme costing £1·25 million in Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury. A decision on whether the scheme will be accepted for TSG will be announced towards the end of 1990.

I should make it clear that Government support for improvement schemes on local roads depends on local authorities' coming forward with schemes in the TPPs, commanding priority for TSG. Until Kirklees comes forward with a bigger programme of schemes, it cannot expect to increase its portion of support through TSG.

Expenditure on routine highway maintenance is not eligible for TSG, but is covered in the standard spending assessment calculations for RSG, where we prefer to give the local authorities a reasonably free hand to sort out their own priorities.

My hon. Friend drew attention to the particular problems of unadopted roads. I understand that he recently received a letter from my hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic explaining the position on that issue, and there is nothing that I can usefully add at this stage.

As my hon. Friend clearly illustrated tonight, the work of the public utilities has a major effect on the condition of roads. Electricity, gas, water and telecommunications companies enjoy statutory rights to break open streets to lay and maintain their apparatus. In built-up urban areas such as Kirklees, where demand for utility services is greatest and road traffic is heaviest, conflicts of interest frequently arise.

I agree with my hon. Friend that a complete overhaul of the legislation governing utility street works is required if there is to be a real and lasting improvement. While I cannot anticipate what will appear in the forthcoming Queen's Speech, I assure my hon. Friend that the Government are committed to bringing forward legislation to reform the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 —known as PUSWA—at the earliest opportunity. I hope that the *Huddersfield Examiner* will, rightly, give credit and praise when that Bill comes forward.

There are a number of serious shortcomings in the present law on utility works. One example is the requirement to serve notices in writing on all the authorities involved before starting works. That results in unnecessary bureaucracy, with some 4 million holes each year subject to the requirements of the 1950 Act.

The paper-based system fails to distinguish the important advance notifications from the routine. There are 18 different forms of statutory notice for use by the utilities, and a further 21 for use by other authorities. The highway authority has little opportunity to make adequate arrangements for traffic management, still less to co-ordinate works between various utilities. The possibilities for simplification and efficiency gains offered by information technology are ruled out by the statutory requirements for paper notices.

Another example of the shortcomings of the present framework is the generally unsatisfactory state of reinstatement of roads following excavation work by utilities. The 1950 Act allows highway authorities to elect to do the permanent reinstatement of the upper levels of the roads themselves at the utility's expense. There is no time limit laid down for the highway authority to carry out the reinstatement in those cases. As a result, temporary

reinstatements done by utilities are often left for far too long in a totally unsatisfactory condition, and in those cases where the utility is allowed to do the permanent reinstatement itself there is a wide variety of permitted standards and a weak system of enforcement. All that means too many reinstatements are left in a poor condition, and highway authorities have to spend more on maintenance in the long run.

Recognising problems such as those, in 1984 my right hon. Friend the Member for Wallasey (Mrs. Chalker), the then Minister of State, Department of Transport, invited Professor Horne to chair a committee to review all aspects of the 1950 Act. Its report, "Roads and the utilities", published in November 1985, provided a comprehensive review and a series of recommendations for action that commanded a wide degree of support.

The Government published their formal response to the report in 1986, accepting the main recommendations. I hope that reassures my hon. Friend that we take such issues seriously. Those recommendations were, first, that the primary responsibility for carrying out reinstatements following street works by utilities should be placed on the utilities themselves. Local authorities and their direct labour organisations would be allowed to tender for such work if they wished, but would no longer have the statutory right to elect to do the permanent reinstatement themselves. In future, the responsibility and liability for reinstatements will clearly rest with the utilities. That should go a long way towards meeting the concerns about liability in the case of accidents that my hon. Friend mentioned. Members of the public trying to find out who is responsible for a particular pothole will no longer have to suffer being passed back and forth between utility and highway authority

The second main recommendation was that there should be new performance standards for reinstatements with better specifications for materials and workmanship, backed up by a system of training and certification of workmen and their supervisors. There should also be improvements in the procedures for the service of notices, inspections, traffic management, and safeguarding road users.

In accepting those main recommendations of the Horne report, the Government recognised that primary legislation would be required to implement them. At the same time, they urged local authorities and the utilities to embark on the detailed technical work required to prepare the ground. The street works advisory committee was established to give the Secretary of State for Transport direct access to the best advice available. That committee has been invaluable in the formulation of detailed proposals for legislation, which were included in a consultation paper issued by the Department of Transport last year.

Over the past three years, a considerable effort has been made by representatives of local authorities and utilities in association with Department of Transport officials to draw up the various codes of practice which will underpin the proposed new arrangements. Those involved have produced draft codes of practice on matters such as the specification for reinstatements, notice and inspection procedures, requirements for training and certification of workmen and the arrangements for diverting utility apparatus during road schemes.

My hon. Friend may be interested to know that the new specification for reinstatements that is being drawn up will require utilities to guarantee the performance of the repair for a fixed period. A demanding standard will be set to prevent uneven and dangerous road surfaces. The prescribed standard will have to be met whether the reinstatement is temporary or permanent. The needs of more vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, will be taken into account when the standards are set. Each utility's performance will be closely monitored through a system of highway authority inspections, and there will be penalties for failure to meet the required level.

All that important preparatory work should ensure that the implementation of the new arrangements can be done more effectively and quickly once a new legislative framework is in place.

There is a need to reduce traffic obstruction and delay caused by utility street works. The Horne report argued the case for improved co-ordination of road works and better traffic management during the execution of works. I take my hon. Friend's point that there is nothing worse than a new road being laid and someone digging it up the next day. The Government fully accept the importance of this aspect and have indeed gone further than Horne in their proposals to protect the interests of road users, whether they be on wheels or on foot. It is proposed that the highway authority will be placed under a duty to co-ordinate all excavations in the highway, including its own, with a view to minimising the disruption to road users. There will be a new management tool to aid co-ordination in the form of a computerised street works register. I am pleased to tell my hon. Friend that the Department of Transport is making available funding for the design and development of the register.

In future, the highway authority will be empowered to designate as "traffic sensitive" those streets where works could cause great disruption to road users. On such streets, utilities will be required to consult the highway authority in advance before starting works. Where the highway authority is satisfied that works may cause serious disruption to traffic, it will have power to direct the utility on the times of working. However, of course, special arrangements will be made for genuine emergency works.

Utility street works and building works undoubtedly impose costly delays on trafffic. Although much of this disruption is unavoidable, and as customers of the utilities we often benefit from the work which causes it, unnecessarily long or frequent disruption to road users can and must be avoided. For that reason, we came forward with a further proposal last autumn to take a power which would enable my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to require highway authorities to charge the promoters of works and their contractors to minimise disruption and delay in the most traffic-sensitive areas.

We shall continue to encourage the use of so-called trenchless methods of construction and maintenance. Various techniques are now available to bore under roads with far less disruption to traffic and damage to the road surface than conventional trenching methods. As the technology becomes more reliable and cost-effective, we may expect to see it increasingly preferred by the utilities.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising this important matter. He was joined in his comments by my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Sir G. Shaw), and my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Mr. Kirkhope) was present throughout the debate. I realise what an important subject this is to the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley. He is certainly

[Mr. Patrick McLoughlin]

never backward in coming forward and making strong representations to the Government about what most affects his constituents. I hope that I have been able to outline the Government's thinking and what action is necessary.

I hope that we can act soon and that some of theproblems to which my hon. Friend referred, which have caused much annoyance to his constituents and to those of other hon. Members, can be put right and that we can achieve a better system of maintaining and fixing our roads when they are dug up by the utilities.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 26 October 1990

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITIONS

Dog Registration

9.35 am

Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown): I am pleased to present a petition organised by *Dog World* and Pro Dogs, signed by nearly 50,000 people and warning that a compulsory dog registration scheme will not work. The petition also outlines the positive steps that should be taken to protect dogs and deal with irresponsible dog owners. The petition reads as follows:

The Humble Petition of the undersigned sheweth that proposals for the compulsory dog registration will not solve the problems of dogs in society and will penalise responsible owners while the irresponsible who produce most of the problems will not participate. A far better answer is implementation of all existing legislation and a programme of education to combat straying, fouling and excessive and irresponsible breeding. Wherefore your Petitioner prays that your honourable House call upon the Government to reject the House of Lords amendment to the Environmental Protection Bill.

To lie upon the Table.

Motorway Service Area (Bishop's Stortford)

9.36 am

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): I have the honour to present three petitions from my assiduous constituents. The first is from the East Hertfordshire district council and with it, on the same subject, there is a similar petition from Bishop's Stortford town council. The two town councils are concerned about the problems that the Department of Transport has visited upon them by proposing the construction of a motorway service area at the Birchhanger interchange of the A120 and the M11.

The Petitioners believe that it will intrude badly into the protective green belt between Bishop's Stortford and the M11 and prevent the two councils from controlling further development in that area, which is under heavy developmental pressure. Therefore the East Hertfordshire district council

(a) urge the Secretary of State for Transport to reconsider the decision taken by the said Secretary of State in relation to the proposed erection of a Motorway Service Area at Birchhanger near Bishop's Stortford, and

(b) in the meantime require the Secretary of State to order the cessation of all activities in relation to the proposed erection of the said Motorway Service Area in order that the adverse impact upon the amenities of local residents and the danger to road users in this part of Hertfordshire be alleviated.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Similarly, the Bishop's Stortford town council petition reads as follows:

your petitioners pray that your honourable house (a) urge the Secretary of State for Transport to reconsider the decision taken by the said Secretary of State in relation to the proposed erection of a Motorway Service Area at Birchanger near Bishop's Stortford, and

(b) in the meantime require the Secretary of State to order the cessation of all activities in relation to the proposed erection of the said Motorway Service Area in order that the adverse impact upon this part of Hertfordshire be alleviated.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray, etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Antarctica

Mr. Wells: My third petition is from 845 petitioners in the Bishop's Stortford and Hertford area. The petition states:

the undersigned are alarmed that our Government is supporting a Treaty which will allow mining in Antarctica.

Antarctica is the last great wilderness left on earth and should be kept this way; one place on Earth free from commercial development.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House support International efforts to declare Antarctica a World Park.

To lie upon the Table.

Orders of the Day

Courts and Legal Services Bill *[Lords]*

Lords amendments to Commons amendments considered.

New Clause

TYING-IN ARRANGEMENTS: CONNECTION WITH RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY LOANS

The Lords have agreed to the amendment made by the Commons:

"Insert the following Clause:

'.—(1) In this section "residential property loan" means any loan which—

(a) is secured on land in the United Kingdom and

(b) is made to an individual in respect of the acquisition of land which is for his residential use or the residential use of a dependant of his.

(2) No person ("the lender") shall enter into an agreement with another ("the borrower") for the provision to the borrower by the lender of a residential property loan together with one or more controlled services, unless the conditions mentioned in subsection (3) are complied with before the agreement is entered into.

(3) The conditions are that the lender—

(a) informs the borrower by notice that the residential property loan, and each controlled service to which the proposed agreement relates are separate services;

(b) informs the borrower by notice whether the terms and conditions of the proposed residential property loan will, if the loan is made in accordance with the proposed agreement, be capable of subsequently being varied by the lender;

(c) provides the borrower with a statement of—

(i) the price which will be payable by the borrower for each of the controlled services if they are all provided in accordance with the terms of the proposed agreement; and

(ii) the extent to which (if at all) the terms and conditions of the proposed residential property loan would differ if it were to be provided by the lender without the controlled services to which the proposed agreement relates being provided by the lender; and

(d) informs the borrower by notice that, if the borrower declines to take from the lender any of the controlled services to which the proposed agreement relates, the lender will not on that account refuse to provide the proposed loan.

(4) Where a person advertises, or in any other manner promotes—

(a) the provision of any controlled services which, in the course of his business, he offers to provide in conjunction with the making by him of residential property loans; or

(b) the making by him, in the course of his business, of any arrangements for the provision of any controlled services in conjunction with the making by him or any other person of residential property loans,

he shall comply with such requirements as to the information to be given, or which may not be given, in any such advertisement or promotion as the Secretary of State may by regulations impose.'."

with the following amendment: in subsection 1, after ("section") insert

(

"and sections *(Tying-in Arrangements: supplemental provisions)* and *(Tying-in: offences)*")

9.39 am

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

I understand that it is convenient to discuss at the same time Lords amendments Nos. 2 to 19 to the amendment.

It may be helpful for me to remind the House why the tying-in provisions are included in the Bill. They are intended to remedy what the Government and consumer bodies have perceived to be a serious problem in the property market and especially in the domestic property market. The problem arises from the fact that house purchase can be stressful and house purchasers, at a time when they are vulnerable, are sometimes subjected to pressure to take a loan in combination with other services that are not necessarily quite what they want or need. The tying-in provisions are designed to remedy that by obliging lenders to make clear to borrowers what they are getting as part of any package, in what form and at what cost.

The Lords amendments do not affect the policy of the clauses, which has now received the approval of both Houses, but they are necessary to give proper effect to the policy. In that sense, the amendments are essentially technical.

The main amendment, which has consequential results throughout the other clauses, is No. 2, which changes the tying-in prohibition from one based on the lender entering into an agreement with the borrower to one based on the provision of the loan together with other controlled services to the borrower. The reason for the change is simple. It became clear on further consideration of the amendments made by this House that the ambit of the prohibition was not as clear and effective as intended. "Agreement" was likely to be interpreted by the courts to mean "contract" and such an interpretation could have led to perhaps quite complex legal argument as to whether a contract existed in a particular case. The Government did not consider that this was desirable, especially in those cases which were likely to be heard by lay magistrates.

A further difficulty was that the prohibition in the form in which it left this House was based on an agreement to offer a loan together with other controlled services. Apart from the difficulty of proving the existence of such an agreement, all a lender would need to do to avoid the prohibition was to ensure that he never entered into such a single agreement.

Amendment No. 2 contains another important provision—the power given to the Secretary of State to provide for the stage, or "relevant step", to quote the amendment, at which the lender must serve the relevant notices and statements. The purpose here is to ensure that the borrower is given the information required by the clause at an appropriate stage in the transaction when it is early enough and clear enough to be useful to him. This flexible approach is preferable to imposing an absolute timetable, which could cause unnecessary delay or loss in some circumstances.

The other Lords amendments are either consequential on the deletion of the concept of "agreement" or merely technical drafting amendments intended to tidy up the clauses. The Government believe that the amendments improve the efficacy of the tying-in provisions. That can only be of benefit to the consumer when buying his home. I commend them to the House.

9.45 am

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): Tying-in may not be readily understood by those who observe our proceedings. Some people regard it as a form of bondage—as it may be regarded. It is not easy to unravel it. We did not find it easy when we first saw the drafting of the tying-in clauses, although they are welcome and are supported. The clauses amount to two propositions. First, the lender, who will usually be a bank, an insurance company or a building society, will not be able to say to a borrower—whether, as the Solicitor-General pointed out, it is a contract or not —that he will lend the borrower money only if he also takes the lender's insurance policy or surveying, agency or conveyancing services. Those matters cannot be tied together, and that is right.

House purchase is one of the most important and expensive transactions of most consumers' lives. It would be utterly wrong if the need to obtain a mortgage led to having to buy an unwise insurance policy. I have seen some outrageous tying together—not by the general mortgage lenders, but by people on the fringes—of virtually worthless insurance policies, as a condition of making the loan. It is important that people buying a home should have complete freedom to obtain independent advice about conveyancing and about the insurance companies to which they go.

Such tying together happens even with the building societies. When I was Minister with responsibility for consumer affairs, I initiated discussions with the building societies which led to house buyers having a choice of the insurance company that insured the house. At one time, building societies tried to tie house buyers to a particular insurance company. In the biggest transaction of most consumers' lives, these are important matters. They are also important because they will ensure free and fair competition between those providing services in the house-buying market.

Secondly, the tying-in arrangements do not apply only to lenders. Someone who is carrying out conveyancing —which could also be a building society or a bank—will not be able to say, "I will only do your conveyancing provided you use the other services which I provide."

The Lords amendments and the main clauses to which they relate must be put into force and I ask the Solicitor-General for an undertaking that they will be. They must also work. We cannot go through the charade of debating detailed clauses in Committee, on Report and in the House of Lords and of putting them on the statute book only to discover that they are never implemented by a commencement order.

That is the danger, and it happened with the Building Societies Act 1986. That Act contained similar provisions which restricted building societies from engaging in conditional arrangements. The Building Societies Association then came to the Government and said, "Why don't we operate these things by means of a voluntary code?" Although the laws are on the statute book, they are not put into force. I have been told that one could drive not only a coach and horses through the loopholes in the voluntary code, but a traffic jam on the M25 on a Friday morning.

When the tying-in provisions are debated in the other place, the Council of Mortgage Lenders asked for a voluntary code which would mean that although the provisions would be on the statute book, they would not be put into force. It is pointless for us to have debates and to put into operation detailed controls—which everyone agrees to be necessary—if they do not then become the law of the land. I ask the Solicitor-General to give an undertaking that, when we have passed the amendments and the Bill becomes law, the provisions will be put into force.

I also ask the Solicitor-General to ensure that the provisions work. One of the most important reasons is the safeguarding of consumers. We have always been in favour of competition in the provision of services in conveyancing and mortgage lending. The provisions are also important for fair competition.

An essential part of the legal profession is becoming increasingly fragile and vulnerable—that is, the part of the profession that undertakes legal aid work. Many firms now do not undertake legal aid work. I am afraid that the legal profession is showing a growing tendency to grow into two professions—firms that undertake legal aid work and those that do not.

The firms that undertake legal aid work are fragile and vulnerable—the more so recently because of the slump in the property market, which has meant a reduction in residential conveyancing. The loss of conveyancing work affects the cash flow of those doing legal aid work, who often have to wait a long time for their bills to be paid by the state. If conveyancing work is not available to support the overheads that a firm has to meet in connection with that section of its business, those overheads will have to be met from the legal aid work, thus making it even less remunerative.

There is a great danger that some of the services provided by legal aid firms will disappear altogether. There is already evidence that more and more people are contemplating giving up legal aid work. Often, those who do legal aid work—especially criminal legal aid work—are the younger and less experienced members of the profession. After they have spent two, three, or four years in the profession, they find that the rewards of undertaking legal aid work are not sufficiently high, and they move into industry or into the Crown prosecution service, which offers more attractive rates of pay. The result is that, increasingly, those in the legal aid service are less experienced and less well paid than those elsewhere in the profession. It is in danger of becoming a second-class sector.

I know that I must not debate that subject at any great length this morning, Madam Deputy Speaker. I merely wanted to underline the relationship between the other services that lawyers provide and their legal aid services. If the provisions do not work and if, unfairly, there is loss leading of the services—if work is unjustifiably taken away from the most vulnerable and fragile part of the profession —there is a real danger that the legal aid system could collapse.

The Lord Chancellor has made it clear that, notwithstanding the fact that the remuneration for legal aid work has been below the rate of inflation, he is intending to restrict it still further, simply because the total cost of the service—which is a demand-led service—has increased. That is the subject for a future debate, but, as I have told the Solicitor-General before, I believe that one reason why there is a problem elsewhere in the profession, and elsewhere in his Department in the payment of bills, is that crime has increased.

[Mr. John Fraser]

If crime increases, the number of people defending criminals increases and costs rise. It is not the cost per hour that has increased; it is simply that demand has increased. There has also been an increase in expenditure as a result of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Five years ago, 6,000 bills were put in for attendance at police stations. Now, 402,000 bills are put in every year, simply to make the legislation work.

I ask the Solicitor-General to give an undertaking that the provisions will be put into force and also that the Lord Chancellor's Department and his colleagues will do their best to ensure that they will be adhered to, not merely to the letter, but in the spirit in which they were intended in the other place.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): As my last word on our proceedings on a momentous Bill—in which I must, of course, declare an interest—let me welcome the amendment. It will protect people who take out mortgages from being put upon and will extend still further the Government's commitment to the property-owning democracy and to making it simpler and safer for people to become owner-occupiers. We can all look forward to the time when, as a result of the Government's economic policies, interest rates will fall and that policy will be advanced still further.

The amendment is one of a chain of sensible and constructive proposals that the Government have made during our proceedings on the Bill. It can only benefit consumers. It does little to diminish the agonising process by which we have sought to make legal services more expensive and less readily available—thus, I fear, threatening the long-term existence of the Bar. I say that with a heavy heart—as I have throughout our proceedings—because I am convinced that the Bar has been one of the great jewels in the British system. It is one of the institutions for which our legal system has been renowned and respected worldwide. As the Bill will make it far more attractive for people to become solicitors than to become barristers it is inevitable that, in the fulness of time, the Bar as we know it will disappear.

We have waded through the Bill with great assistance from the Opposition at every stage. The Government have listened to representations made by the Bar Council and substantial improvements have been made. Their Lordships have made a magnificent contribution to our proceedings. One of the results of the introduction of the Bill has been that the Bar has looked at itself more thoroughly and has brought forward a number of proposals. While the Bar continues to enjoy its status as an independent entity in our legal system, those proposals will ensure that it functions more efficiently and effectively and to sustain the glory of our legal system.

The amendment is one of a chain of useful proposals that the Government have made. I welcome it, and I should particularly like to thank my right hon. and learned Friends, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General for the care that they have taken during the passage of a Bill that has shaken the firmaments of our system.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I have one brief question on subsection 3(d) of the proposed new clause. I must declare an interest as a director of a temperance insurance company called Ansvar, which only insures total abstainers. As the House can no doubt imagine, our business in some areas is rather limited, although we operate all over the world. Subsection 3(d) states that the lender is obliged to advise the borrower by notice that if the borrower declines to take from the lender any of the controlled services to which the proposed agreement relates, the lender will not on that account refuse to provide the proposed loan.

That appears to be a complete safeguard. If company A wants to lend an individual money to buy a house or anything else, it will not be able to say, "You will not get the loan if you do not accept our controlled services." I am sure that Ministers will be aware, however, that there is a second type of restriction. A lending company can say that it is prepared to accept combined services or related services only from companies of which it approves. That has arisen time and time again. An individual who goes along to a building society looking for assistance or aid and says, "I want to insure my house with company A" may be advised that company A is not considered acceptable. That is especially true of insurance.

I am aware that this is a narrow point and one to which the Minister may not have addressed himself, but I hope that he will now reflect on it and consider whether subsection 3(d) is comprehensive and will provide the full support that the Government seek to offer. There is no doubt that the provision represents a major advance. It will stop companies seeking to increase their incomes dramatically by offering controlled services and seeking to obtain substantial commissions or earnings from them.

On the other hand, a danger remains, and I could report particular cases—taken from my experience both in my constituency and as a director of a rather unusual company—in which building societies have been prepared to accept insurance or mortgage control only from a list of companies of which they approve. This is rather a minor point, but bearing in mind the Government have taken very strong and correct steps to ensure that the borrower is protected and safeguarded, I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General will consider this minor point which can be quite significant for people who want to borrow money.

10 am

The Solicitor-General: I will reply to the contributions in this short debate in reverse order. My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) referred to subsection (3)(d), the object of which is to ensure that if a number of services are offered there will be openness and the potential borrower knows exactly what cost he is being asked to pay in respect of each of the available services and he can then choose whether to take any of those extra services or none of them. If he chooses to take none, the amendment ensures that he nevertheless gets the loan which was originally offered at whatever price it was made clear that it would be offered. There may be differential pricing, but there must be openness and clarity so that the borrower knows from the outset what cost is involved.

My hon. Friend asked whether that bites on some of the conditions that are sometimes made by mortgage lenders, sometimes with very good sound reasons, that other services such as insurance shall be provided by reputable companies providing sufficient cover. The amendment does not bite directly on that, nor is it intended to. However, I will reflect on what my hon. Friend has said

and will invite my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor to reflect on it when he considers regulation. Having listened carefully to my hon. Friend, I do not think that it is likely that we will be able to meet the anxieties that he has drawn to the attention of the House, but we will reflect upon them.

I thank my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) for his kind welcome for the amendments and for this part of the Bill. The House is aware that he had anxieties about other aspects of the Bill. I would take a more forward looking approach on behalf of the Bar of which I, like he, am a member. While it was a jewel in the crown, I foresee it remaining a sparkling jewel in the crown and rising to the challenge presented by the Bill. I hope that I can encourage my hon. and learned Friend to take heart in that respect.

I want now to consider the highly relevant points raised by the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). He was extremely anxious that this tying-in clause should be implemented. It is the Government's clear intention that the clause should be put into effect in one way or another so that its benefit should be available fairly and squarely to the mortgage lender and to potential customers. I couch my words in that way because, as the hon. Gentleman said, the Council of Mortgage Lenders and others made a final plea that consideration should be given to the opportunity of a voluntary system. My right hon. Friend the Lord Chancellor commented on that topic in another place, stating:

"The regulation-making powers in the new clauses provide for some flexibility. There will be consultation" —

prior to implementation—

"as indeed is required by subsection (11) of Amendment No. 146, before any regulations are made. The Government intend to hold extensive consultations with interested parties" —

which of course include the Council of Mortgage Lenders—

"towards the end of the year with a view to making regulations in the spring. That is not a fixed timetable as much will depend on the outcome of the consultations. If" —

I emphasise "if" —

"the industry could convince the Government that it had a simpler way of avoiding tying-in by lenders which it could police adequately, the Government could be open to persuasion that bringing the relevant provisions into force would not be necessary after all. But – and I must be clear on this point – the case would have to be a convincing one and the disclosure requirements in the clauses under discussion are the minimum that the Government consider necessary to protect the borrower" – (*Official Report, House of Lords*, 24 October 1990; Vol. 522, c. 1452.)

Drawing the matter together, we now have a clause which both Houses have considered with great care which we believe is well capable of being made to work and well capable of being effective. The only circumstances in which we might delay or defer bringing the provisions into effect would be if we were really convinced that the matter could be dealt with in another way and a strong case would have to be made for that.

The hon. Member for Norwood put the amendment in the context of the Bill as a whole and the wider services offered by solicitors, and he referred to legal aid. He was right to draw attention to the fact that the amount of legal aid provided over recent years has risen in leaps and bounds. The figure for legal aid will be £730 million this year, compared to about £100 million when I came to the House 11 years ago. It has doubled in real terms every five years.

Part of the reason for the increase is connected with crime, and part of it with the liberty of the subject. The hon. Member for Norwood drew attention to the fact that 402,000 bills for attendance at police stations were brought in last year, while only a few years ago it was 6,000. That is a benign statistic. It shows that those who are detained in police stations who need the advice of solicitors are getting it in large numbers. That is something which the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 wished to happen and we are happy to see it happening. It means hard work for solicitors, and of course they will discuss, as they are perfectly entitled to, the proper levels of remuneration. Many solicitors manage to make legal aid work extremely well although I know that smaller solicitors are having a harder time. That is quite properly an area of discussion and the matter is only tangential to the amendments which are widely welcomed and should be approved by the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments to the Commons amendment agreed to.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Crown Agents

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

That the draft Crown Agents (Additional Powers) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 16th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Boundaries Commissioner (Northern Ireland)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

That the draft Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 18th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Fire Escapes (Scotland)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

That the draft Housing (Grants for Fire Escapes in Houses in Multiple Occupation) (Prescribed Percentage) (Scotland) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 26th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Question agreed to.

Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

That the draft Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) (Miscellaneous Changes) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 25th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Question agreed to.

DEFENCE

Ordered,

That Mr. John Wilkinson be discharged from the Defence Committee, and Mr. John Lee be added to the Committee —*[Sir Marcus Fox, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

ENVIRONMENT

Ordered,

That Mr. Peter L. Pike be discharged from the Environment Committee, and Mr. Terry Lewis be added to the Committee—*[Sir Marcus Fox, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE

Ordered,

That Mr. Neil Hamilton be discharged from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee, and Mr. Charles Wardle be added to the Committee.—*[Sir Marcus Fox, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

Cambodia

10.8 am

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I wonder whether you have had any notification from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry about whether he is to make a statement this morning as a matter of urgency on the spectacular collapse of the Polly Peck empire headed by Asil Nadir, who was the 1985 Thatcherite businessman of the year. A lot of small investors are involved, and a lot of important, well-run and well-organised companies have been subjected to an imprudent entrepreneur, as happened in several other collapses following exactly the same pattern. It is important that we get a statement as soon as possible.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Mr. Speaker has had no application for such a statement.

10.9 am

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): This is an unexpected bonus, Madam Deputy Speaker. I came here expecting the statutory 12 or 15 minutes, but hon. Members now find themselves with an opportunity to explore aspects of the Government's policy on Cambodia that we had not imagined we would have time to consider.

Cambodia is a faraway country of which most people in the Foreign Office know very little. That is surprising in a way, because the Foreign Office probably receives more correspondence on this subject than on any other issue; it is a matter of enormous interest to citizens of this country who have been moved by a succession of excellent television films made by John Pilger and David Munro and who have learnt in the past decade or so that our policy in that area of the world is not all that we have been led to believe.

Among those who know least about Cambodia—I mean this as no disrespect to the Under-Secretary of State—are Foreign Office Ministers who, from time to time, are called upon to speak on the subject at the Dispatch Box. That is no reflection on the Under-Secretary. Everyone knows that he is a newcomer to the Foreign Office. In any case, responsibility for Her Majesty's Government's policy towards Cambodia has been kept well away from the House of Commons over the years and has been allocated to a series of Bertie Wooster figures in the House of Lords, one of whom, Lord Brabazon, spectacularly self-destructed in front of John Pilger's television cameras a year ago. Not a lot has been heard from him since. I do not think that he will be allowed out on his own again.

In one's search of the Foreign Office for someone with a detailed knowledge of Her Majesty's Government's policy on Cambodia, one comes fairly quickly to a senior civil servant, Mr. David Colvin, head of the south east Asian department. I referred to Mr. Colvin when the subject was last debated in the House in November 1989. One or two Ministers, particularly the Minister for Overseas Development, felt that that was unsporting of me because, as she said, Mr. Colvin, like most civil servants, has no opportunity to reply. I bear that in mind in anything I say, but Mr. Colvin has a great deal more opportunities to reply on this issue than I have. There is no question but that the speeches that are read out by

Ministers—there have been at least three of them in the past year, and Ministers have passed responsibility from one to another rather like a hot brick and cannot wait to let go of it—are drafted or authorised and certainly studied by Mr. Colvin. Also, I imagine that the recent article in *The Independent* in the name of the Foreign Secretary was also drafted or, the very least, double-checked by Mr. Colvin. That article, I recollect, poured scorn on some of us who had been attempting to criticise Government policy on the issue, and suggested that some of us—it did not single me out, but had it done so it would have been false—were originally supporters of the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Colvin has plenty of chance to reply, albeit through whichever Minister happens to come to the Dispatch Box, so I do not feel all that shy about mentioning his long-term association with this issue. He it was, no doubt, who approved the speech by the right hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave)—the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who briefly had responsibility for this matter last November—which purported to give a history of events in Cambodia and Vietnam and dealt with the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam in Christmas 1978, but omitted to make any reference to the fact that the Vietnamese invasion, whether it was right or wrong—I make no comment on it—was in response to the massive and prolonged attacks over two years on the western provinces of Vietnam which had resulted in large civilian casualties.

That omission was not the fault of the Minister. I did not blame him at the time. I thought that it was more likely to be the responsibility of Mr. Colvin, because, as the Minister said only a few days before, he knew nothing about Cambodia; yet there he was at the Dispatch Box reading out a brief that came from somewhere in the Foreign Office. Let me be fair to Mr. Colvin. I do not suggest for one minute that he makes policy on Cambodia, but he is the only person who has any detailed knowledge of it. I do not suggest that policy on the subject is made ultimately in his department. Perhaps it would be better if we had a Minister from the Ministry of Defence or, better still, someone representing the interests of the Cabinet Office or Downing street because policy on the issue had been made at a slightly higher level.

Perhaps we should have someone from the American State Department here, because it is noticeable that a great deal of our foreign policy is made in the American State Department. That is a matter of record. The policy may originate in one of the murkier areas of the American Government system. I do not think that it originates here, because we are a satellite state. When the telex comes from Washington telling us that there has been a change in policy, as there was a few months ago when Mr. Baker started to talk to the Vietnamese for the first time, a Foreign Office Minister instantly tells us that our policy has changed by precisely the same percentage as the American policy has changed. I suspect that the real villains lie on the other side of the Atlantic. That is merely one of the more humiliating examples of our satellite status in relation to the United States.

I recollect—it was a source of deep shame—when, a few months ago, a member of the unrecognised Cambodian Administration in Phnom Penh, Mr. Cham Prasidh, came to this country. He was the first member of that Administration, which is in a desperate situation struggling against great odds and its plight has aroused sympathy all around the world, even to be permitted a visa to set foot in this country, but he could not establish contact with any member of the Government to discuss the situation in his country. I thought that that was a matter of deep shame. Mr. Cham Prasidh lost his parents and 86 relatives the last time the holocaust passed across his country. That man was deeply depressed. He knew that the holocaust was coming back and that the likelihood was that it would consume more of his family, if not himself. I felt that there were people who were unfit to tie his shoelaces, never mind receive him at the Foreign Office.

Mr. Cryer: What my hon. Friend is saying is really quite appalling. Will my hon. Friend venture any reason why that poor country, which threatens nobody, should be treated with such contempt by the Government? The Cambodians do not seem to be in a position to exert influence on any other country. They pose no military threat to any other country. It is a wretchedly poor country. Will my hon. Friend speculate on whether the Government's attitude might simply be a continuing vendetta by the United States because they happened to be unfortunate enough to be associated with the wrong country when they were rid of the menace of Pol Pot by Vietnam?

Mr. Mullin: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He puts his finger on the point. I do not think that this extraordinary tragedy, which has now been stretched out for many years, has happened because anybody has any particular animus against the Cambodian people. Their great tragedy is that their liberators, which is what they were—whether or not they were right to go in—came from the wrong side of the cold war. Cambodia is trapped in a situation in which those who are seeking to undermine its regime are not interested in the destruction of Cambodia, although that happens to be a by-product, and are more interested in undermining its neighbour, Vietnam. That is the genesis of this terrible matter.

Cambodia has an extraordinarily tragic history. I visited that country on a number of occasions, the first time being in 1973 when United States B52s were burning down the countryside and, indeed, some of the towns up to within a few kilometres of the centre of the capital. I used to lie awake at night listening as the whole city shook to the sound of the B52s as they plastered the area. If one went to Sattahip in Thailand—Utapao was the name of the American base in Thailand—one could watch the B52s taking off, with 30 tonnes of explosives and napalm each time, on their way to annihilate and destroy Cambodia. I saw that. I went to Cambodia again in 1980 shortly after Pol Pot and his cronies left town. No one who went there at that time could fail to be moved by the horrors awaiting them.

For many years Cambodia was ruled by Prince Sihanouk, first as an absolute monarch and later, by some deft footwork, as a constitutional Head of Government. He managed, precariously, to preserve an imperfect neutrality for his country and to keep it out of the holocaust that was taking place next door in Vietnam and further north in Laos. He managed to do so until 1970, by turning a blind eye to the activities of both the United States and the Vietnamese communists, both of whom were operating in the eastern provinces of his country. That precarious neutrality proved not to be sufficient for

[Mr. Mullin]

those who were running the war next door and a military coup was connived at which removed Prince Sihanouk in March 1970.

When the Minister replies, he will no doubt tell us that one of our objectives nowadays is to get Prince Sihanouk back into government again. One has to pinch oneself to recall that one of our objectives 20 years ago was to remove Prince Sihanouk, which is exactly what happened. There was not a word of protest from the British or American Governments about the military coup that removed Prince Sihanouk, because it is widely believed —there is some evidence— that the Americans were behind it. During the four or five years of the crazy Lon Nol regime, the country was opened up to carpet bombing on the most enormous scale. It was probably the greatest bombardment in the history of warfare. As I have said, it annihilated most of the countryside, outside a few main cities.

Out of that holocaust grew a revolutionary movement more terrible than any ever seen— the Khmer Rouge. The only reason that that group of revolutionaries—a tiny group in 1970— was able to take over the entire country by 1975 was the backlash that, not surprisingly, drove thousands of ordinary Cambodians into their arms as a result of the holocaust that had been unleashed upon them.

The Khmer Rouge's activities during the four years in which it had total control of the country is a matter of record and I do not propose to dwell on it. It is not controversial. What is controversial is what happened next. At Christmas 1978, after a long series of massive attacks on the western provinces of Vietnam—there were similar attacks by the Khmer Rouge, with similar atrocities, although not on the same scale, on the eastern provinces of Thailand and so everybody knows what they were like—the Vietnamese finally lost patience, invaded and removed Pol Pot regime. That invasion took place in, I believe, exactly the same week that the Tanzanians, with western backing, invaded Uganda and evicted the regime of Idi Amin and were generally celebrated for having done so.

Mr. Cryer: Will my hon. Friend use the word "liberate" more frequently because we know how concerned the Government are to create images? The fact is that Vietnam saved many Cambodian lives and was the only country prepared to take action to release Cambodia from a holocaust, the nature and extent of which had not been witnessed since the 1939-45 war and the gas chambers of the Nazis in Germany. It is worth repeating time and again that in the view of many people Vietnam liberated Cambodia. The Foreign Office probably likes to differ from that view, and we must ensure that quotations from *Hansard* cannot be used to suggest that my hon. Friend is underlining the American attitude that there was an invasion.

Mr. Mullin: Once again, I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I am not suggesting that the Vietnamese motives were the purest because there was a considerable amount of self-interest, which they own up to. Their western province had been attacked, with the slaughter of perhaps 20,000 people, mainly civilians, as has been attested to by the western correspondents who were there at the time. If a country to the south of us invaded the southern part of England and slaughtered people on a similar scale, I doubt whether anybody would hold it too much against us if we took some extremely serious action, up to and including invasion. That is primarily what provoked Vietnam to go in and, as a by-product, it liberated many Cambodian people who might have expected death shortly. Many people had already died——

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): It should be made clear at this stage that the view of the British Foreign Office about the Vietnamese invasion was not peculiar to the Foreign Office but was also the view of the United Nations and of the vast majority of the countries of the United Nations, and was repeated year after year. I agree with the hon. Gentleman's view of the motive. The invasion was provoked by attacks on Vietnam. I agree that there was a benefit in that the Vietnamese deposed Pol Pot and got rid of the Khmer Rouge. However, it was not a particular view of the Foreign Office, which then condemned the continuing invasion and the threat of invasion into other countries.

Mr. Mullin: Like myself, the hon. Gentleman has taken a long and persistent interest in Cambodia and is quite right. As I said, I was in Cambodia shortly after the Vietnamese invasion. Although, historically, there was no love lost between the Kampuchean people and the Vietnamese, the word "liberate" was frequently used because many of the people to whom I spoke believed that they would not have survived another year or two of the regime.

Apart from consuming many of the country's citizens, the regime was consuming its own. Those of us who had the opportunity to visit the death camp in Tuol Sleng— perhaps Mr. Colvin did not—noticed that its most compelling feature was that the killers took photographs of the people they killed, including many women and children, shortly before killing them. Most of the victims were Khmer Rouge. The organisation was eating itself. Like all Stalinist organisations, there was a succession of purges. Most of the civilians who died, died from hunger and overwork in the paddy fields or were murdered.

Many Cambodian people, of all persuasions, and whatever their attitude towards the Vietnamese, were grateful for the arrival of the Vietnamese, sudden though it was. According to those who have travelled the country —I know that the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) and my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) have been there recently—the people are terrified at the prospect of what awaits them now that the Vietnamese have withdrawn.

Although not a state of affairs that one would wish to prolong unnecessarily, the Vietnamese invasion should have been at least as celebrated as the Tanzanian invasion and removal of the Idi Amin regime in Uganda, but precisely the opposite happened. For very different motives, China and the United States decided that it was in their best interests not to arrange for the removal of Pol pot from the scene, but to arrange his preservation, and in the succeeding decade, they took steps to ensure that Pol Pot did survive.

Those of us who are satellite states of the United States are implicated deeply in that policy. As we shall see in a moment, we are implicated a lot more deeply than many British citizens and hon. Members understand. It cannot

be stated too clearly that specific steps were taken to arrange for the survival and reorganisation of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. I remember that the objective was stated frankly by an American Under-Secretary of State at the time as being to bleed Vietnam. It was not to get Vietnam out of Cambodia; it was not to get the Khmer Rouge back into power in Cambodia—I accept that nobody wanted that—it was simply to keep the Vietnamese in Cambodia, to tie them down and to drain their already seriously depleted resources. That was the object of the wicked policy that has been carried out during the last decade.

Thailand was leaned on—the relationship between the Thai military and the United States is extremely close—to provide facilities for the Khmer Rouge. Some deal, the details of which were not made public, was arrived at with China that it would supply the guns, at least at first. The guns would come into the port of Sattahip or Utapao, the former American base, from which they would be transported by Thai army vehicles. The Thai military would pause only long enough to take their rake off before distributing the guns to the Khmer Rouge.

It was also agreed that food would be supplied—this is a bit rich—under the cover of the United Nations Border Relief Operation. The regime of Pol Pot remained the recognised Government at the United Nations. For a while the Khmer Rouge flag flew at the United Nations. Enormous efforts were made by China and the United States and their satellites initially to make sure that recognition of the Pol Pot regime was sustained at the United Nations. When it became unsustainable a fraudulent coalition was constructed, to which Prince Sihanouk—who is a tool of the Khmer Rouge; he was not originally but he is now—was added, along with a clapped-out politician called Son Sann. It was called a coalition and for the past seven or eight years that coalition has theoretically represented Cambodia at the United Nations. It did not control a single centimetre of Cambodian soil for most of that time, although it now controls a considerable amount.

The representative of Cambodia was not even someone from the more acceptable and palatable half of that fraudulent coalition. It was Mr. Thiounn Prasith—the House will forgive me if I do not pronounce his name correctly. Four members of his family, indeed I believe that they were his brothers, were members of the regime that ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1978 while the Khmer Rouge held sway. Mr. Thiounn Prasith is a member of the Khmer Rouge. All the facilities of the United Nations have been at the disposal of the Khmer Rouge under the guise of that fraudulent coalition.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): Does my hon. Friend agree that particularly on that issue we can nail one of the lies which the Government have consistently peddled? They maintain that they have never given support of any kind to the Khmer Rouge, yet, as my hon. Friend said, the Khmer Rouge among others held the seat at the United Nations until recently, and on three occasions—in 1979, 1980 and 1981—the United Kingdom Government voted to seat the Khmer Rouge at the United Nations. On those three occasions at least, the Government gave diplomatic support to the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Mullin: In any case, anyone who saw the film made by John Pilger and David Munro in November last year will have seen the United Nations debate on the subject and seen delegates congratulating Mr. Thiounn Prasith on his success in becoming yet again, somehow or other, the representative of that fraudulent coalition at the United Nations.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I concede the hon. Gentleman's great knowledge of the area but is not he being rather naive in making the assertions that he makes? Is not it clear that the only way in which the extremely powerful Khmer Rouge could have been stopped from overrunning Cambodia, taking control and resuming its killing fields operations, was to keep it within a quadripartite agreement within which there was at least the hope that the Khmer Rouge could be controlled? Does not that explain the attitude, not of the British Government but of the United Nations as a whole, and the decision to take a course which, it is true, from time to time could give the impression of lending support to the Khmer Rouge, as the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) just suggested? It was the lesser of two evils. The alternative was too horrible to contemplate.

Mr. Mullin: The hon. and learned Gentleman is a distinguished lawyer. He used to say that I was naive when I said that the people convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings were innocent. I imagine that he now shares my view on that. He used to say that I was naive—indeed, he said so in the House once or twice—when I said that the people convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings were innocent. I predict that he will be in this place long enough to see them released and their convictions quashed.

While the hon. and learned Gentleman was speaking I noticed his hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe shaking his head. I hope that he will forgive me for calling him in aid. There is no foundation whatever for the assertions that the hon. and learned Gentleman makes.

Mr. Cryer: Does my hon. Friend agree that the curious argument that the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) just advanced could be compared to someone suggesting after the 1939-45 war that we should incorporate Hitler in a coalition to prevent him from developing his position in Germany again? That would be an exact parallel and we should have rejected it with contempt in 1945. We should reject with contempt the same suggestion with regard to Cambodia.

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend puts the point far better than I. I do not suggest that the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) is malign; if anything, he is naive in the interpretation that he puts on recent events. We did not simply incorporate the Khmer Rouge into our arrangements in order to keep it under control. We resuscitated it; we reorganised it; we helped it set up military training camps; we supplied it with food; we arranged for the supply of guns. I see the hon. and learned Gentleman shake his head, but it is true. He does not know the slightest thing about the matter or, at least, he knows only as much as he knew about the Guildford and Woolwich case.

Pol Pot was provided with facilities in Thailand. He still has them. They are there for anyone to see. People have been to see them. Thailand is a member of the western alliance. It is a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, but it has a close relationship with the

[Mr. Mullin]

United States and a friendly relationship with Britain. There is a training camp in Thailand for officers of the Khmer Rouge—not officers of the coalition. The main leaders of the Khmer Rouge, including Pol Pot, regularly give lectures there. The camp is a few miles from the border, about 20 miles from the town of Trat in the province of Trat. In addition, an island in the Gulf of Thailand near the border between Trat and Cambodia has been set aside for the exclusive use of the Khmer Rouge leadership. Defectors from the Khmer Rouge have been interviewed in *The Daily Telegraph*, of all papers, on the facilities that are available to the Khmer Rouge leadership there.

The Khmer Rouge come and go through the main airport in Bangkok through the military section of Don Muang airport. When Pol Pot had heart trouble—yes, Pol Pot has a heart—a few years ago he was given hospital treatment twice in a hospital in the centre of Bangkok. A suite in the Erawan hotel in the centre of Bangkok was put at his disposal. We all know that that is what has gone on.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): The hon. Gentleman is right to refer to the role of Thailand. He is wrong to imply that that is somehow part of British policy. Will he explore a little—I know that he wants to be fair about the background to this case—the history not only of east-west relations but of Sino-Soviet and Sino-Vietnamese relations? Will he also explore the fear and perhaps hatred between the Thais and the Vietnamese which also plays a part in the background to the horrendous situation? Perhaps he should address that as much as his concern about western alliances.

Mr. Mullin: I respect the intelligent interest that the hon. Gentleman has taken in the issue over a long period. However, one can exaggerate the hostility between Thailand and Vietnam. One of the main problems in Thailand is that the military is more or less independent of the Government. I am friendly with people who are extremely senior in the Thai Government so I have access to their thoughts on the subject. Merely to be Prime Minister of Thailand is not sufficient to persuade the military to desist from the arrangements that they have arrived at with the Khmer Rouge. The military deals directly with the United States military and, to some extent, the Chinese military. That is a funny old turn up for the books. When I used to go to Thailand in the early 1970s the newspapers were full of phoney stories about the imminent Chinese invasion. That shows that 15 or 17 years is a long time in politics.

No, that generous interpretation from the hon. and learned Member for Burton cannot explain what has happened, because everyone involved in the western alliance and everyone who has taken a close interest in these matters—Mr. Colvin has a detailed knowledge of them—knows that the facilities that I have described have been made available to the Khmer Rouge for a long time. They have also been made available to the coalition, which has facilities in Thailand, including soldiers who are said to be supporters of Prince Sihanouk and a few who are said to be supporters of Mr. Son Sann. However, everyone who knows anything about the situation knows that the real fighting, the real dying and the real killing are done mostly by the Khmer Rouge, which is experienced in and good at it.

Building up the non-Khmer Rouge wing of the coalition, an effort which has been more or less unsuccessful, has been an objective of American and British policy. It has led to what we now have—the Khmer Rouge in an extremely strong position.

Mrs. Clwyd: Has my hon. Friend seen this week's *Jane's Defence Weekly*, which has three worrying articles in it? One, headed "New Khmer Rouge offensive planned", talks about a meeting between Khmer Rouge army commanders on the Thai-Cambodia border—that reinforces my hon. Friend's point that they can come and go as they please across that border—which was attended by Pol Pot and other Khmer Rouge leaders, and brought together 25 division and five special regiment commanders. It says:

"The recent meeting represents the largest Khmer Rouge military gathering in more than five years."

It is clear that they are reinforcing for a new offensive within Cambodia as soon as the rainy season ends, and that this offensive will be strong.

Furthermore, according to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, there is concern that, for the first time in 12 years of guerrilla warfare, there will be a major push towards one of the Cambodian cities. Is not this news deeply worrying to those of us who know that, despite the efforts of the United Nations, neither the ceasefire nor the cessation of arms supplies has taken place?

Mr. Mullin: *Jane's Defence Weekly* has not always been my required reading, but I dip into it now and again as I am always interested in what I find there. I shall be referring to another article in it later.

If the situation is as the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) suggested, I ask him this question. Why have the British and American Governments, who are close friends of Thailand, never protested about the facilities afforded to Pol Pot? The answer is that we are in it up to to our necks. We are not just neutral observers. We make a contribution. The Minister will tell us at some length how much the Government abhor and hate the Khmer Rouge and how wicked and terrible it is. In that case, he has to address the question of what steps Her Majesty's Government have taken over the past decade to persuade the Thais not to support those facilities for the Khmer Rouge.

The Thais are embarrassed about this, and the Thai Government—I cannot speak for the Thai military—are anxious to get rid of the Khmer Rouge. One of the reasons why they cannot do so is that the United States, China and other western counties, no doubt including ourselves, are putting pressure on them not to evict the Khmer Rouge. I can quote an article that appeared in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* on 2 March 1989 about what is happening in Thailand. This all depends on Thailand because were it to kick out the Khmer Rouge, it would not matter what anyone else did. The United States is getting worried that the Thais' resolve is slipping. Its officials

"privately warned that if Thailand abandoned the Cambodian resistance and its leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk"—

that is a laugh, for a start—

"for the sake of doing business with Phnom Penh, it would have to pay a price. Thailand should consider whether the total value of any new Indochinese trade would even cover the

United States trade access privileges it still gets under the Generalised Special Preferences, one administration official said."

That is where we are at. Thailand is trying to pull out and break the circle, but, like us and probably more so, it is a satellite of the United States. Furthermore, the Thai military is largely independent of its Government. Thailand is being leaned on to keep coming up with the goods in respect of the Khmer Rouge.

The Minister will tell us that a settlement is in prospect, that we can all relax, that, terrible though the situation has been, we should not get too bogged down in the murky history, that we should look forward, that the United Nations is in the process of imposing a settlement that will bring together all factions of Cambodia, that it is up to the Cambodians to get themselves together and sort themselves out, and that everything will be all right on the night. The hon. Member for Broxtowe, whose views I greatly respect on this issue, and I take a slightly different view of the wisdom of this settlement.

It is said that the Hun Sen Government in Phnom Penh have agreed to the terms of this settlement, but if they have, it is because they are desperate. The situation there is so bad because the Government were badly undermined. They were attempting, with some success, to restore some semblance of normality to life, with the help of aid agencies, although not many western Governments, and aid from the eastern bloc. They have suddenly found, as a result of the great changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, that their eastern bloc aid is about to be cut off. When that happens, they will have no source of development income from outside.

I see Mr. Colvin saying "Rubbish", but when that happens, the situation will be even more desperate. The only source of arms for the Phnom Penh Government was the eastern bloc, and now they are having to buy on the international market with what small gold reserves they have. Tragically, they are getting some of their weapons from the same source as the Khmer Rouge. If the Hun Sen regime has been forced into this proposed UN settlement, which everybody who knows much about the area thinks is unworkable, it is because they have no other choice and the alternative facing them is annihilation.

Mrs. Clwyd: Have not the Opposition repeatedly called for bilateral aid to be given to the Cambodian Government, while the Government have repeatedly refused to give it, although that means that the Cambodians are desperately handicapped? Their Government have never been given the international assistance that they should have been given to help the country to recover from the disastrous American bombing and the Pol Pot years. One of the poorest countries is denied bilateral aid from the United Kingdom while the aid that it gets through non-governmental organisations is hopelessly meagre and cannot deal with the problems. United Nations development aid is also denied to Cambodia. Although there is $40 million in the account for Cambodia, it is frozen, as is another $40 million for the next two years. Is not this a scandal, given the desperate needs of the Cambodian people?

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend has visited Cambodia more recently than I and she knows how desperate the situation is. In the past decade Cambodia has attempted to get off its knees and to improve the circumstances that have been forced upon it by outside powers too great for that country to overcome. Every time that country appears to be in the process of doing so, it receives a new kick from the national boycott that has been systematically organised in the past decade. Its neighbour Vietnam is also subject to that boycott.

Mr. Cryer: I recently asked the Minister for Overseas Development about aid to Cambodia. In a written parliamentary answer she informed me that the British Government, with all their humanitarian concern welling up in their stony heart, will give in 1991 a massive £7,000 to assist in the provision of rural water supplies in Cambodia. That is about the annual cost of a drinks cabinet for each Minister. It is appalling that the Government should be so contemptuous of that poverty-stricken country.

Mr. Lester *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) must respond before another intervention.

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) is one of the more reliable Members of the House, and if the figure he has quoted is correct, it is scandalous. The most useful thing that the Government could do is to stop assisting the terrorists to undermine the regime. If they did that alone and left it to other sources to provide the aid that would make a tremendous difference.

Mr. Lester: The truth is that in the past year we have given more than £1 million directly to United Nations agencies in Cambodia. We have financed £500,000 worth of expenditure on joint funding with organisations working in Cambodia, for example Oxfam—the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) and I have seen the fruits of that expenditure. It is nonsense to try to make a shallow, miserable political point about Ministers' drinks cabinets when we operate an open joint-funding scheme. As other schemes come forward, we shall fund them. I have more to say on funding later.

Mr. Mullin: I do not want to get too bogged down in this issue now, as I am sure we shall return to it later. Suffice it to say that I am sure the hon. Member for Broxtowe would agree that the Government do not give development aid.

Mr. Cryer: I do not wish to exaggerate the argument, but I am merely basing my information on the information given to me by the Minister for Overseas development. If hon. Members turn to *Hansard* for Monday 22 October they will find at column 23 in the written answers, the figures given by the Minister relating to aid to Cambodia —figures given in a specific response to my question. In 1991 the committed money for a rural water supply is £7,570.

Mr. Mullin: I am grateful for that clarification. On a number of occasions Ministers have reiterated that we do not give development aid to Cambodia. Such aid as we give is directed through non-governmental agencies. That aid has not been given out of the kindness of the Foreign Office heart, but as a result of the enormous public pressure generated by the excellent films made by Mr. Pilger and Mr. Munro, as well as the writings of other people. The aid is also the result of pressure exerted on

[Mr. Mullin]

Ministers by Opposition Members and the hon. Members for Battersea, for Broxtowe and others who take an intelligent interest in this issue.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I understand that the Foreign Office received 3,500 letters following the initial John Pilger film. I have received a mass of letters which represent the greatest spontaneous response that I have ever received from individual constituents as distinct from organised pressure groups. This subject arouses great concern and I congratulate my hon. Friend on his fortuitous circumstances that will enable us to have a full debate on it.

Mr. Mullin: I stand open to correction, but I believe that the response has been even greater than that. As a result of the past two Pilger films shown at the end of 1989, the Foreign Office has received 16,000 letters and the Prime Minister has received the 3,500 to which my hon. Friend referred. There is no doubt that, despite our difficulty in persuading Foreign Office Ministers to take the situation seriously, the public already do so. It is that concern which encourages me to raise this issue in such strong terms.

Mrs. Llin Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): The letters are still coming in. I received one this morning from the Rev. Victor Oxford, the parish priest of Chesterton in my constituency. He wrote to express the deep concern of his parishioners at what is happening in Cambodia and stated:

"I do not believe that Britain's involvement has been an honourable one."

Mr. Mullin: I shall deal with the most dishonourable part of Britain's involvement later.

Mr. Cryer: Perhaps my hon. Friend should dwell on our proceedings yesterday. My hon. Friend will recall that we debated the Broadcasting Bill and the imposition on broadcasters of a legal framework for impartiality. Many Tory Members claimed that no television producers should be allowed to hold views that intrude on their programmes. The Government's decision last night could lead to court decisions requiring, in the interest of balance, any programme on Cambodia to include representatives of Pol Pot. In that way the legal restrictions imposed by the Government would not be breached.

Mr. Mullin: I imagine that the films that aroused the great public concern to which we have referred were uppermost in the minds of those who devised the new arrangements. Civil servants and Ministers who are engaged in activities that cannot be easily justified in public need and require silence—they do not want those activities talked about. I note that the Minister is looking upset, but I absolve him as he has been in office for only a short time.

The main Government spokesman for policy in south-east Asia sits in the other place—that subject has always been the responsibility of Bertie Wooster figures whom it is difficult to take seriously. That practice, however, keeps any detailed questioning on the subject away from the House—that is the effect; who can say if it is the intention?

The only reason why this subject has been discussed at any length is the persistence of a handful of hon. Members, most of whom are in the Chamber today. Last year's debate on the subject in the House had a meagre impact on Government policy, but the only reason for that debate was our decision, in response to great public interest, to allocate one of the Opposition half-days to it. It is only by good fortune that we are able to have this extended debate today rather than an Adjournment debate that might have taken place, unwitnessed, in the early hours of some morning. Good fortune does not often smile on lowly Back Benchers such as myself.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): It is true that the John Pilger films have led to a flood of letters from our constituents, but for many years I have consistently received letters and representations of a most thoughtful nature from people who cannot understand the Government's attitude. They cannot understand why the survival of the Cambodian people should be put at risk. Although I welcome the recent flood of letters, it is important to remember that they do not represent an isolated incident. For many years there has been considerable public reaction to the Government's policy.

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend is right. We continually refer to the Government's policy, and while we are discussing that as a subject, it is not really British Government policy. Somebody in a dark area in Washington has created the policy and we, as in many other areas, are lamely following, and as in many other areas, that is bringing humiliation on all who are having to defend the situation.

I shall deal with the settlement to which I referred before dealing with two areas of Government policy of which I gave the Minister's office notice. The agreement that is now being imposed on Cambodia is unworkable, and I do not think that those who are imposing it believe that it will work. When it breaks down, they will blame it on the faction-fighting among Cambodians and say, "It is extremely difficult to get the fractious Cambodians to co-operate with one another."

If I were a Cambodian, I would be nervous about co-operating with the Khmer Rouge and some other groups with whom they are being forced to co-operate. One effect of the agreement will be to give the Khmer Rouge a place in the Government. It will also give the Khmer Rouge territory that it has not yet captured on the battlefield. Others have used the analogy that it is as if, towards the end of the last war, instead of opting for unconditional surrender, we had suggested a coalition under which even if Hitler were allowed to retire to a military training school in Bavaria, it would at least have included Himmler, Goering and a few others.

There is fear in Cambodia lest, under the cover of the agreement, the Khmer Rouge will come back, and I share that view. One effect of the agreement will be to disarm —it forces disarmament on all factions—the only faction that is conducting any serious resistance, which is the regime in Phnom Penh. If I were in the Phnom Penh regime and I were being required by the agreement to lay down my guns, I should be extremely hesitant to do so.

As I say, the agreement will not work and I do not believe that those who are trying to impose it believe that it will work. Unfortunately, it will provide an alibi for those who designed it, who will be responsible for what

may happen in the next few years and who will say at that time, "It is not our fault. We did our best to impose the agreement, but the fractious Cambodians would not sit down and sort it out among themselves. What else could we do?"

For a long time I took the view that neutrality was probably the best that western Governments could offer, and some of us argued for that, at any rate over the United Nations seat. We said that at least the United Nations seat should be left vacant until arrangements were made for an elected Government in Cambodia to become internationally recognised.

For a long time the British Government, along with the Americans and the Chinese, took the view that a Vietnamese withdrawal was required. I recall when travelling in that neck of the woods being told by representatives of Her Majesty's Government, "The priority of our policy is to get the Vietnamese out of Cambodia." When asked, "What will happen after that?" the answer was invariably, "We have not yet got round to thinking about that." Occasionally the representatives were more frank and would reply, "It worries us, too." Unfortunately, being servants of the Foreign Office, Mr. Colvin and the rest in Whitehall, they had to pursue remorselessly the line of removing the Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, without giving much thought to what would follow.

Though it may have surprised many, the Vietnamese have gone. For a time some people tried to pretend that they had all changed into Cambodian uniforms and were still there. Nobody seriously argues that now. Mr. Colvin may disagree with me over that, and there may be the odd adviser there, but the Vietnamese troops have gone home and, as a result, the regime is crumbling. The Khmer Rouge is in a stronger position than ever before, because nobody thought about what would happen after the withdrawal, even though many people there were trying to smuggle messages to those in authority telling them what would happen and what is now coming to pass.

I would have settled for neutrality five years ago, until an acceptable Government in Phom Penh had been worked out, so that the Vietnamese could withdraw in an orderly fashion, provided that all concerned could be satisfied that the Khmer Rouge no longer posed a threat. It is too late for that now. The only way out now is to provide aid to the only faction that is offering any serious armed resistance to the Khmer Rouge, and that is the regime in Phnom Penh. I cannot see any other way out of the situation. If there is another way, I wish somebody would tell me, because time is short.

I come to some points relating to British Government policy about which I gave the Minister's office notice. This may be rather unfair on the Minister, as I said at the outset, although I think that I see the Minister dissenting, obviously indicating that what I say is not unfair on him. It would be good to have taking part in the debate a representative of the Ministry of Defence at the least. Ideally, because the authority for this whole issue goes much higher than the Ministry of Defence or the Foreign Office, one would prefer to hear the Prime Minister's view on the subject.

The only recorded interview of which I am aware on the subject of Cambodia, apart from a few brief comments that the Prime Minister made when she visited the border two years ago, was in the Blue Peter children's television programme—*[Interruption.]*—hon. Members should not laugh, because that interview was rather more perceptive than some of those conducted on this subject by many of the pompous political correspondents. The right hon. Lady was asked a few awkward questions and I shall deal shortly with her replies.

The British Government's support year after year at the United Nations for the thinly disguised coalition which is a front for the Khmer Rouge is a matter of record to which I have referred. So, too, is our contribution through the United Nations border relief operation for the food that has helped to sustain the Khmer Rouge and its allies through the 11-year guerrilla war that has brought it to the point of having a real prospect of regaining control of Cambodia.

Today I shall address one area of Government policy about which I have given the Minister notice, and that is the fact that between July 1985 and October last year, British soldiers had been providing military training for Khmer terrorists, including the Khmer Rouge, and that since last autumn the programme appears to have been contracted out to former, sometimes very recently former, British soldiers.

The first report that I saw about that appeared in *Jane's Defence Weekly*, which is not regarded as a left-wing publication and which is probably read more by Conservative than Labour Members. The article was by a journalist named Mr. Robert Karniol, who is based in Bangkok and has excellent military sources, which is the most discreet way that I can put it. The article which appeared on 30 September 1989, was headed:

"UK trained Cambodia guerillas"

—terrorists, as I prefer to call them. The report said that training commenced in July 1985 and that the courses were conducted by serving United Kingdom military personnel said to be from British special forces, which I take to be a euphemism for the Special Air Services. It went on to say that those participating in the course were said to be members of the Sihanouk and Son Sann factions. That is probably how we privately describe them.

It said that among their achievements was the creation of a 250-man sabotage battalion which was no doubt responsible for planting many of the mines with which the country of Cambodia is now infested and which are reported to be causing up to 80 amputations a day. No doubt that sabotage battalion has done more destruction to the fragile infrastructure of Cambodia than could be repaired by any aid squeezed out of the British Government so far.

I spoke yesterday to someone who is personally acquainted with some of the SAS men who have been engaged in training Cambodians. He said that although the original proposal was to train supporters of Sihanouk and Son Sann, many Khmer Rouge soldiers started to present themselves for training. Apparently the training is taking place at purpose-built camps near the Thai-Cambodian border. It is being conducted by British soldiers in groups of 12. It is headed by a captain. Several NCOs are also involved. I was told that some of the SAS men have accompanied raiding parties of Khmer terrorists into Cambodia and that several British service men have been injured.

I recall discovering in the mid-1970s from someone who was in the SAS that one or two SAS men were killed in Malaysia. Through a friendly Member I tabled questions about the fatalities of service men in Malaysia. By God, there had been a lot of car accidents and swimming

[Mr. Mullin]

accidents that year. I suspect that if any SAS men who have been involved in training Cambodians have been killed—I have no knowledge that they have—there will be car accidents in Thailand as people return from leave spent in Hong Kong, or something like that.

The person to whom I spoke yesterday said that SAS involvement with the Khmer Rouge and its allies was causing misgivings among SAS soldiers. I suggest that they are not a body of men who are given to crises of conscience. When the first reports of the involvement appeared in the autumn of 1989, Ministers refused to take Parliament into their confidence. Certain favoured journalists, however—I have spoken to one or two of them—were given background briefing by a Minister and civil servants to the effect that training had been given. Recent inquirers have been told that the training has now ceased. That no doubt accounts for the letter that I received from Lord Caithness, the Foreign Office Minister with direct responsibility for this part of the world. It is dated 19 October and contains this sentence:

"There is no British Government involvement of any kind in training, equipping or cooperating with the Khmer Rouge forces or those allied to them."

The key word in the sentence is "is". On 18 October—that is the day before I received Lord Caithness's letter—I tabled a question that put the matter in a slightly different form. I took it to the Table Office. I asked:

"If British service men have been involved in any military training for Cambodians".

The question was returned by the Table Office on the bottom of the page the word "blocked" had been written in pencil. There was reference to an answer to a similar question of 30 October 1989. It was stated in that reply that it was not the practice to provide information of that nature. On the one hand, the Government wish their denials to be believed. On the other hand, it is not their practice to provide information of this nature.

Mr. Lawrence: I have a letter dated 19 October from Lord Caithness. It says:

"There is no British Government involvement of any kind"—

the Minister is referring to support for the Khmer Rouge in any form—and never has been

"training, equipping or co-operating with the Khmer Rouge forces".

That is the complete sentence.

Mr. Mullin: The position is that we are training Sihanoukists. The unofficial official position or official unofficial position, if the House follows my reasoning, is that we are training Sihanoukists and supporters of Mr. Son Sann. The problem is that after a few months of this military training, members of the Khmer Rouge started to present themselves for training. That is why some people are talking now who were not prepared to do so previously. A blind eye has been turned over a period of several years.

Let us suppose that the position is not quite as Lord Caithness has stated. Let us suppose that the unofficial official position is that we are training Sihanoukists, supporters of Mr. Son Sann and Khmer Rouge terrorists. If someone has his leg blown off by a mine in Cambodia, I do not suppose that it matters very much to that person whether the person who planted the mine was a supporter of Prince Sihanouk, or Mr. Son Sann or of the Khmer Rouge. I am against terrorism in all its forms, as I know the hon. and learned Member for Burton is. I suspect that the British public will be surprised when they come to hear of these matters. They have not yet been told. The letter signed by Lord Caithness is extremely misleading.

The British people have not yet been told the truth but I am reasonably confident—people are talking now who have not talked previously—that in due course the issue will be fully aired. I advise those who wrote Lord Caithness's letter—I do not suppose for a moment that Lord Caithness had anything to do with it—to think carefully about the wording that they use.

Following the unwelcome public interest that was aroused by Mr. Karniol's report—a similar report appeared in *The Sunday Telegraph*, which is not a Labour newspaper, and there were several excellent television programmes—Mr. Dennis Gallwey, the MI6 officer responsible for the military training programme for Cambodians, was hastily withdrawn from his post at the British embassy at Bangkok. I gather that he has since retired. British advisers are, however, still to be found training Khmer Rouge terrorists in Thailand. The operation has been contracted out—privatised, one might say—to former SAS soldiers. That will enable Ministers, including Lord Caithness, and others to deny with hand on heart that the Government are involved in the training of Khmer Rouge terrorists.

Mrs. Clwyd: I shall add to what my hon. Friend is saying by quoting from a letter written by Susan Eliot, who has worked for many years with Cambodian refugees. She has evidence that in Malaysia, British advisers have helped to train Khmer Rouge guerrillas. She states:

"The training was conducted by Malaysian army officers, through the medium of English language, with British and American trainers acting as advisers. Not only were the troops trained together but they travelled to and from Bangkok."

Mr. Mullin: Complex arrangements surround the training and supplying of the various Cambodian terrorist factions. I do not pretend to know all the details. Malaysia and Singapore appear to be involved. We have access to Malaysia—at Johore Baru—and military facilities in Brunei for jungle warfare training. I do not know whether those facilities are being used. The SAS has certainly been active in Malaysia over an extremely long period. The training that I am talking about is taking place on the Thai—Cambodia border and British nationals appear still to be involved, whatever the precise arrangements are.

I invite the Minister to deny that British soldiers were training Cambodian terrorists between July 1985 and October 1989. I am not talking about the Khmer Rouge. It is no good if the Minister says that we are not training the Khmer Rouge and we would not dream of doing so. I am not talking about that. I prefer to use the term Khmer terrorists—those who plant mines in Cambodia and blow up bridges. It has been demonstrated that the Sihanouk faction works hand in hand with the Khmer Rouge. There are joint raiding parties and some of the weapons that are passed to the Sihanouk faction end up, for various reasons, in Khmer Rouge hands.

A film was made of a joint raiding party. I do not know how it was made. It was an extract from the Pilger film that appeared at the end of 1989. The film showed the raiding party looting a village and driving away a tractor and all the other bits of development aid that some good people

had no doubt saved for, to enable money to be spent to provide that aid. The party set fire to the village hospital, or clinic. We are up to our necks in that sort of activity. I should like to hear today—perhaps I shall not hear it today—the truth about what is going on. I predict that the Minister will choose his words with great care.

There is another little matter that will be of interest to students of Government policy on Cambodia.

When the hon. Member for Broxtowe and my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley visited Cambodia in September last year to witness the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, they were surprised to discover that the official guest list contained the names of two Englishmen—Mr. Christopher Edward Wollaston Mackenzie Geidt, a name one cannot forget in a hurry, who worked for the Royal United Services Institute which is based in Whitehall and partly funded by the Ministry of Defence; and Mr. Anthony Leigh de Normann, who appears to be a member of one of our older families, too. Mr. de Normann was until recently, before he departed for Cambodia, a captain in the Royal Hussars.

When I asked the Ministry of Defence in what capacity these gentlemen were visiting Cambodia, I was told in a written answer on 18 December that it was at the invitation of the Hanoi Institute for International Relations. That is not true. According to covering letters and their visa applications Mr. Mackenzie Geidt's and Mr. de Normann's visit was at their initiative. Once they got to Cambodia their visit may have come under the auspices of the Hanoi institute—that would be fairly common—but the initiative came from them, so let us have no more nonsense on that point.

What is more, Mr. Mackenzie Geidt appears to have been rather economical with the truth in his visa application. In his letter to the Vietnamese embassy dated 11 September last year and written on RUSI notepaper, he says he is travelling

"as a representative of the Royal United Services Institute".

He signs himself, "Assistant Director" and describes Mr. de Normann as his personal assistant.

Yesterday I talked to Group Captain David Bolton, the director of RUSI who, by a happy coincidence, is a native of Sunderland, so we had a lot in common, at least to start with. He told me that Mr. Mackenzie Geidt worked at RUSI from March 1988 until April 1990, not as assistant director but as an assistant to the director responsible for fund raising. He was self-employed; his job was purely administrative and it had nothing to do with Cambodia, the far east or any aspect of policy. Group Captain Bolton told me that Mr. Mackenzie Geidt did not travel to Vietnam and Cambodia as a representative of RUSI, and had had no business to be passing himself off as such. Of Mr. de Normann, RUSI had no record.

Again I ask what Mr. Mackenzie Geidt and Mr. de Normann were doing in Cambodia. On whose behalf did they go? To whom did they report? I gave the Minister notice of these questions——

Mrs. Clwyd: I have here what was described as the official guest list of the people who witnessed the Vietnamese troop withdrawal between 21 and 26 September 1989. As my hon. Friend knows, there were no official British visitors present to witness the withdrawal, because we do not recognise the Government of Cambodia. On the list, as guests Nos. 74 and 75 are someone called Anthony Norman from Great Britain and someone called Mackenzie, also of Great Britain. They are described as

"Fonctionnaire de l'Institut de Recherche Min Defence."

That is what I, my hon. Friend and others have been trying to find out the truth about. That is why I have asked the Prime Minister for a public inquiry. I am not making allegations. Like my hon. Friend and others, I am asking for the truth. So far we have not been able to get at it.

Mr. Mullin: I entirely endorse the sentiments that my hon. Friend has expressed.

One might ask how it comes about that British taxpayers' money and British soldiers have been used and, in one way or another, are still being used to train Khmer terrorists in support of one of the most odious regimes in living memory. What possible interests can that serve in an area of the world in which we have little historic connection, yet in which we are training terrorists to plant mines to blow off the legs of Cambodian rice farmers? The is answer is, as I said at the outset, to be found in our satellite status in relation to the United States, of which this episode is only the latest and most humiliating example. I suspect that our Cambodian policy did not originate in the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Defence: it began in Downing street. No doubt it was a product of the love affair between the Prime Minister and former President Reagan.

Some time in the mid-1980s the Prime Minister allowed herself to be persuaded to send the SAS to help the Americans with their latest crazy adventure in Indochina. Something similar happened during the Vietnam war when I believe a few SAS men found their way there. It may have been intended to confine the help to the Sihanouk and Son Sann factions, but somewhere along the line it got out of hand and we have ended up training the Khmer Rouge.

Anyone who saw the remarkable interview on "Blue Peter" on 19 December 1988 will realise that the Prime Minister has a view of the situation in Cambodia which is wholly different from that of all other informed observers. She said:

"I think there are probably two parts of the Khmer Rouge. Those who supported Pol Pot, and then there is a much more reasonable grouping within that title Khmer Rouge".

When the interviewer expressed surprise at that she replied:

"I am assured by people who know."

Who assured the Prime Minister that there are reasonable Khmer Rouge, and who are they? This, is the question that caused Lord Brabazon to self-destruct in front of the television cameras a year ago. I invite the Minister to tell us who these reasonable Khmer Rouge are, and where they may be contacted.

Short of a miracle, the Khmer Rouge stand a good chance of coming back to power in Cambodia. They already control a large part of the countryside. The familiar atrocities are already taking place. Within the past few months there have been a number of attacks on trains when everyone connected with the Government has been taken off and murdered on the spot. We shall have to live with the knowledge that British soldiers, British taxpayers and the British Government have in one way or another helped to bring about the return of the nightmare.

I repeat that nothing I say reflects on the Minister personally. I urge him to put aside the claptrap in his brief about our abhorrence of the Khmer Rouge and about all

[Mr. Mullin]

the work that we are doing for a peaceful settlement and to concentrate on telling the House the truth about what we have been up to in Cambodia.

11.27 am

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): I am always pleased to take part in debates on Cambodia. I have been fortunate enough to initiate most of the Adjournment debates on it in which we have exchanged views across the Floor of the House.

My interest in this area started when the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs visited Vietnam and all the ASEAN countries in 1986, since when I have been able to visit Cambodia in 1987 and 1989.

I share the sense of injustice about the Cambodia situation expressed by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin). I share his sense of injustice about what the innocent people there have suffered, but I do not share his desire to bring in a lot of extraneous issues. We desperately want an end to the conflict and a better future for the Cambodians, and the hon. Gentleman did not deal at all with the excellent work being done by the permanent five——

Mr. Mullin: The hon. Gentleman is being a little unfair in saying that I did not deal with that. I appreciate that he disagrees with my interpretation of the agreement which it is being attempted to impose on Cambodia, but I dealt with it at some length and I should be grateful if he would acknowledge that.

Mr. Lester: I do acknowledge it, and I do not want to conduct a battle across the Floor of the House. My concern is for the Cambodians. The unilateral disarmament of the Hun Sen regime was not part of the document, and the hon. Gentleman did not refer to the five parts of the document which are essential for elections, human rights and so on. I admit that the hon. Gentleman mentioned the matter, but he did not give it the weight and credibility that I hope to give it.

In a sense, I also share the hon. Gentleman's view of the historical perspective, although it is easy in 1990 to forget the situation in 1979. Pol Pot had been perpetrating wicked policies on his people in 1975 and the world had sat on its hands, unable to think of any way of intervening. As the hon. Gentleman says, the Vietnamese swept into Cambodia. I suspect that that was not for humanitarian reasons but because there was a pro-Chinese regime on their borders. One of the great benefits of that invasion was that it deposed Pol Pot and brought that terrible period to an end.

Many people in south-east Asia were afraid of the Vietnamese, who had the biggest standing army in the area. People will remember the domino theory. It was said that the Vietnamese would sweep into Thailand and Laos and move down the peninsula. It was for that reason that the ASEAN group of nations came together and, with the Americans, signed a defence treaty with the Thais. As a consequence, the whole weight of the United Nations was subsequently turned to getting the Vietnamese to withdraw.

The difference between the situation in Africa and Tanzania and that in Cambodia was that the Tanzanians withdrew. I greatly regret that, at that time, none of us could advise the Vietnamese not to make statements about the great grouping of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. They could have said that they had dealt with their own security situation and had driven into Thailand the hostile force that was attacking them. They could have said that they had relieved the situation in Cambodia, and could have asked the world to repair the damage caused by Pol Pot. If they had taken that line, we would not be deploring the current situation. That is the real historical perspective.

I share the hon. Gentleman's view about the coalition. I have said in the House that it was cobbled together for a specific reason. It is a difficult horse to ride, and it is even more difficult now that the Vietnamese have withdrawn. It is difficult for western Governments to justify recognising two thirds of the coalition. The hon. Gentleman did not mention that, in theory, the coalition is an external Government of Cambodia, although it is not recognised by the British Government as legitimate. Prince Sihanouk was the president and Son Sann was the Prime Minister. The Khmer Rouge is at the United Nations because its representative was the Foreign Minister. It was not that there was some magical arrangement to restore the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot to power. The coalition was formed from external Khmers, and that formulation has given the Khmer Rouge access to diplomatic channels. As a result, it has gained a great deal of prestige.

This is not a peculiarly British view. The credentials committee of the United Nations has consistently supported that formulation. On many occasions last year and the year before, the hon. Member for Sunderland, South and I tried to do something about that because we did not want that to continue, especially after the Vietnamese had withdrawn from Cambodia. That is the true position; there is no cobbled-up scheme in which we have said, "Dear Pol Pot, we want to restore you to power and will therefore give you a seat at the United Nations."

My concern all along about Government policy is that it has not moved with the times. When the Select Committee went to Vietnam, it was told by the Vietnamese that they would leave Cambodia by 1990. The Vietnamese are straight talkers; anyone who has negotiated or talked with them will admit that. I suspect that their reason for leaving Cambodia in 1990 was that, by that time, they would be sure to have trained sufficient of the Hun Sen regime troops to sustain the security situation.

All my colleagues on the Select Committee believed them, and we suggested at that time that we should start to build bridges. That is what must be done if we want to see an end to the conflict in south-east Asia. I am happy to say that the Americans are now starting to talk directly to the Vietnamese Government at a high level. That is essential.

At that time, we suggested that the right thing to do was to take the Vietnamese at their word. We should have told them that in the meantime we recognised that there were enormous redevelopment needs in Cambodia and Vietnam. We should have started to talk to them then about what needed to be done when they left Cambodia. By talking to them in that way, we would not have been wielding a constant stick but offering a carrot and a little humanity and concern for the fact that, for one reason or another, these people have endured 40 years of war and conflict, which have had a devastating effect.

Our suggestion was not accepted. I suspect that it was not believed that the Vietnamese would leave Cambodia. One of our Ministers came back from a visit and told me,

I think in March, that he did not think the Vietnamese would leave when they said they would in September 1989. I told him that they would be gone by September, and asked what Government policy would be then I was one of those who saw the withdrawal.

If we want to get our policy right in solving the problem, and if we want to play a full part, we must recognise the coalition Government as legitimate. Over the years, we have given generous help in a way that many people do not understand to those in the camps on the Thai border. Those camps are closed. Some people are in camps run by Prince Sihanouk, some in camps run by Son Sann and other camps are run by the Khmer Rouge. There is no interchange. People cannot move from one to another.

Many of us saw the camps in daylight, at which time they are well presented and give one a sense of welcome that few places would offer. However, the situation is quite different at night. Our Government have sent policemen there to instil into the camps a sense of proper order and humanitarian living. Although we have done that, we have never recognised the coalition.

Even if we do not recognise the Hun Sen regime, we should at least talk to them. How can we develop the right policy unless we have interchange and understanding? A week on Tuesday, I raised this matter with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, who agreed that, as we recognise neither of the sides that form the supreme national council, and as every member of that council is acceptable to every other member, now is the time to start a dialogue. That would be a belated start, but at least it would be a start. I still press for that policy.

We now have an embassy in Bangkok, and I think that we were the first country to send a diplomat to Phnom-Penh after the Vietnamese withdrawal. He had strict instructions not to talk to the Government there but to deal with the aid programme that I have mentioned. His job was to see how we could begin to offer humanitarian aid through the United Nations and the non-governmental officers who work there for much of the time.

When we returned from our first visit, the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) and I went to see a Minister at the Overseas Development Agency. Our reception was helpful, and we were able to persuade the Government to begin joint funding. Until then, all the work carried out by non-governmental organisations in Cambodia had been done entirely at their own expense. Hon. Members will know that the ODA, jointly with non-governmental organisations, funds pound for pound schemes which they put forward. That has been going on since 1987. I shall deal later with the aid situation.

I part company with the Opposition about what is in the best interests of the people of Cambodia. The situation is desperate, but nobody can come forward with a United Nations development aid programme to offer the Cambodians the sort of help that they need as long as there is conflict. I talked to the Soviet ambassador in Phnom Penh. He said that the Soviets helped in some ways but could not spend the budget that they allocated for their aid and development programme.

Many NGOs have told me that they cannot spend the budget allocated, because the desperate conflict prevents the distribution of sensible aid, especially the assistance that is desperately needed because of Pol Pot's activities —for example, assistance with waterworks and with developing major roads and major telecommunications systems and opening up the country. We should ask ourselves how we can ensure a ceasefire and disarmament, and a future for the Cambodian people.

Following my discussions with Hun Sen the last time I was in Phnom Penh, I believe that the United Nations proposals satisfy the conditions that he sought. He always recognised that the Khmer Rouge exists, but he did not want it to exist in its own right as an independent power in a quadripartite system. He did not want a quadripartite system with Prince Sihanouk as an independent power, with his army; Son Sann as an independent power with his army; the Khmer Rouge, with its army intact; and himself, as just one quarter of the system. He told me that he wanted a joint arrangement in which he represented the internal regime and the coalition—faulty though it is—continued to represent the external regime. Hun Sen felt that, if the Khmer Rouge were to be part of that coalition team, it was up to Prince Sihanouk to make it possible.

For a period, Hun Sen tried to see whether it was possible to bring Prince Sihanouk on side, to join his regime. If that had happened, Hun Sen plus the non-communists who were opposed to the Khmer Rouge would have been on their own. That would have been possible if China—the principal backer of the Khmer Rouge—had been persuaded to accept that proposition. At one stage, after many of hours of negotiation, Prince Sihanouk accepted it, but on returning to Peking, he changed his mind.

A supreme national council has emerged, precisely in the form requested by Hun Sen. It was negotiated in Tokyo, but the Khmer Rouge, which was not part of the negotiations, rejected it. The matter was renegotiated in Jakarta, and there is now in place a supreme national council comprising six members of the Hun Sen regime, two members from the Khmer Rouge, two from the Son Sann group and two from Prince Sihanouk. We should concentrate our attention on that council. It may be that there is still hassle because Prince Sihanouk was not part of the team and has now said that he would like to be chairman.

Some people think that he still has a role to play. I do not happen to share that view. If the coalition wishes and if the team of 12 puts its personal differences aside—we are looking to the future of a divided, war-torn country—and can accept Prince Sihanouk as chairman, I am sure that it will be possible to add another Hun Sen member. Having accepted the peace plan—or, so to speak, the camel—they are straining at gnats. If they believe in their country's future, they must come together and operate the United Nations plan.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South said that the only way out was to recognise Hun Sen. As one who has agonised over this matter, I must ask: if that happens, who provides the fire power to defeat the Khmer Rouge? Who provides the military ability to defeat the Khmer Rouge? I do not believe that there is a military solution. How much more suffering must the Cambodian people go through before a possibility is seen to work? As I have suggested repeatedly in the House, we should look for the Namibian solution, for what I hope will be the Angolan solution and for what I know will be the Mozambican solution—places where these civil conflicts exist. There are groups like RENAMO that are almost as bad as the Khmer Rouge. The Namibian and Zimbabwean solutions are a pattern that could equally apply to Cambodia.

Mr. Mullin: I put it to the hon. Gentleman that the alternative solution would be a coalition that included everyone except the Khmer Rouge. That has been the logical thing to do all along. If they chose, Prince Sihanouk, Son Sann and all the rest could form a coalition to defeat the Khmer Rouge. That is the coalition that we should underwrite, not, for heaven's sake, some coalition that includes the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Lester: The hon. Gentleman's view differs from the view that Hun Sen expressed to me. As I asked, who defeats the Khmer Rouge? The Khmer Rouge has considerable forces. Hon. Members have seen films showing caches of arms and the rest. We know that guerrilla warfare anywhere in the world is almost undefeatable. One could go down that route only as a last resort, but I do not believe that it would bring peace and development aid to the Cambodian people and restore this beautiful country.

I should like to turn to the document that has been patiently negotiated in the principal capitals of the five permanent members of the Security Council. I am happy to criticise the Foreign and Commonwealth Office—I am on the Foreign Affairs Select Committee which has a remit to do that—but it is wrong to do so in this instance without any knowledge of the diplomatic efforts that have been made to bring together such disparate people as the Soviets and the Chinese to sign an agreement and accept that they should stop backing their respective elements in the conflict. One should look at this intimately complex document, which tries to consider every possible variation that could occur.

The document refers to the transitional arrangements regarding the Administration. None of us could replace the Hun Sen regime in terms of the people who are doing the work. At one stage, it was suggested in a wild flight of fancy that the United Nations would take over the government and run it. That sounds all right, but I gather that there are only two or three Cambodian speakers in the United Nations. It would be impossible to come in from outside, take over a country and run it on that basis.

One requirement that had to be satisfied was that the regime in place should not in the interim initiate policies and take actions that the Chinese regarded as wrong and unfair. That is not an unreasonable negotiating position. According to the document, the Hun Sen regime will stay in place, with the United Nations supervising five key Ministries. Much can depend on what one means by "supervise". As I see it, that fulfils the conditions that Hun Sen wanted, and enables the solution to move forward.

I want to deal now with the military arrangements during the transition period. The hon. Member for Sunderland, South talked as though the only people who would be disarmed were the Hun Sen supporters, which would leave the whole country to be taken over by the Khmer Rouge. However, when one reads the military arrangements, one realises that they contain many important provisions. They refer to

"Liaison with neighbouring governments over any developments in or near their territory which could endanger the implementation of the comprehensive political settlement . . . Monitoring the cessation of outside military assistance to all Cambodian parties . . . Locating and confiscating caches of weapons and military supplies throughout the country".

It is constantly argued that the Khmer Rouge has two years' supply of arms in caches, but that point has been dealt with.

The document also refers to

"Undertaking training programmes in mine clearance."

I share the feeling about the wickedness of the mines, which have been laid not only by the Khmer Rouge, but by all parties in the conflict. The Khmer Rouge has used them to try to destabilise villages. Mines have been floated down the Mekong and have been laid indiscriminately in paddy fields because the Khmer Rouge is trying to undermine the regime. Mines have been planted throughout Cambodia for a long time and it is a desperate situation. We want a ceasefire so that the mines can be detected and removed.

When dealing with the ceasefire, the document says:

"all forces will begin regrouping and relocating to specifically designated cantonment areas under the supervision of UNTAC. While the forces are in the cantonments, their arms will be stored on site under UNTAC supervision."

That is what happened in Namibia. We are talking not about a one-sided disarmament, but about a multi-sided disarmament of all parties.

Item 19 states:

"UNTAC will then initiate a phased process of arms control and reduction in such a way as to stabilize the security situation".

The document does not talk about undermining the security situation. If it was such as the hon. Member for Sunderland, South has described, I would share his view. However, the UN proposals are designated to stabilise the situation and to build confidence among the parties to the conflict.

The military element is the only hope. The one way in which we can deal with the Khmer Rouge is within this framework, backed by the Chinese and by the Thais. We must contain the Khmer Rouge and disarm it—and, of course, do the same for the other forces in the area. That will allow people to come back as individuals to take part in the elections, and no one disagrees about the desirability of moving towards elections.

It is easy to utter the phrase "free and fair elections". I am not sure that there are enough Cambodians left to form a Government and an Opposition through elections. I hope that there will be a coming together. One reason why I do not support the recognition of the Hun Sen regime —although I support maximum contact with it—is that, if one goes to the country and looks at the aid programme and at what people are trying to do, one sees that there are not enough Cambodians in the country to interface with those who want to help. There are not enough Cambodians in the departments or in planning because Pol Pot killed the majority of those who worked there.

The only hope for a genuine aid programme and for a genuine future for Cambodia is a coming together of those who now live outside the country and those within it. I base that comment on my feeling that, until there is an interface and people work together, any aid programme, including the United Nations Development Programme, will be frustrated by a sheer lack of people, however much we want to spend.

We hope that free elections will take place. We do not know whether they will produce something more in line with a Government of reconciliation, who will recognise the tremendous problems with which they have to deal. I should like to feel that that will be the case.

The supreme national council exists and has agreed to the framework agreement. All of us who have the interests of Cambodia at heart should now be working in every way possible to enable the council to function and to get over

the long-held and understandable bitterness in an effort to begin to initiate the United Nations plan. The plan has been worked over patiently since the meeting in Paris a year ago last August in all the capitals of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The plan now has the good will of those members and of the whole of the United Nations machine. The plan is now mandatory for the United Nations and includes a mandatory provision for the necessary finance.

When one talks to some senior Foreign Office people, one realises that they are concerned that the cost will be enormous; there is no provision yet in the Foreign Office budget to implement the plan which, along with other members of the United Nations, we are mandatorily obliged to support.

The plan is the best way to defeat the Khmer Rouge. I accept that either side could be be planning a new offensive to try to take political or military advantage, but I do not believe that any other solution is possible. The United Nations resolution calls on both sides to exercise maximum restraint in the intervening period before the United Nations action can be taken.

I am convinced that, without a ceasefire—without an end to the conflict—all our good intentions and attempts at assistance will be meaningless and useless. We should all be devoting our lives to considering how we can bring about a ceasefire, and I believe that our only hope of doing that is through the painfully negotiated United Nations plan. I hope and pray that the conference can be reconvened in Paris before Christmas and that all parties can then look forward to finding a solution, rather than harking back to all the tragic events that have occurred.

What of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South about military training? I have no knowledge of the matter, although I have read the repeated denials. I give a great deal of credence to the views of the then ambassador to Thailand who, of all people, should have known about it if the hon. Gentlemen's allegations are true. I have served on the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs since 1982 and, my experience of British foreign policy is that a management-by-objective system is operated. The Foreign Office identifies an objective and all our policies are then designed to achieve that objective.

Given our relationship with the Association of South-East Asian Nations and our desire to see the end of the conflict and to restore relations with Vietnam, I cannot see how training Communists—or training anyone else, for that matter—in a civil war can be a part of our policy. That would be a complete departure from sensible thinking about how to achieve the objectives that the Foreign Office has identified.

I do not want to go down the highways and by-ways of the various weeklies and the various leaks. I want an end to the conflict. I want the Cambodians to be able to look forward to the future—something that has been denied them for too long.

I come now to the incident in Phnom Penh and the two gentlemen to whom the hon. Member for Sunderland, South referred. I do not know the background. I do not share the view of the hon. Member for Cynon Valley that there was some sinister implication. I know that the matter is now the subject of civil action and that real concern exists about the allegations and their possible impact on the security of the two gentlemen. I remember speaking to them at length at the various receptions and at Angkor Wat and the other places to which we were taken during our visit. I have always taken the view that the more people who can visit Cambodia, from whatever source, the better.

Mr. Cryer: Who pays for them?

Mr. Lester: I do not care who pays for them. The more people who go there and see for themselves, the better. The reason why there has been a change in American policy is that people from the Heritage Foundation, no less, have been to Cambodia, as have senators and congressmen. They have seen what the hon. Member for Cynon Valley and I have seen and they have come back and explained that the Government are running the country, that they are not a Vietnamese puppet Government and that they deserve more respect and more contact than they have had in the past.

Now the American Government have agreed to talk to Hun Sen. I cannot understand the sinister implications of the presence of two very tall men in Phnom Penh, who travelled around with us with our Cambodian guide and then went to Saigon. I cannot understand what their motive is supposed to have been—what they are supposed to have been looking for and what they were supposed to do with what they saw, other than to form the view that the arguments that I have advanced for contact with the regime are the correct ones.

Mr. Mullin: I said nothing about sinister motives. I share the hon. Gentleman's view that the more people who go to Cambodia, the better. Perhaps it would be a good idea for Ministers to go and have a look round. Perhaps Mr. Colvin could make a visit too. If that happened, what we heard from the Dispatch Box might more accurately reflect the situation. I do not know what the men were doing there or under whose auspices they were there. But I do know—and I have given factual evidence to support my claim—that they were not truthful about whom they represented. Whoever is responsible—whether it is the men themselves or any Department for which they happen to be working—I should like to hear what they were doing there and why.

Mr. Lester: I respect what the hon. Gentleman said, but that was not the case made in the Pilger film, which is now subject to a civil action. The case in the Pilger film was sinister and very different from what the hon. Gentleman has described. Perhaps those two men simply have an interest in that part of the world; that might come out in the civil action. From my contacts and from the discussions that I have been involved in, I see no machiavellian plot. I see no secret service or any way in which those two people could be involved in actions in Cambodia and Vietnam which are in any way reprehensible. I am happy to leave the matter to the action to the civil court.

I have tried to be brief, but I am still completely involved in the situation and have contacts in all the different areas where most good can be done. I firmly believe that the best option for the Cambodian people is to use all our influence to get the Supreme National Council to function and begin to see the end of the conflict and the disarmament of both sides. Essential de-mining teams must also be brought in to prevent those dreadful daily tragedies of which we are all aware. We should set fair for 1991 with a real sense of hope for the future of the people of Cambodia.

12 noon

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I am pleased to take part in this debate on Cambodia, although I had hoped that we would have moved on apace since we first discussed this topic after the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) and I visited Cambodia some years ago. As he has said, we visited Cambodia again last year and saw considerable changes. However, the continuing fear of the majority of the population of a possible return of the Khmer Rouge cannot be over-emphasised, as I am sure the hon. Member for Broxtowe would agree. That is the last thing the population of Cambodia want.

Those who say that the Hun Sen Government do not have popular support should consider the fact that they have armed about 90 per cent. of the population with guns. There is a strong local militia throughout the country. If the Hun Sen Government were in any doubt about their popularity, I doubt whether they would have armed such a high percentage of the population when those guns could so easily be turned against the Government.

Anyone who suggests that the Cambodian Government do not have popular support obviously has not visited Cambodia and talked to a cross-section of the population. Instead, they are relying too heavily on newspaper reports that originate in Bangkok. They have not been to Cambodia to find out for themselves.

The Opposition believe that the United Kingdom Government have played a particularly intransigent role on Cambodia. My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) has referred to the foreign Office, whose position, as on so many other issues, seems to follow the United States—a suggestion that the Foreign Office is always embarrassed by and quick to deny. That Foreign Office has barely changed its attitude for some years.

The hon. Member for Broxtowe and I were briefed before our first visit to Cambodia. The briefing was completely out of touch with the reality in that country at the time. When we returned and presented the facts at our debriefing, we hoped that there would be a rapid change in the United Kingdom Government's policy towards Cambodia. Alas, that did not happen.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South referred to the visit of the two Cambodian Ministers to Europe on a trip sponsored by various aid agencies. They met a very encouraging response from some countries, including Holland and Ireland. However, in the United Kingdom, although their visit was a success from the point of view of publicity, the only contact that the Foreign Office deigned to make was to send a couple of officials to an off-the-record briefing at Chatham house.

Someone who has long experience of working in Cambodia with the Cambodian people—an American—wrote a report after her visit to Chatham house when she listened to the two Ministers. She said:

"The questions [at Chatham House] came mostly from a representative of the Foreign Office"—

again, I am afraid I have to refer to Mr. Colvin—

"and from a Thai embassy official [the minister counsellor . . .] Both were quite hostile and rude. They suggested that the Paris conference had failed because the State of Cambodia [Hun Sen's government] would not accept the involvement of the UN."

It is regrettable that other people should have been so conscious of the Foreign Office's hostility in that general meeting.

Opposition Members have continually called for a reversal of British policy towards Cambodia. We have stated quite clearly what our priorities should be—an immediate ceasefire, an end to arms supplies to all factions, and immediate development aid from Britain and the United Nations. I have called for a public inquiry into allegations of British support for the Khmer Rouge and an immediate end to all such assistance, if it exists—we are anxious to establish the facts—from the west. It is to the west's great shame that, 12 years after the Khmer Rouge devastation of Cambodia, the Cambodian situation still remains desperate.

There is no doubt, and it is not an exaggeration, that the Khmer Rouge is still led by Pol Pot. Hon. Members have continually asked why the Prime Minister is rightly anxious to prosecute Saddam Hussein in a Nuremberg-type trial while she never calls for the prosecution of Pol Pot, who is alive and kicking and actively pursuing his old aims within Cambodia. We are all familiar with double standards, but nothing could be quite as glaring as the double standards in this case.

Mr. Cryer: Are there not also double standards in the press, for example? Members of the press frequently berate Members of Parliament for not being present in the House. Will my hon. Friend note that only the *Morning Star* is represented in the Press Gallery? As usual it is keeping a close interest in the subject, while *The Sun*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail* and all the posh papers are busily engaged elsewhere.

Mrs. Clwyd: I thank my hon. Friend for that point. As a former journalist, I am appalled that the Press Gallery should be so empty this morning, when we are discussing a matter which, as several of my hon. Friends have pointed out, is of great interest to the British people. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have said that they have never had such large postbags on any foreign affairs issue as they have had on the issue of Cambodia.

People throughout the country have great interest in what goes on in the House. It will be interesting to read the papers tomorrow morning to see exactly how much of the debate is reported. Certainly the press will have little comprehension of their readers' interests and those of the general population if the debate is not given sufficient space in the papers tomorrow morning. I agree that the *Morning Star* has consistently shown an interest in Cambodia. A few weeks ago I wrote an article for that paper on this subject.

I re-emphasise that the allegations of British military support for the resistance factions, including the Khmer Rouge, are too numerous and too serious to be dismissed lightly. That is why, on 10 October, I asked the Prime Minister for a public inquiry to discover the truth. If it is true, nothing could be more disgraceful than giving the Khmer Rouge training in mine warfare, because between 1975 and 1978 the Khmer Rouge killed at least 1 million Cambodians. It is now reported to have a hit list of at least 2 million Cambodians to be purged if the Khmer Rouge ever gets back into power in that country.

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend may recall that when Mr. Khien Samphan who is one of the leaders of the Khmer Rouge was asked what lessons he would learn from the experience of the past few years, he said that the Khmer Rouge had possibly been too generous to its opponents during its four years in power. If that is one of the lessons

that he would learn from what happened in 1978, presumably he is proposing to draw the appropriate conclusions if the Khmer Rouge ever gets back into power again.

Mrs. Clwyd: I thank my hon. Friend for making that point. We cannot over-emphasise the real danger of the Khmer Rouge returning to power.

There were three articles on Cambodia in *Jane's Defence Weekly* this week. I have already referred to one. The second is entitled "An end to peace talks—a return to war". It states:

"Guerrilla commanders and Western analysts say that war could come to Cambodian cities for the first time in the 12-year-old conflict.

In the wake of major guerrilla gains in the rural areas in the past year, the Khmer Rouge is preparing an offensive to capture the provincial capital of Siem Reap and the temples of Angkor Wat.

Hundreds of villages are already under the control of the Khmer Rouge and scores more under the control of non-communist forces of Prince Norodom Sihanouk in the north."

I am certain that that is a factual account of the true situation in Cambodia at the moment.

The Government have repeatedly denied that there is British Government support for the Khmer Rouge, but to my knowledge they have never specifically refuted the charge that SAS forces have been involved or that former members of the SAS have been to Cambodia on behalf of the Government; nor have they denied giving military support to the other resistance factions which are fighting alongside the Khmer Rouge.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South and the hon. Member for Broxtowe have both talked about the two men who were mentioned in the Pilger programme and elsewhere. I have never made any allegations about them; I have merely asked questions. It is legitimate to ask these questions, and today I am speaking on an issue that diverts from what we want to see happening in Cambodia now and in the future, because it is important to establish the facts. I am not prepared to be gagged by writs which have been issued against Mr. Pilger and myself by people who seek to prevent us from making any further comments on this issue.

Mr. Mullin: Is my hon. Friend aware that yesterday I received a letter from solicitors representing those two gentlemen in which, of course, they were careful to say that they would not wish to interfere in anything that I proposed to say in the course of my parliamentary duties, but which was clearly addressed to anything that I might say about them in today's debate?

Mrs. Clwyd: That does not surprise me. Clearly the tactic is to prevent us from pursuing the point and seeking to establish the truth. I hope that the Minister will be able to answer the question once and for all. He had prior knowledge of some of the questions that would be raised in the debate today. I suspect that, without a public inquiry, we shall never get at the truth of the matter.

The hon. Member for Broxtowe mentioned the two men we met in Cambodia. I want to set the record straight. I have already mentioned that they were on the official guest list when there were no official observers from the United Kingdom witnessing the Vietnamese troop withdrawal. I had a conversation with the two men, as did the hon. Member for Broxtowe. I suspect that he has had more conversations with them subsequently than I have.

They told me that they were there on holiday, but from conversation, it appeared that they were very hostile to Cambodia. Indeed, they knew few of the historical facts about Cambodia. I suggested that they should go over to talk to some of the non-politicians such as people from the aid agencies, who had lived in Cambodia and worked there for many years. I took one of them across to talk with the officials from the aid agency. They spent less than four minutes in discussion with them.

The following day we were taken with a large number of people from other countries to visit the temples of Angkor Wat. As hon. Members will know, Angkor Wat is one of the wonders of the world. Most people who were looking at Angkor Wat were looking at it from that point of view. Those of us who were carrying cameras were pointing them towards Angkor Wat. Those two men were significant by their behaviour. They had the most sophisticated camera equipment of the whole party of 60 or so guests. I noticed that they were pointing their telescopic lenses towards the undergrowth surrounding Angkor Wat rather than towards the temples themselves.

There is nothing sinister in that chain of events.

Mr. Mullin: They were probably botanists.

Mrs. Clwyd: Yes, they were probably botanists. It would be interesting to establish that they were botanists. They may have been bird watchers or geographers. They could have been any one of a whole series of things.

There was an Indian journalist in the party. I did not voice my feelings about the two gentlemen, even though, as I said, their behaviour was significant. The Indian journalist said, "Those two guys over there stand out like sore thumbs. It is quite obvious what those two are up to." Hon. Members will be able to imagine what he was suggesting.

Mr. Cryer: Surely not MI6?

Mrs. Clwyd: He did not mention MI6, but he suggested that they might have been there on some kind of surveillance. They could have been surveying birds or the foliage.

Mr. Cryer: On the day before the John Pilger-David Munro film "Cambodia—The Betrayal" was broadcast, I saw the film. I wrote immediately to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence and to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They all had plenty of time, because my letter was on their desks the day after the broadcast, to explain to me why those people were in the party and who they were and to give me the rest of the background information that I requested. I specifically asked the Ministry of Defence to explain the circumstances in which it had apparently sent representatives there. Yet all we have had is complete silence. It is scandalous and disgraceful that elected Members of Parliament are not given information in response to legitimate questions.

Mrs. Clwyd: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. There have been so many incidents about which we have attempted to establish the truth and have been palmed off —either through questions being blocked at the Table Office or being given half-truths by Ministers. It is interesting that, following the Pilger programme to which my hon. Friend referred, the Foreign Secretary wrote a half-page article in *The Independent*. As far as I know, that is the first time that a Minister has responded to a

[Mrs. Clwyd]

television programme in this way. I suspect that the Foreign Secretary did not write the article but that it was ghosted for him by somebody quite close to the Chamber and to him.

As some of the things that were said in that article deserve a response from those referred to in it, I wrote back to the Foreign Secretary saying that I had read the article with interest and pointing out that it failed to answer several important questions concerning Britain's role in Cambodia. For example, he had said:

"The British Government has never given aid of any sort to the Khmer Rouge, nor will it do so."

I asked whether references to the British Government include former SAS officers who could be pursuing British Government policies in their retirement. In his article he attempted to dismiss my suspicions about the two men whom I met in Cambodia, but unless he is willing to say what they do and why they were in Cambodia, I cannot help but be suspicious.

When I came back from Cambodia, I went along to the Library to try to find out a bit more about the Royal United Services Institute, as I had subsequently discovered that the two men purported to be representing it. The Library made various inquiries on my behalf and I discovered that the RUSI is partly funded by the Ministry of Defence. When I tried to find out whether the two men worked there, the librarian was asked by the RUSI who wanted to know. When the librarian told the RUSI who wanted to know, it replied that the information was classified. If there is nothing to hide, I cannot see why that information could not have been given.

The Foreign Secretary did not deny that the two men whom I met in Cambodia were previously members of the British forces, but said that they were invited by the Institute of International Relations in Hanoi. My hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South has nailed that assertion. We know that an official invitation was secured for them by the Vietnamese embassy after they had applied for visas. Their visa applications did not mention such an invitation, but merely stated that the purpose was an unofficial visit to Indochina to assess the prospects for security and prosperity.

That sounds innocent enough, and perhaps their visit was innocent, but if it was, why was there so much secrecy? Why did they tell me that they were there on holiday? Why did they ask the hon. Member for Broxtowe to assist them to get to the front because they wanted to look at some of the fighting at first hand? No one has mentioned this so far, but I am sure that, were the hon. Member for Broxtowe here, he could confirm it. I am sorry that he is not here. Even if one is an ex-military man, I doubt whether one would spend a holiday in Cambodia, one of the most beautiful countries in the world, watching people kill one another or blowing one another up, unless one is there for another reason.

I again ask the Government to explain why the men were assessing the prospects for security in Cambodia at that time and on whose behalf they were there. I have been told that they are not, and were not at that time, members of the SAS, but what was their occupation? The information given to my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South makes us doubt their previous occupation. Were they in Cambodia collecting information on behalf of the British Government or any publicly funded organisation?

May we please have an answer to those questions today? Whatever the role of those two individuals, broader and more important questions concern British and American training for resistance soldiers, including Khmer Rouge soldiers. There are too many reports from those living, working or reporting in Cambodia and outside for the allegations to be dismissed.

I must remind the House of a statement from a Cambodian Minister earlier this year:

"We're grateful to the British for offering supplies of artificial legs, but it would be much better if first they stopped helping to blow children's legs off".

That is an appalling statement. We must know today whether or not that is true.

It is also important to consider Cambodia's desperate need for aid. Since 1979 it has been isolated by the west and has received no aid or trade to recover from the Khmer Rouge years and the American bombing. While the Khmer Rouge wages an active guerilla war—laying mines, destroying the infrastructure and terrorising villages—the Cambodian Government are running out of money. Soldiers cannot be paid and civil servants are being sacked in their hundreds. There are virtually no medical supplies to treat the victims of the civil war, and no resources to care for more than 150,000 people who have been displaced by the continuing civil war. With aid from the Soviet Union and eastern Europe drying up, the Cambodian Government are spending nearly half their total budget just fighting the Khmer Rouge and other factions.

The Opposition have repeatedly called for bilateral aid from Britain. Contributions to voluntary agencies and multilateral agencies are welcome—I do not denigrate them—but they are hopelessly meagre in the face of Cambodia's needs. The Government still refuse to give bilateral aid, because they refuse to recognise the Hun Sen Government. A Government who can arm 90 per cent. of their peasants with guns clearly have the support of those people and therefore also deserve support from us. Aid to Cambodia should flow immediately.

The Government say that they will wait for a comprehensive political settlement before they establish diplomatic relations and give bilateral aid. However, a comprehensive settlement means including the Khmer Rouge. If we wait for its participation in the peace plan it could leave aid donors and the Cambodian people waiting for months, if not years.

The United Nations General Assembly has now recognised the Supreme National Council as Cambodia's external representative, even though the council barely functions as yet. If the Government really wanted to give aid, they would have seized that opportunity to side-step the legalistic obstacle about diplomatic recognition and started the funds flowing.

The United Nations development programme has $40 million set aside for Cambodia and I believe that another $40 million is in the pipeline, but it is waiting for the go-ahead from politicians. We call for those funds to be released immediately. We have already suggested that a United Nations de-mining and mining awareness programme should be a top priority. Immediate aid would not only save lives now, but change the balance of power against the Khmer Rouge.

While Cambodia remains diplomatically isolated and economically strangled, it is in the interests of the Khmer Rouge to drag out the negotiations and to pursue its guerrilla war against a Government who are desperately short of money. Obviously, a change of policy today would change the balance of power in Cambodia.

One of the most petty restrictions on aid is the refusal to help with the repair of the main water filtration plant in Phnom Penh, which was smashed up by the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot when they invaded the country. The hon. Member for Broxtowe and I visited that water plant. We understand that only 2 per cent. of the population of Cambodia has access to clean water supplies. That means that one in five children under five years old in Cambodia die from water-borne diseases.

The aid agencies are prevented from putting money into restoring the water filtration plant in Phnom Penh because the humanitarian label under which they are allowed to dispose the meagre aid that the Government give them is extremely tight. While "humanitarian" allows them to provide water wells in rural areas, it does not allow them to put money into restoring the water supply for the whole of Cambodia. That is a petty and short-sighted restriction, and I hope that the Government will have second thoughts about it.

A few countries, led by the United States and the Khmer Rouge representation at the United Nations last year, prevented the United Nations from operating in Cambodia. Some Governments, including ours, lacking first-hand information from Phnom Penh because of the non-recognition policy, are unduly optimistic about the United Nations proposals. While we are anxious to be optimistic about them and dearly want to see them implemented—that would achieve a ceasefire and the cessation of arms supplies—I fear that it will be a long time before they are implemented. For that reason, many western Governments are putting off making any change to their aid and other policies towards Cambodia until there is a United Nations presence there. I fear that such an optimistic delusion recently led the Swedish Government to withdraw support from a trust which was operating a de-mining and mine awareness project in Cambodia.

Realistically, a negotiated solution is still far off. Time is on the side of the Khmer Rouge, so long as the West and ASEAN do not come to the aid of the Cambodian people. The Supreme National Council has so far failed to negotiate a comprehensive political settlement and agree what powers should be delegated to the United Nations. Sadly, the joint communiqué did not even mention a ceasefire.

I was in China at the beginning of September and spoke to, among others holding positions of power there, the Foreign Minister. While I was there, the Chinese made a statement which appeared on the front page of *China Today*. It called for a ceasefire and for all countries to stop supplying arms to Cambodia.

There have recently been reports of Chinese tanks being used in the offensive against the Phnom Penh Government. I raised the matter last week with the Chinese ambassador in London, who told me that the tanks were in the pipeline, as it were, from the beginning of January, before there was any discussion of the United Nations peace plan. I hope that China and other countries that have been supporting various factions in Cambodia mean what they say, because it is imperative that a ceasefire becomes operational quickly and all countries are seen to have clean hands on the issue. I am not accusing this country any more than any other of having dirty hands in that respect. No one has clean hands in this matter, and I do not want this country to be indicted more than any other.

We welcome the United Nations intervention in Cambodia. Nothing would be better than a peaceful settlement, but the existing United Nations plan is inadequate. According to it, nothing happens until the Supreme National Council, comprising all the factions, agrees a comprehensive settlement. There will be no ceasefire, no United Nations peace-keeping or administration, and no aid. But with a Khmer Rouge veto on the council, the negotiations, and hence the war, could drag on for months. We all know that those are Khmer Rouge tactics now, as they have been in the past. The British Government, as a permanent member of the Security Council; should insist on a ceasefire and an end to all arms supplies—first, not last.

The Opposition believe that Pol Pot and all his accomplices should be in court, not in government. The Cambodian Government have accepted that some Khmer Rouge participation in the peace plan may be necessary for a peaceful solution. We accept that, but with two provisos. Those responsible for the genocide should still be tried for crimes against humanity, and if the Khmer Rouge continues to obstruct negotiations, the West should isolate and condemn them, not just wait for them to change their minds.

12.37 pm

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) for her assiduousness and dedication, especially to aid matters. She has asked my hon. Friend the Minister for the truth. I hope that when she hears it she will accept it, and not reject it just because it does not fit her Left-wing political mythology.

Among the catalogue of distortions, half truths, innuendoes and party political cracks with which the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) larded his lengthy speech was his total failure to acknowledge that one of the reasons why we are having an unusually long debate this morning on Cambodia was my forbearance —under pressure from the Whips—to make a speech of appropriate length on the Courts and Legal Services Bill, which was the main subject for debate today. That may be one reason why the Press Gallery is empty and why the Chamber has been empty and is emptying even more now —I see the hon. Member for Cynon Valley departing, no doubt for important reasons. So I should be given some credit where credit is due.

I do not want to be too hard on the hon. Member for Sunderland, South, who also seems to have left the Chamber—perhaps he will forgive me if I speak in his absence. I know him to be extremely intelligent, which is why I can only assume that for much of his speech he was talking with his tongue in his cheek. He certainly has no monopoly of concern for the Cambodian people. Everyone wants peace in Cambodia; everyone wants a democratic development in which the Cambodians themselves decide their own Government and future. Everyone wants the rule of law to safeguard human rights and to protect them against Pol Pot, and no one wants this

[Mr. Ivan Lawrence]

tragic part of the world, where millions have died and the revelation of whose killing fields horrified the whole world, to continue its suffering.

It follows that the conspiracy theory on which Opposition Members are always so keen is manifestly absurd and cannot be contemplated by reasonable beings. That theory has developed to the point at which Opposition Members say that the British Government somehow stand out in opposition to the Vietnamese involvement in Cambodia; that the United Nations hardly exists in the matter; that we are nothing more than the puppet and satellite of the United States; and that we the British have been supporting the evil Pol Pot so that he may commit further atrocities. These absurd suggestions have been repeatedly made by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South and his colleagues and repeatedly denied by the Government, and I expect and hope that the Government will deny them again today.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South may be well informed, but it strikes me that he does not have too much wisdom. Some might think that his naivety is positively mind-boggling. One of the main parties to the Cambodian dispute was, is, and is likely to continue to be, the Khmer Rouge. It is numerically and militarily extremely large and it is very important politically. We would not be able to exclude it from the settlement. It cannot be wished away. No one can pretend that it does not exist. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote in an independent article, some of those who are now speaking loudest in condemnation of the Khmer Rouge were those who were speaking loudest in support of it earlier on.

The view of Cambodians and of their leaders, such as Son Sann, Prince Sihanouk and others whom the members of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs have met in the past—it is not only our view—is that it is far better to have the Khmer Rouge within a quadrupartite coalition, in which other parties may be able to exert some control, than to have it excluded and driven to use its military might, numerical strength and political power to destroy the coalition that remains. To ignore that imperative seems to be appallingly naive.

A less important absurdity is to suppose—this is part of a theme that runs through the speeches of Opposition Members—that the United Kingdom controls events in Indochina or somehow can do so. That is preposterous. We have no control over Thailand but we are part of the United Nations, the body which is supported by the leaders of the Opposition parties. I am sure that they would express their support for it if they were here. It is, of course supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House.

The way forward, as my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) so well said, is the United Nations peace settlement proposal. It was agreed at the General Assembly as recently as 15 October. It is not the only show in town, but it is quite a good one provided that everyone gives it support. It is important that everyone supports the transitional arrangements for the administration of Cambodia until an election can be held. It is important that everyone supports the ceasefire proposal and the recommendation that there should be an end to arms supplies. We must support the human rights proposals so as to guard the Cambodian people against more Pol Pot atrocities. We must also support humanitarian aid.

Aid figures have been bandied about by hon. Members on both sides of the House. I did not hear my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe say, so I shall do so, that we have given an additional £15 million to help the refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border. That is in addition to the smaller amounts to which reference has been made.

We must support the formation of a supreme national council that will represent Cambodia at the United Nations in future. There is no other way forward. Instead of having a debate in which there is distortion, half-truth and innuendo, which characterise the speeches of Opposition Members—I do not want to anticipate anything that the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), who is now the only Opposition Member in his place, will be saying, but my description characterises the speech of the hon. Member for Sunderland, South, who initiated this important debate—would not it be better if both Government and Opposition Members made common ground, supported, inspired and perhaps guided to improvement the United Nations, leading to the sort of settlement that we all want, a settlement that will bring peace, security and happiness to those most tragic of all people, the Cambodians, about whom all of us in the House care very much?

12.44 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): The film by John Pilger and David Munro has stimulated a great deal of public interest and, as has been said, there is continuing interest in the tragedy in Cambodia which, over the years, has been publicised by all sections of the media. Films on the subject have been a useful reminder and a bitter exposé of the double standards that are betrayed from time to time by the United States and other western nations.

A number of questions have been asked about the Government's position. As I said in an intervention, I wrote to the Prime Minister who transferred my letter to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. I also wrote to the Ministry of Defence, but it has not yet taken the trouble to reply and clarify the position. Such a reply would have been better than sending round a duplicated letter signed by the Earl of Caithness.

My letter was on the desks of the Ministers concerned the morning after the latest film, "Cambodia—the Betrayal" was shown and it presented them with a first-class opportunity to provide information to a Member of Parliament. Much useful information was provided by the television film. In one instance information was obtained from an American representative of a United States humanitarian institution. It demonstrated that the Khmer Rouge faction has a policy of presenting to western nations what it calls a liberal capitalist face. No doubt that is attractive to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which, over the years, has connived at the disruption of regimes that it regards as inimical to the liberal capitalist face. It supports regimes that present the opposite picture.

The Khmer Rouge faction headed by Pol Pot has supported that philosophy. It was confirmed in the film that, to the best of the film makers' knowledge and certainly from the direct evidence of an American journalist, such a policy was designed to make the Khmer

Rouge seem less menacing. The film also presented the view that people who were shown to be supporting the Phnom Penh Government were being murdered. It also showed that in the areas that the Khmer Rouge have overrun men and women are separated and there are forced marriages according to the pattern that operated in Cambodia prior to the entry of the Vietnamese liberators who freed the people from the Pol Pot horror.

I should like to emphasise, perhaps more than my hon. Friends, the matter of aid for Cambodia. It is a wretchedly poor country with a modest population of 6·5 million and, as has been said, pure water supplies reach only 2 per cent. of the population. The film showed the wretched plight of those people who have been unlucky enough to tread in the wrong place when they were engaged in the innocent but useful and important task of farming or when they were in rice fields in which thousands of mines have been planted.

I have asked some questions about our Government's contribution towards relieving the plight of the Cambodian people and about improving water supplies. As the film made clear and as has been known for many years water-borne diseases still kill children in Cambodia. They are relatively simple diseases such as diarrhoea which could easily be eradicated if the water supply could be improved.

On 22 October my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs,

"for what reason a proposal for the repair of a water filtration plant in Cambodia was turned down."

Cambodia is a poor country. Only 2 per cent. of the population have pure water supplies. It might therefore be thought that, on the basis of common humanity and concern for poor people, the Government would respond. The Minister for Overseas Development replied:

"Oxfam applied in 1988 for co-funding of a water distribution project in Phnom Penh under our joint funding scheme. When we told non-governmental organisations, including Oxfam, that we were prepared to support projects in Cambodia, we indicated that we would prefer to consider smaller-scale development projects with a humanitarian element and not infrastructural projects concerned with restoring or maintaining major public utilities which are more usually the concern of government rather than non-governmental organisations.

This project fell into that second category and was therefore rejected. Since 1988-89 we have committed £565,000 to co-fund 12 projects in Cambodia carried out by non-governmental organisations, including five from Oxfam, and are currently considering five new proposals, including three from Oxfam".—[*Official Report*, 22 October 1990; Vol. 178, c. *23-24*.]

The Government's concern is that the rural population should have pure water supplies, but not, apparently the population of Phnom Penh. The Government must surely be aware that Cambodia, which is a small, agrarian nation, has suffered massive carpet bombing by their allies, the United States, that it has suffered the incursion by Pol Pot and that it is now suffering from a war within its borders. Therefore the task of overhauling city water supplies is large. Facilities are limited.

Mr. Bowis: The hon. Gentleman makes an important point about water supplies and that nation's health. Presumably, this kind of project could come within the orbit of the United Nations agencies, to which our Government and many others contribute. I should have thought that, with a healthy water supply, the provision of rehydration tablets and so on being part of the United Nations health campaigns, that body, rather than any individual Government, would be authorising such a project.

Mr. Cryer: If the United Nations were doing this, I should be delighted, but it is not. That is the problem. A fund of $40 million is earmarked for Cambodia; the only problem is that it has not been released. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman agrees that the Government could have made a gesture through Oxfam, an organisation held in high esteem and without a political axe to grind. This project is ready to go ahead to improve water supplies in a highly populated area, thereby benefiting more people. I should have thought that, in common humanity, the Government would say yes, particularly given a ministerial answer to me. On 22 October, I asked

"the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list for 1988, 1989 and 1990 to the most recent practicable date the development aid given to Cambodia by the United Kingdom Government".—[*Official Report*, 22 October 1990; Vol. 178, c. *22*.]

The Minister said that in 1988-89 we provided £46,656 for rural water supplies. In 1989-90, we provided nothing and we are not committed to providing anything in 1990-91. Elsewhere under the same heading in the answer, we were told that the United Kingdom will provide £7,570 in 1990-91. When I said that that might be the annual cost of the Minister's drinks cabinet, I was exaggerating—it would perhaps be the cost of the drinks cabinets of four or five Ministers. It is a paltry sum. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office may think that there are no adequate schemes suitable for financing, but there is an alternative and it should be adopted. It is disgraceful for the Government to turn down a scheme that could provide near-immediate relief to some people in Cambodia. A massive programme is needed. We are talking about many millions of pounds to provide pure water for the population of Cambodia.

The Government have allocated £7,570 for a pure water supply in the rural region of Cambodia. They are the same Government who, this week, proposed that £34 million should be allocated to ease the unification of West Germany and East Germany. I do not object to the money being used in that way, but I believe that the two cases are very different. West Germany and East Germany both have relatively sophisticated economies and the provision of pure water is not questioned in either country. I criticise the Government's paltry efforts in those terms.

In the written answer, the Government say that the amount committed for primary and secondary schools is nil. Nil is committed to community schools and to the World Council of Churches. The amount committed to preventive health care services in Kampot is £192,250. Nil is committed to primary health care under the first heading. Under the secondary heading, £61,433 is committed. Nil is committed to the Takeo canal irrigation. As I have mentioned, £7,570 is committed to rural water supply. The sum of £43,604 is committed to the animal vaccines project and the Ministry of Agriculture, for some reason, gets the magnificent sum of £54. Agricultural development gets nil. The engineering assistance programme will receive £35,985, which contributes to the grand total of £340,896. That is relatively paltry in view of the needs of the population, which is currently 6·5 million.

[Mr. Cryer]

However, if action is not taken on the political front to give support to the Phnom Penh regime, the population will certainly diminish.

The sums for medical aid are relatively—and significantly—paltry, bearing in mind that it has been reliably reported in the John Pilger programme and in the press that there are 80 new amputees a day. Let us be conservative and say that there are about 500 new amputees a week. If we, with our national health service, had to cope with a sudden influx of 500 new amputees a week, we should be hard pressed. There is a need for massive sums of aid which the Government are not prepared to give. It is true that in 1990-91, there is a commitment of £1 million—which is very welcome—through the United Nations Children's Fund, through the Food and Agriculture Organisation, through the World Health Organisation and through the World Food Programme. However, it is still not enough to make Cambodia a well-fed, healthy and confident nation.

We have talked about the political solution. I intervened in the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) to say that I was afraid that programmes such as, "Cambodia—The Betrayal" are in the minds of those who tabled the amendment in the House of Lords to ensure that balance is a legal obligation and subject to challenge in the courts. That would mean producers looking over their shoulders the whole time, whether they were producing programmes for radio or television. No such restriction would apply to the press, because the Government are certain of the press. The press is mainly owned by friends of the Conservative party so it can be relied on.

The problem about which I am concerned was amply demonstrated in the debate yesterday. The hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) seriously suggested that "Start the Week" was a subversive programme which did not put forward the doctrine of the enterprise culture with sufficient vehemence and zeal to match his standards. I am happy to say that he was laughed at, even by a number of Conservative Members. He supported the amendment because he is on the far right of the Conservative party, which wants comment on the position in Cambodia to be stamped on by the threat of legal action whenever pressure is brought to bear by the Government and their acolytes.

Suppose that the Government get wind of the fact that a fourth Central Television programme is to be presented by John Pilger and produced by David Munro. A couple of people could go off to the courts to obtain an injunction to prevent the programme from being shown, supposedly in the interests of ensuring that Central exercised due impartiality—now no longer merely the subject of a guideline but the subject of an obligation. That spectre raises its head. The Government know that, with a few honourable exceptions, the British judiciary would warmly welcome such a request, and that an injunction would be granted with a speed that would stun those who have sustained industrial injuries and who are waiting for a court hearing. The broadcasts to which we have referred with much praise are in the minds of those who have introduced the legislation. The two are not disconnected.

In the programmes, serious questions were raised about the malevolent attitude of the State Department of the United States towards Cambodia—the result of the Americans' continuing hatred of Vietnam and the fact that the liberators of Cambodia following Pol Pot's holocaust happened to be on the wrong side of the political tracks. In that, the Americans have been aided by the Chinese Government—of whom the British Government were rightly critical following the Tiananmen square massacre. The traditional hostility between Vietnam and China is being exacerbated because the United States and China have a common purpose—although perhaps not a direct purpose: they are isolating Cambodia because of the assistance that it received from Vietnam, which it recognised and does not repudiate.

I welcome the United Nations intervention but I seek a solution that excludes the Khmer Rouge. The hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) advanced the extraordinary argument that, because the Khmer Rouge has a lot of arms and a lot of supporters—although he did not specify how many—they must be included.

That argument does not find favour on the Conservative Benches when it is applied to the IRA. The Provisional IRA has some support in Northern Ireland; there is no question about it. If it did not, its campaign could not be sustained. The Provisional IRA keeps blowing people up—innocent people, very often—although not on anything like the same scale as Pol Pot. The principle is the same.

What do the Government say about the Provisional IRA? Only this week, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said at the Dispatch Box that the Government were having nothing to do with these people and that their outrages would not divert us one millimetre from our purpose of bringing peace to Northern Ireland and combating terrorism. If that argument is good enough for the Provisional IRA—whose activities are on a minute scale compared with those of Pol Pot—why is it not good enough for the Khmer Rouge?

The hon. and learned Member for Burton argues that, because the Khmer Rouge are there, they must be embraced and padded round with a few liberal capitalists to prevent them from bringing about another holocaust. The argument seems to be that we should somehow shroud the Khmer Rouge round to stop them massacring people. Humanity's view is usually that those who kill people on a massive scale are beyond the pale and outside accepted standards of conduct and that we must therefore isolate them rather than embrace them.

The hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) said that it was a pity—what an unhappy chance—that the Khmer Rouge was given a seat in the United Nations. He argued that it was just unfortunate that in the embrace of the Pol Pot regime, it became part of the coalition which had United Nations representation, and that it had nothing to do with the fact that it was a Pol Pot faction. Imagine what would happen if the Provisional IRA were invited to take part in a scheme and was presented with a seat at the United Nations. Would we say that we supported the IRA because it had been given a seat in the United Nations? That sort of logic does not stand scrutiny.

The Opposition believe that we must have nothing to do with Pol Pot. We must isolate and separate the Pol Pot faction. It must not be involved in the negotiations. If the Pol Pot faction is well armed, as the hon. and learned Member for Burton claimed, with justification, how are we to disarm it? Are we going to disarm the Phnom Penh Government and the population of Cambodia which fears for its life in the face of the Pol Pot terror 40 miles from

the capital and leave Pol Pot alone? Or are we going to disarm Pol Pot first? What is to be the procedure? Once arms have been given to people, it is very difficult to take them away, as we found in Zimbabwe before the Smith spectre was finally laid to rest.

I support the United Nations. The Government are now invoking United Nations support, but I wish that they were a little less selective with regard to the United Nations. For example, I wish that the Government would support the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty and stop building Trident nuclear weapons because that is a United Nations obligation. I support that treaty and I support United Nations intervention in Cambodia on a fair and square basis and I support the United Nations in other areas.

Mr. Mullin: A couple of years ago I had quite a long conversation with the Foreign Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Co Thach about United Nations solutions for Cambodia. He told me that the Vietnamese were a little sceptical about them because over the past 40 years four of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council had invaded Vietnam.

Mr. Cryer: My hon. Friend has made a valid point and he is right to be sceptical. People are looking to a peace plan simply to gain support for their hope that peace will come to Cambodia and that the Pol Pot terror will not be inflicted on that poverty-stricken country once more.

We need a commitment from the Government to provide more aid to that poverty-stricken, illness-ridden country. We also want a commitment from the Government to isolate Pol Pot completely. It would also not be a bad idea for a Government commitment to arraign Pol Pot before an international court of justice. The Government are talking about doing that with Saddam Hussein, and his infringements of civil liberties, although manifest and to be condemned, are not on the scale of Pol Pot's. A commitment to try Pol Pot would be extremely important. With those commitments, we could begin to accept the integrity of the Government's attitude.

Mr. Harry Barnes: This is a very important debate and the commitments requested by my hon. Friend must be taken seriously by the Government. When the Minister replies, will he tell us whether the situation is likely to shift or will we simply plough on with the situation that existed before and with expressions of sympathy and concern while there is back-door assistance to the Pol Pot regime? People outside this place will not understand if we do not today get the commitments that my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) has requested.

Mr. Cryer: I share my hon. Friend's view.

I have received a letter from Mr. Jeremy Barlow, the Oxfam area campaign organiser for Yorkshire and Humberside. I am not aware of his political views so I am not quoting someone who I know is sympathetic to the Labour side, the Conservative side or any other side. He said:

"While Oxfam has welcomed the UN peace plan as offering some prospects of peace in the country, we are deeply concerned that there is still no ceasefire in the country. While the political negotiations continue, ordinary people continue to suffer and more innocent civilians are maimed by mines. Furthermore, while the fighting continues there is little prospect of increased international aid being forthcoming. We understand that the United Nations development project has around $40 million set aside for projects in Cambodia. It is a tragedy that this money cannot be released given the urgent needs inside Cambodia which Oxfam sees in its day-to-day work inside that country. The continuing conflict in the country and the lack of large-scale Government and UN aid is severely hampering the efforts of the Cambodian people to recover."

That is from an agency which has been doing more than most to help the Cambodian people to recover.

We do not visit all the faults on the Minister. We say that it is not his individual fault, he may be a decent individual, and so on. However, he represents the collective responsibility of the Government today. Everything that he says has been vetted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He dare not step out of line. What he says represents Government policy. If he disagrees with it because he feels that the Government are supportive of a bloodthirsty terrorist on a scale not seen on the face of the earth since Adolf Hitler, if he thinks that the back-door assistance to Pol Pot is wrong, immoral and outrageous, if he thinks that overseas development aid to the Cambodian Government is a tiny fraction of the amount of money spent on the privatisation of electricity, for example, lining the pockets of City gents and organisations that are doling out money to the Conservative party and if thinks that the whole matter is immoral, he has a course open to him. He can either stay within Government policy and regurgitate the platitudes of concern or he can resign. The Minister is not just an innocent pawn; he represents collective responsibility, and we shall judge him on that.

1.13 pm

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) referred to a balance in broadcasting. I hope that this broadcast debate will be shown to have that balance. I agree with many of the points that were made by the hon. Members for Bradford, South and for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin). However, I depart from the hon. Member for Bradford, South when he seeks to put the entire blame for the history of Cambodia on the shoulders of the Government and suggests that all the solutions to the future of that unhappy nation also rest within the House of Commons and within Government Departments linked to it.

My interest in Cambodia began with some keys that my children were collecting to take into the local "Blue Peter" collection point. That excellent programme stimulated them into doing something about raising money for the children of Cambodia. My interest has been stimulated by subsequent programmes, such as John Pilger's television documentaries and films such as "The Killing Fields" which have dramatised the scene for us. I say that in a good sense and in a less good sense. Documentaries and films have brought the matter to light for us, but they have occasionally over-dramatised the reality.

I pay tribute to the work of Oxfam and the way in which it has kept us informed. I pay tribute also to a young constituent, a photographer, who has twice been to Cambodia and brought me pictures of the terrible devastation of the people and to the land.

I was saddened by the latest of the Pilger films. I had hoped that it would continue the good elements of the Pilger documentaries, but it trod on too many matters of controversy and exaggeration for its own good. When a case is exaggerated and when there is too much political sniping, the message is undermined—and the message is: what can the world community do to look after those people?

[Mr. John Bowis]

I hope that this debate will return to the issue of the Cambodian people themselves and to the way in which we should seek to protect the future of those people who remain. Through the swirling mists of Indochinese history —from some great historical and cultural moments in civilisation—Cambodia has come through the murky period of the Vietnam war to the horrors of the Pol Pot regime. That is where we must begin.

We are talking about a regime that sought to weed out systematically by killing anybody in the country whom the regime and Pol Pot felt was capable of acting or thinking for him or herself. Those are the people we mourn. They are not here to pick up the pieces in the future Cambodia, which we hope will be free. Sadly, those are the people to whom the hon. Member for Sunderland, South referred when he talked about people being photographed before their deaths. I am sure that he has seen—I have seen this only in photographs—the memorials where row upon row of skulls mark the thousands of people who were murdered in that totalitarian barbarity.

I find it irrelevant when people talk about the Vietnamese coming in terms of either liberation or aggression. I believe that the Vietnamese stopped the total annihilation of the Cambodian people. We should acknowledge and accept that. Yes, it may have been illegal and have gone against all the tenets of United Nations rules and normal practice in international affairs, and, yes, there are dangers that it could be taken as an example to justify other invasions or other annexations of which we are all too aware at the moment, but I do not believe that at that moment anybody else could or would—both those words are important—have acted to save the Cambodian people as did the Vietnamese.

At the moment, in part of Cambodia, under the governance of Hun Sen and the Phnom Penh Government or regime—whatever one likes to call it—there is a partial return to some sort of normality. It is not normality as we know it in the western world or as we see it increasingly in many parts of the developing world, but it is a giant step for mankind when we remember the pictures of the dead, depopulated and motionless cities at the end of Pol Pot's rule. Gradually, bicycles are returning to the streets and trade is beginning again. We have a duty in this House, in this country, in the United Nations and through all the agencies at our disposal to find ways of assisting that normality to spread throughout the rest of the country.

United Kingdom policy has been criticised in this debate. It is not even-handed to do so, because one can also be critical of the past policies of the United Nations. It is not the fault of east or west, of China or America, but of all the countries that have supported the United Nations resolutions in the belief that that was the right way to obtain Vietnam's removal and some return to independence for Cambodia. It is not the fault of east or west, and it is certainly not the fault of the western alliance. The state of affairs in Cambodia has been supported by all the non-aligned countries as much as by the aligned countries, by the developing as well as the developed, in their votes at the United Nations. Not enough tribute——

Mr. Mullin: The hon. Gentleman's comments contain an element of truth, but many of the developing and smaller countries have been leaned on extremely hard by China and America, which are basically the principal villains of this terrible state of affairs.

Mr. Bowis: There is an element of that. All countries, including in particular the ASEAN countries, have contributed to that policy. Not enough credit has been given to the responsiveness off the British Government in recent months, and in the past year or two in particular, to the words and actions of both sides of the House as much as anything.

The British Government have taken a lead in beginning to change that policy. We have considered the United Nations seat. That is not the most important aspect of this whole area of policy, but it is symbolic. The British Government have moved ahead of the pack and of their allies by saying that, if the matter came up again, the British Government would not vote for its continuation. As it happened, the so-called alliance withdrew and resigned its seats, so the question did not arise. However, some credit is due to the British Government for their influence on America and its allies in beginning to move towards the peace settlement that we hope is possible, the bilateral talks and so on.

The policy on Vietnamese withdrawal has largely been implemented. I hope that it is right. It will have been right only if it leads to a position in which a true and lasting settlement can be agreed with confidence. There are dangers ahead without that support for the present regime, but nevertheless that is one part of United Nations policy which has been accepted in most parts of the world, and, indeed, by Vietnam.

We must now turn to the future. Anyone who goes to Cambodia and comes back and reports to people such as myself brings back a message of despair. It is despair at the military threat that faces the people in what is at least a partly free Cambodia, as well as despair at the financial threat that faces it in the form of poverty, disease, hunger and lack of world support. Collectively, the world community, not just Britain, has a role to play in dealing with both of those threats.

Aid has been mentioned and debated across the Chamber today. Some £1·25 million this year has been sent to United Nations agencies. That is why I raised with the hon. Member for Sunderland, South the possibility that some of it could be used for water treatment, health and so on. Then £565,000 of British money has been sent this year to United Kingdom charitable organisations. Another £100,000 has been sent to displaced people within Cambodia. That is money. It is not the large sums that one could give to a secure Government which could control the spending of the money and in which one could have total confidence, but it is a start. I am the first to urge my Government to provide aid, encouragement and eventually investment for Cambodia, and I shall continue to do so.

We should acknowledge that the money has been sent not only to refugees on the Thai border but to areas within the influence of the Phnom Penh Government. That is good. However, the military threat is probably the most urgent. Whatever accords are reached following the Jakarta agreement, I hope that we shall be sensible and positive but also wary.

I have not been to Cambodia, but I was in Namibia in the run-up to that country's independence. I saw the excellent work that the United Nations did in

peace-keeping and the registration of electors in the most difficult of circumstances and subsequently in the free and fair elections that were held. But in that circumstance, the United Nations was aided by the inestimable value of genuine acceptance by the South West Africa People's Organisation—democrats—the rule of law and the need to abide by the democratic decisions of the people.

I am not yet convinced, and we have no grounds to be convinced, that that is true of the Khmer Rouge. When, and only when, those principles are convincingly upheld by the Khmer Rouge and its leaders—its leaders must not include Pol Pot—we can have a little more confidence that we are moving towards a solution which can bring some sort of peace and stability.

I began by speaking of the keys that my children collect. I am asking my Government to go on looking for keys to the solutions for the problems of this unhappy country. I do not seek the key to a prosperous future, or the key to a secure future, or the key to a peaceful future. I seek a key to any future at all, because at the moment Cambodia has no future and the world owes it, literally, a living.

1.25 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) for providing the House with a fresh opportunity to discuss progress by the international community towards a peaceful settlement of the continuing civil war in Cambodia and an end to the suffering and misery of a peoploe who have known conflict for so long. It is the hon. Member's good fortune that we should have had an opportunity today for a full debate. I know that, for professional and personal reasons, he has a long-standing interest in, and a deep knowledge of, Cambodia.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence), who spoke earlier, has asked me to say that he is unable to be here for the winding-up speech.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South suggested that British policy was determined by American thinking. However, I am neither a covert nor an overt member of the CIA. I am not employed by the State Department, and I have no contact with it save in my ministerial capacity. I hope that he will accept that I am to some extent qualified to answer this debate as a Minister.

I recognise that this subject is of great concern to the hon. Member and others on both sides of the House, and I shall be commenting later on the remarks of which he gave me notice. However, I hope that he will forgive me, and understand why, if first I deal with some wider political developments.

When the House last debated this issue, my hon. Friend the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State forecast:

"We may be approaching a decisive stage for Cambodia's future."—[*Official Report*, 9 July 1990; Vol. 176, c. 1530.]

He was right, for I would now say that we have reached a crucial moment in our efforts to restore peace and stability to this unhappy country.

Recent developments have demonstrated the commitment of the world community to ending the fighting in Cambodia. Those most closely involved in the conflict have shown their willingness to work, within the terms of an internationally agreed framework, to achieve peace. After too many years of suffering and desperation, the Cambodian people have some hope for the future. This is the right time to consider the progress that has been made so far and the way ahead.

Like many of our friends and partners, we have consistently argued that the only way to bring lasting peace to Cambodia and an end to the terrible plight of its people is through a comprehensive political settlement. The Cambodian people must be allowed, ultimately, to decide their own future, but there cannot be an end to conflict if the settlement excludes any of the main parties to this dreadful dispute. To do that would only prolong the war and condemn the Cambodian people to indefinite misery. What is needed are arrangements that will ensure a peaceful and neutral political environment under impartial United Nations supervision in the run-up to free and fair elections.

During the course of the year, as is well known, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council worked out the elements of a political settlement involving the central role of the United Nations. In New York on 27 and 28 August, the five reached an agreement on a framework for peace in Cambodia. The document is extremely important, the details of which are worth spelling out.

The framework gives some hope for the future and provides safeguards against the return of the terrible horrors of Cambodia's past. It outlines the transitional arrangements for the administration of Cambodia until elections can be held. It covers military arrangements, including a monitored ceasefire and an end to external arms supplies. It covers arrangements for free and fair elections under United Nations auspices, including comprehensive human rights provisions to guard against any return to the atrocities of the Pol Pot years. It also includes international guarantees. The Government believe that that is the way forward.

Mr. Mullin: One has to have dropped off a Christmas tree from a great height to believe that the Khmer Rouge, given its history and its attitude towards other people—never mind free elections—could possibly accept the outcome of any free elections. It is not worth being included in those elections. Its participation is not credible, it is wild fantasy.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I understand the hon. Gentleman's scepticism, but we must press in that direction. When the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations and all the parties in that tragic country—the wicked as well as others—have accepted the framework as a way forward, we cannot fail to press in that direction. That is the basis of the Government's policy. I put it forward as the basis of an honourable policy designed to try to bring peace to that country even if the hon. Gentleman seeks to disagree that it will succeed in that objective.

The hon. Gentleman and others have argued that the framework does not represent a realistic policy and that Cambodia should, in effect, be handed over to the non-elected rule of the existing regime.

Mr. Mullin: I have not told the Minister that.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Others have. Could such proposals attract the support of the people in the Cambodian parties? Without co-operation, a settlement in Cambodia is not possible.

[Mr. Lennox-Boyd]

At a meeting in Jakarta on 9 and 10 September, all four Cambodian parties formally accepted the five permanent members' framework in its entirety. That is what was stated. They also agreed to form a supreme national council that will represent Cambodia in international forums and, in the context of a comprehensive political settlement, embody Cambodian sovereignty.

The creation of the supreme national council has already had one significant and welcome effect. When the 45th session of the United Nations General Assembly opened on 18 September, the existing occupants of Cambodia's United Nations seat—the Resistance Coalition National Government of Cambodia—announced that they would leave it unattended. We and many others were most deeply pleased to see the end of the previous totally unsatisfactory arrangement. Had it been necessary, we would not have shrunk from action against the status quo, but the situation was resolved.

Mr. Mullin: We did shrink for a decade. We supported the seating of one of the Khmer Rouge leaders as the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The important point, as I have emphasised, is the way forward now, and the way forward is eased by that development.

Since those events, the entire international community has given its backing to the peace process that is now under way. On 20 September, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 680, which confirmed strong support for the current efforts and pressed the Cambodian parties to work together.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a similar resolution unopposed on 15 October. That was a remarkable development, for it was the first time for 11 years that a Cambodian resolution commanded universal support. Both resolutions are forward-looking. They do not ignore the atrocities of the Pol Pot years. They certainly do not condone them.

The whole purpose of the present initiative is to prevent a return to those horrors by endorsing the five's framework. Both resolutions signal world support for the comprehensive human rights provisions, and we believe that they deserve the full support of the House. That is the only way for further significant progress.

Senior officials of the permanent five held the latest in their series of meetings on Cambodia on 15 and 16 October. They took the opportunity to discuss the way forward and all agreed on the importance of maintaining the momentum of current activity. We hope that informal meetings of interested countries will take place in the coming weeks and that that will lead to a meeting of the co-ordinating committee at the Paris conference in November, at which the framework produced by the five will be turned into a detailed settlement plan. That could, and we hope it will, lead to a plenary session of the conference at ministerial level before the end of this year.

That is an ambitious proposal and timetable. It will require the commitment and co-operation of all concerned if it is to be met. No one can underestimate the difficulties that lie ahead, such as the high degree of mistrust among the Cambodian parties. That is a matter of concern, because, since its formation in Jakarta on 10 September, the supreme national council has failed to reach agreement on the chairmanship arrangements.

As a result, that council has been unable to appoint its representative to occupy Cambodia's seat at the United Nations and cannot function properly in the detailed negotiations that are now necessary for a settlement. At their recent meeting, the permanent five urged the Cambodians to settle their differences so that the supreme national council could play its proper role in the peace process.

The continuing fighting in Cambodia is also an obstacle to further progress. Hon. Members and others have criticised the British Government, the five and the international community for failing to call for an immediate end to hostilities in Cambodia and an end to all outside arms supplies.

Everyone recognises that, without a peaceful situation in Cambodia, current efforts to achieve a settlement will not be successful. That is why we have repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict to stop fighting and to co-operate to the full in working out the details of a comprehensive political settlement. That is why the permanent five, the United Nations Security Council and the entire United Nations General Assembly have called on those parties to exercise maximum self-restraint in the interests of achieving a settlement.

Mr. Mullin: That is what we said in public, but in private we have armed the factions that we support, one of which happens to be the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I said that I was coming to the hon. Gentleman's comments on that matter. I hope that he will bear with me and allow me to reach them in due course.

A formal ceasefire, which will require monitoring and an end to arms supplies to the parties, must be part of the comprehensive settlement. There will be no agreement in isolation in advance of a settlement.

Mr. Cryer: The Minister is right to express concern about international arms supplies to Cambodia. Have the Government, while waiting for an international settlement to be reached, made any representations to other western Governments about preventing arms supplies reaching Cambodia? I understand that we are giving Germany £34 million. Could not we tell the German Government that it would be helpful not to allow arms supplies to reach Cambodia, and to ensure that Thailand does not act as a transit camp for arms supplies?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I hope to be able to comment on the hon. Gentleman's intervention in a few minutes' time.

The British Government are ready, with other members of the permanent five, to talk to the supreme national council. In doing so, we shall not be talking to representatives of the four Cambodian parties. In accordance with the framework of the permanent five, the council is composed

"of representative individuals with authority among the Cambodian people and reflecting all shades of opinion among them."

The members of the supreme national council are also, in terms of the framework, acceptable to one another. Our attitude to the two rival Cambodian Governments, to use the words of the framework, will remain the same. In recognising Cambodia as a state, we shall not have dealings with the regime in Phnom Penh or the National

Government of Cambodia. In the meantime, we shall continue to maintain informal contact with the two non-Communist partners in the resistance coalition.

In response to the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester), I say that we have no objections to talking to representatives in Phnom Penh to urge them to co-operate in restoring peace to Cambodia on the basis of the framework of the permanent five.

Hon. Members will note from what I have just said that I have most clearly refrained from talking of any contact with the Khmer Rouge. As they will have guessed, that is no omission. I make it clear once again—my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have done this repeatedly in the past—that we abhor the Khmer Rouge and all for which it stands. On 13 November 1989, speaking from the Opposition Front Bench, the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) referred to Pol Pot as the worst example of his kind since Hitler. I am more than happy to associate myself with those words. Our aim over many years has been to prevent a return to the atrocities of the Pol Pot years.

Mr. Mullin: Perhaps I might steer the Minister away from his brief for a moment. How does he think that the Khmer Rouge has survived in Thailand with all the facilities that I described in my speech if no one was supporting it? He may argue that the villain is China, but China has no contiguous border with Cambodia. How has it happened? The Khmer Rouge was in a hell of a mess in 1980 and now it is stronger than it has ever been. Does the Minister know of any time when we have made any protest, public or private, to the Government of Thailand for their harbouring of the Khmer Rouge? Can he draw my attention, and the attention of the House generally, to any occasion when we have condemned Thailand for harbouring those who he says are terrible and wicked?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The hon. Gentleman knows that the Chinese have been supplying the Khmer Rouge for many years. I am not in a position to say how it comes to be in this position of strength, although I shall deal with my responsibility for British policy in due course.

I am informed that we have regular contacts with all the countries most interested in the situation in Cambodia, including China, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam—the principal backer of the four Cambodian parties—and that we confer with our European Community colleagues and take every opportunity to urge an end to all outside supplies. The hon. Member for Sunderland, South looks doubtful; if he wants to write to Lord Caithness or me on this specific point, I believe that I can obtain a detailed answer.

Mr. Mullin: I have had a lot of experience of writing to Lord Caithness and his predecessors and to the Minister's many predecessors, none of whom ever seems to hold his brief for more than about six months.

Again, I ask the Minister: can he draw our attention to any time when we have publicly criticised those who are openly harbouring Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge? Can he draw my attention to any occasion when we have criticised China—although it is not all China's fault? During the past decade, while all this has been going on under our noses and people have been drawing it to the attention of the Minister and his colleagues, when have we ever had anything public to say about it? I do not think that the Minister can name any such occasion.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I do not have specific responsibility for Cambodia, but I think it would be appropriate if I wrote a letter to the hon. Gentleman about that, which I undertake to do——

Mr. Cryer: The Minister will get a lot of letters.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Yes, indeed.

Mr. Harry Barnes: The Minister said that he was going to come on to the issues that were the subject of Government responsibility. That means that he has only covered the background so far, but part of that background has concerned the role of the Security Council, with which we are connected. Certainly we have to negotiate on it and we cannot dominate it, but we do contribute to its activities, and we are also connected with what has been happening in Thailand, China and the other countries that have been discussed—and that is where our sins of omission come in.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I can only tell the hon. Gentleman that my analysis of the divide between his views and those of the Government is as follows: given that the United Nations Security Council—the permanent five—the General Assembly and all the other parties in the conflict, accept the proposal under the framework of the permanent five, the Government believe that we should push in that direction. The hon. Gentleman, on the other hand, is making comments which would only tend to undermine that framework, which has been accepted by all the relevant parties. I accept the integrity of any remarks that he may like to make about the atrocities of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, but we feel that if there is to be an end to the fighting and a prospect of peace for the unhappy people who have suffered so much, we must push in the direction that I have just described.

Our concern is to prevent a return to the atrocities of the past. We shall continue to work hard to ensure that those horrors can never be repeated. If a way could be found to bring Pol Pot and his cronies to justice for their crimes against the Cambodian people, we would certainly be the last to object. However, hon. Members should not live in a dream world. They must remember that there are formidable legal and practical problems, which I shall describe.

Under the auspices of the United Nations, a tribunal could be established. However, it would require the agreement of a majority of United Nations members, and a legitimate Government in Cambodia would have to accept its jurisdiction before it could hear cases relating to Cambodia under the genocide convention. Alternatively, Pol Pot and others could be brought to trial under the genocide convention, but the only courts with jurisdiction under that convention would be Cambodian courts. We have been accused of giving nothing more than pious support to the proposition to bring Pol Pot to justice, but however desirable the objective, we have to be realistic about the likelihood of its implementation.

I shall now reply to the specific matters raised by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South. Perhaps he would refrain from intervening until I have finished each passage in my speech. At that point, I shall accept his interventions should he wish to make any. As has been said, it is

[Mr. Lennox-Boyd]

ridiculous for hon. Members and others to suggest that we support the Khmer Rouge. There is no foundation whatever to those allegations. We do not sustain terrorism or terrorists, and we have never given and will never give support of any kind to the Khmer Rouge.

I was asked about the two people that my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe and the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) met in Phnom Penh in September 1989. I shall give a few simple facts. Those two men did not visit Indochina at our behest or as representatives of the Government. They went privately, at the invitation of the Institute for International Relations in Hanoi. The Government have already said that. Through the institute, they were introduced to the Phnom Penh authorities. Those authorities then invited them to witness the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia before travelling to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi to fulfil their engagements for the institute. It must be up to the two men themselves, as private individuals, to respond if they so wish. As hon. Members are aware, they have taken out writs for libel. I am more than happy now to give way to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South.

Mr. Mullin: It is nonsense to say that they were invited by the Hanoi Institute for International Relations. That is manifestly not true. I have here letters from which it is clear that they made contact themselves, and I would be happy to make those letters public. They are not suing me for libel because I am entirely confident about what I have said and would be happy to repeat it outside this place. I am not bothered about those two people and we must not allow ourselves to become distracted by them.

I was disappointed by the brevity—about two or three sentences—of the Minister's reply in relation to military training. If that is all that he has to say on the subject, he has repeated, as I predicted he would, the line about how the Government do not in any way support the Khmer Rouge. The point on which I seek the Minister's clarification is: we have been training Khmer terrorists, have we not? We have been training persons of Cambodian nationality to plant mines, blow up bridges and do all sorts of unpleasant things in Cambodia and British service men have been there doing that, have they not? That is the point that I want the Minister to address. Will he now do so?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The Government never sustain, succour or support terrorists and terrorism. As to questions which the hon. Gentleman raised about the special forces or their activities, he will have heard before that it is the practice of all Governments—previous Governments over the years—to make no comment on those matters. The words that I have used are perhaps hallowed by time, but they are the words that I shall stand by.

However, I shall add just one further point of a personal nature. Whether the hon. Gentleman accepts the Government's explanations, which I have happily repeated today, is, of course, a matter for him. As I said, I respect his integrity and his determination. But he must at least accept this from me: I have obviously prepared this speech and commented on briefings given to me, and I have to say that I am personally completely satisfied that the explanations that I have been given are comprehensive and accurate.

Mr. Mullin: I am grateful to the Minister, but I want him to share with the House the explanations that he has been given. One cannot hope to have one's general denials believed if one is unwilling to address these specific points. I shall repeat them. There have been British service men, have there not, based on the Thai-Cambodian border training Khmer terrorists? That has used British taxpayers' money. British service men have been doing a task which I understand many of them find distasteful, and we are all anxious that that task should be stopped.

I understand that the unofficial official position, to which I referred in my speech, is that, shortly before the House debated this issue on 13 November, all those activities were privatised—they were put out to tender to some sort of phoney organisation containing a number of military people who were recently associated with Her Majesty's forces. The operation was supervised by Mr. Dennis Gallwey, based in the British embassy in Bangkok until October last year. I invite the Minister to deny that, to say that I am making it all up and that it is all fantasy. If he cannot do that, he must expect people to be a mite sceptical about all these generalised denials.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I have already paid tribute to the hon. Gentleman's persistence and I have no doubt that I shall have good opportunity to pay tribute to his persistence in the future in due course, but I cannot say more than I have said.

I have referred briefly to one other point in the speech by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South, but I should like to add to my comments. At the beginning of his speech, he basically accused the British Government of being poodles of the United States and of United States foreign policy. Let me just ask the hon. Gentleman—rhetorically, of course—a few questions. Does he think that we are poodles of United States policy when it comes to the Vietnamese boat people? I can assure him that we are not. Clearly that is a matter of great contention between Britain and the United States, and it is of great importance in south-east Asia as well.

As to following United States policy in Cambodia, in July 1990 the United States brought their policy into line with ours. We had already been talking to Vietnam and had had normal diplomatic relations with Vietnam since 1975. We were already permitting British non-governmental organisations to work inside Cambodia, and we were already funding those NGO activities inside Cambodia. Furthermore, we do not—and never did—operate a trade embargo against Cambodia, whereas the United States continues to do so. United Kingdom companies have been and are free to do business there if they wish.

I must place it clearly on record that the British Government, of course, utterly and clearly refute the allegations made by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South and by Mr. Pilger in his programme.

Mr. Mullin *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. The Minister has been generous in giving way. I remind the hon. Gentleman that he has had a good run today. Interventions should be very brief.

Mr. Mullin: It is the Minister's misfortune to have ended up not with a half-hour Adjournment debate, but with a three or four-hour debate, in which he has been able to be questioned a mite more rigorously than he might have expected. That must be in the public interest.

The Minister asked whether I thought that we had been poodles of the United States in relation to the policy on the boat people. No, it is one of the few areas in which we have tweaked the noses of our masters in Washington. The reason is that many of the boat people ended up in Hong Kong and put our administration there under intolerable pressure. The United States then adopted the entirely ludicrous policy—as even Mr. Colvin would agree—of opposing our returning the boat people, while at the same time being unwilling to do anything about them. That is why we have departed from the United States on that minor aspect of policy. There are not many others.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I was, perhaps, unwise to make that sally, as it has extended the debate into a different area. I shall now come back to the matter in question.

The real thrust of the debate should be to support the international efforts to bring an end to the suffering of the Cambodian people and to work towards a comprehensive political settlement to enable all Cambodians to resume their lives free of the fear of Khmer Rouge atrocities, of civil war and of outside aggression. That goes hand in hand with an international commitment to alleviate the humanitarian plight in which the Cambodian people now find themselves.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) expressed his interest in those aspects. However, I must refute what he said. Our own humanitarian aid programme is designed to help all Cambodians, and it is proving successful. Over the past 10 months, we have spent or committed almost £2 million for humanitarian relief in Cambodia, and we are likely to commit more funds in the coming months. That is in addition to almost £15 million which we have provided since 1979 in humanitarian assistance for the inhabitants of camps along the Thai-Cambodian border.

Mr. Cryer: I appreciate the Minister's helpfulness in giving way. Does he accept that the aid is small in terms of overseas aid generally? Is not it mean-minded to make an artificial distinction between a water supply project for Phnom Penh, from which the people there would benefit and a similar project for rural districts? Will he urge his colleagues in the Overseas Development Administration to look again at that project from which so many people in Phnom Penh would benefit?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The hon. Gentleman has not got all his facts quite right. He should refer to *Hansard* of 22 October at column *23*.

Outlined there are rural water supply activities to which the hon. Gentleman did not draw attention—particularly our contribution via the multilateral agencies working in Cambodia. Under the United Nations Children's Fund funding arrangements for health, water, nutrition, sanitation and education, the hon. Gentleman will see listed three sums that amount in all to £1 million over three years. The hon. Gentleman does not have all his facts right.

Le me go into a little more detail. Since the start of this year, we have committed £565,000 in support of 12 humanitarian assistance projects proposed by British non-governmental organisations. We are considering a number of other non-governmental organisations' projects and we expect to receive more applications. In addition, we have allocated £1·25 million to support programmes in Cambodia carried out by the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation. They include the provision of safe water supplies, food-for-work work schemes, primary health care, education and assistance for agricultural development.

Two British aid officials paid a second visit to Cambodia between 31 August and 6 September to review the progress of non-governmental organisation projects already under way and to assess the need for further humanitarian assistance. Cambodians displaced within Cambodia by the civil war are in particularly urgent need of assistance. In response to that, the Overseas Development Administration announced on 8 October that it would make up to £100,000 available for work by the British non-governmental organisations to assist those people.

That is not our only financial commitment to Cambodia. With other members of the international community, and in the context of a comprehensive political settlement, we shall be ready to consider Cambodia's long-term reconstruction and development needs. The United Nations development programme has already allocated more than $41 million to Cambodia for the five-year period from 1992, in addition to the work of other United Nations agencies' activities in Cambodia.

Most significantly, however, we shall make a substantial contribution to the cost of implementing a comprehensive political settlement—the foundation on which the country's future must be built. That cost will certainly run into many millions of pounds. We do not enter into such commitments lightly and the fact that we are prepared to do so should be seen as a measure of our conviction that current efforts to achieve a comprehensive political settlement represent the best, and perhaps the last, chance for Cambodia's political leaders to secure a future for their people and their country. That is why we call on them to act constructively with the nations of the world in the interests of all those whom they claim to represent, to restore peace and stability to Cambodia. If they do that, Cambodia's friends worldwide will respond eagerly and willingly.

British Council

2.8 pm

Mr. Dudley Fishburn (Kensington): The purpose of this second Adjournment debate is to focus on the British Council—in particular on its turn of speed in the past year. Earlier this month, the British Council held its annual general meeting and produced its report and accounts for the year, so this is a good moment at which to have a look at its activities in the round.

The subject is worthy of an Adjournment debate because the British Council spends about £320 million a year, most—though not all—of which comes directly from the British taxpayer. In scrutinising the council's expenditure, we have a difficulty, because the majority of the money is spent on activities that cannot easily be assessed within the United Kingdom. After all, the money is spent on overseas projects or to bring people to the United Kingdom from overseas. For those reasons, it is perhaps harder to judge how the £320 million is spent than it would be to assess the equivalent sum spent on a capital project within the United Kingdom.

Another reason for having this debate is that the British Council is one of the four ways in which the British Government can play upon the world stage. The first leg of the chair is the Foreign Office, which is the Government's official voice overseas. The second leg is the Overseas Development Administration, which is the method by which we give some assistance—although never enough—to the developing world and those countries poorer than us. The third leg is the World Service, which needs no supporters from this place and lacks for no audience in the world at large. It is a tremendously successful service and, perhaps more than anything else, is the official voice of Britain and the way in which British views are transmitted to the world. But the fourth leg of the chair is the British Council, which presents the range of British culture of our 56 million people to a world population of 5,000 million.

We must remember that just as the Foreign Office competes with the policies of other Governments abroad, just as the World Service competes with a huge amount of propaganda spewed out on to the airways by other countries, most of which are totalitarian, just as the aid programme competes quite rightly with the massive aid given by other more prosperous countries, so the British Council has real, healthy competition from the equivalent organisations in other prosperous, wealthy and mostly democratic countries. I am thinking, in that regard, of the activities of Alliance Francaise, the Goethe institute and the United States Information Service, all of which keep the British Council on its toes.

Over the past year, those toes have indeed been exercised. The results have been dramatic. Some £325 million has been spent. I am not one of those who argues that the more money that is spent, the better, but the £325 million, which is an increase on recent years, has been better spent than ever before. The number of student awards supervised by the British Council has never been higher. Some 15,000 students now come here for technical training and through Foreign Office programmes. The British Council was responsible for 38,000 foreign visitors to the United Kingdom over the past year. They came to study British ways and to take back not just an affection for this country, but a knowledge of how from their own countries they can tap into British resources.

The surest sign of growth within the British Council can be seen in the many new offices that have opened up, particularly in eastern Europe, where people have reached out over the past 12 dramatic months to sources of culture, literature and ideas. Those are precisely the things that the British Council is best placed to provide. The increased activity in eastern Europe has, of itself, given the British Council a year second to none.

The British Council has not only expanded its offices in eastern Europe. I am delighted to say that over the past year it has reopened an office in Argentina—a country that has always had a close, but complicated relationship with British culture.

It was not always thus. There were many years when the British Council was a rather whining institution, forever holding out the begging bowl for more money and then almost parodying itself by staging Shakespeare in Swahili in half empty halls in Africa. It was sliding down as an organisation. It slid down so far that, a few years ago, it even entertained my application to become director-general, but it had not slid far enough, I am pleased to say, to accept me. It is good to see that, under the present director-general, Sir Richard Francis, it has taken on that turn of speed that I hope to celebrate in this short Adjournment debate.

What was the turning point? It was in 1988 when the British Council belatedly took upon itself the disciplines of a corporate plan, looked at itself as a business organisation, and set itself targets that it had to meet. It is a subject of criticism that an organisation that was giving away £250 million a year did not have such a plan until 1988, but it has now and it is operating within that framework. It has targets to reach and a clear idea of what it is trying to do, which has made it become a vastly better organisation in the past year, with a sense of momentum that will carry it in the years ahead.

We must look at the way in which the organisation is getting its act together. It is going out to raise private money to top up the money that the Government, the Overseas Development Administration and the Foreign Office give it. That is exactly the right course of action. A large number of institutions that feed off the Government have recently been doing that, and, in each and every case, doing so to their own advantage. I am a governor of the English National Ballet and a trustee of the Open university. Both institutions feed from the hand of Government but, in the past few years, they too have got their act together. Like the British Council, they have understood that an organisation cannot survive on Government funds alone and that it is degrading to do so. The seeking of private money and sponsorship not merely tops up the amount available but gives an intellectual discipline to make what is produced better, more germane and more productive. That is just what the British Council has belatedly begun to do.

It is very good, looking through the council's accounts, to see the number of its English language schools. It runs about 55 English language teaching centres throughout the world. They are profit-oriented and they produce £31 million revenue, the profit element of which goes to allowing the British Council to do things that it could not otherwise have done.

The British Council also seeks industrial sponsors. Since the purpose of the British Council is to present a British image abroad, this is entirely right. After all, Britain exports a larger percentage of its GNP than even Japan does. We are known as a trading nation. That is part of British life. So it is completely right that the British Council should have teamed up with many of the great multinational corporations based in Britain and entered into common projects that not only benefit the British Council but make the Council target its activities more productively. I welcome these changes.

The clearest signal that the British Council has got its act together in terms of management is that it has reduced its overheads. In any organisation, overheads are the most wasteful way of spending money. For example, money should be spent on productions, in the case of a ballet company, or on an academic programme, in the case of the Open university, and not on the organisation itself. The British Council has realised that, has made a considerable effort to reduce its costs and is moving many of its staff out of London. By reducing costs, it will have more money available where it is needed—at the sharp end, presenting the range of British culture and education overseas.

One can see from the British Council's accounts that it is improving, albeit from a relatively undistinguished past. There is, of course, greater joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth, but one is still aware of the British Council's sins, such as the fact that it still spends 29 per cent. of its money in Africa and only 7 per cent. in the Americas and the western hemisphere taken as a whole. That is completely disproportionate to the populations of those two continents, to British trade with those two continents or to our political and cultural ties with them. I am delighted that that will shortly be addressed and balanced.

In the past year the British Council has rightly undertaken a large number of partnerships with other international organisations. It is not setting out to reinvent the wheel. It has been working with the World bank, the international monetary fund and the European Commission on, for example, exchanging academics to bring them up to date with the 1992 regulations. It has also worked with the Goethe institute, one of its rivals, to present a pattern of European culture in the world as a whole. The more that the British Council can do such things, the further its money will spread and the more good it will do in the world.

I do not believe that of itself, co-operation necessarily produces, those good things. However, the British Council will be made more active, modern and effective by entering, after hard negotiations, into joint ventures with other countries and with multinational institutions that know their way around the world and have resources that are greater than those that the British taxpayer alone is willing to provide.

The British Council is continuing its proper classical activity of supporting British arts organisations in their travels around the world. I should declare an interest—and delight—that the British Council supported the English National Ballet's tour to Jordan earlier this year. As long as the British Council continues to support the English National Ballet, I shall continue to make speeches in its favour, but that may bring about a conflict of interest, which I should not dream of causing.

The need for the British Council can be demonstrated most clearly in our own continent—in eastern Europe. A sudden thirst sprang up in eastern Europe for knowledge about Britain, British education, literature and language, when the Berlin wall collapsed in November last year, which has continued during the past 12 months. One can see that most clearly in the report from the British Council's office in East Berlin, which shows that in one day after the wall began to fall, it received more calls from Germans living in what was then East Germany than it had received in the previous six months. That is the clearest sign that education and culture, and a desire to enjoy and to celebrate the finer things of the mind, march hand in hand with the overthrow of tyranny, the embracing of democracy and with the values of a truly liberal society. For that reason, I recommend to the House the report of the British Council and place on record my delight at being able to initiate this Adjournment debate.

2.23 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I am delighted to be able to say a few words on a subject which we rarely have an opportunity to debate in the House. We have been fortunate today in the way in which things have turned out. Instead of passing rather boringly large numbers of amendments from the Lords on the Broadcasting Bill with which no one disagreed—late night habitués of this place will know that we did all that yesterday—we are able to debate subjects which are dear to the hearts of Members. The previous debate on Cambodia was one of those unique parliamentary occasions which one is privileged to witness.

The opportunity to say something about the British Council is welcome. As the hon. Member for Kensington (Mr. Fishburn) said, institutions such as the British Council and the foreign language services of the BBC are of crucial significance to Britain and its image and culture. It has always worried me that Governments of all colours have never really given the British Council and the BBC external services the level of resources that they merit on the basis of their achievements and their potential. I have always found it depressing to witness the way in which the Foreign Office has always cut back—it has happened under Labour Governments—on the foreign language output of Bush house, usually at the most inappropriate moment. Indeed, I remember under the last Labour Government when the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) as our Foreign Secretary cut back on Farsi just when the Shah of Iran fell from office. What wonderful information he must have been receiving from the Foreign Office about world developments.

Clearly, events in eastern Europe make it essential that we should encourage the British Council and the foreign language services of the BBC to increase their activities and output. As luck would have it, I have tabled several questions, to which I await replies, on those matters. What is happening in eastern Europe is so exciting and there is so much potential there that we cannot allow those opportunities to slip through our grasp. But I fear that unless the Government are prepared to look at and respond imaginatively to events in eastern Europe, others will fill the gaps that we leave. We have enormous opportunities there.

The hon. Member for Kensington was absolutely right to point to the enormous pressure that has suddenly been put on the British Council because of events in eastern Europe. There is a great thirst and a great appetite for

[Mr. Tony Banks]

English language material, which can be obtained through the British Council if it is given the resources to meet the demand.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford) *rose——*

Mr. Banks: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman, who does not seem to welcome events in Europe quite as much as I do these days.

Mr. Cash: I welcome them every bit as much as the hon. Gentleman. What worries me is his conversion to the idea of a hard core, federal Europe. I am sure that he would agree that the consequence of that policy, which he advocates on the basis of his socialist credentials, would lead to the very difficulty that he wants to avoid for the people of eastern Europe. In other words, the so-called springtime of nations would rapidly turn into a silent spring.

Mr. Banks: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman and I can agree that what is happening in eastern Europe offers great opportunities. How we take them and shape them is undoubtedly a matter on which we differ greatly. The hon. Gentleman's question takes me away from the nature of the subject. I should not have allowed the hon. Gentleman, who came hot foot into the Chamber, to take me into such interesting disgressions. He knows, as I do, that he and several of his hon. Friends who share his views are absolutely correct. I see the events in Europe as a possibility of creating a socialist federation of Europe. That is exactly what I want; the hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. He fears it and I desperately want it to happen. I hope that we are both correct. He will then be the mourner of the news and the developments and I shall be the person who rejoices. However, as I have said many times in the Chamber, I should not ask anyone to rely entirely on my judgment, given my track record. As the hon. Member will know, I am one of the few supporters of the Trabant in this country and that is not perhaps the best qualification either for selling second-hand cars or for exercising political judgment.

I do not know whether the hon. Member for Kensington saw an article in *The Independent on Sunday* last week. It is opportune that I tore out this article, which is headed, "Germany's new European war." The right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) might be interested in this, though it is not about the war about which he is thinking, because language is the battleground.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kirkhope.]*

Mr. Banks: We cannot afford to lose this battle. The article tells us how much the French are putting into spreading knowledge of French language and culture. A Minister is specifically charged with promoting the two. They have a large budget, scholarships and schools throughout eastern Europe and they are arranging thousands of exchange visits with the Soviet Union. They are seizing the opportunity that has been presented by what is going on in Europe. Some £20 million has been allocated to training French teachers in Europe.

The lingua franca of the new Europe will be English, provided that we are not complacent about the advantages that we already have and are prepared to put in as many resources as both the French and the Germans are putting into the propagation of their languages and culture. We have an advantage, because English is the language of the United States, which means that most young people believe it to be the most desirable second language that they can have. We must meet that demand and satisfy it. That will mean considerably more resources going into the British Council. The Minister cannot expect us to be able to take advantage of these opportunities without changing our priorities and spending patterns. The French and Germans have recognised that. They have so often shown us a clean pair of heels in social and economic issues that we should be most unwise and neglectful were we to ignore the lessons that they can teach us here. They are setting us an example which we must be prepared to follow.

British Council offices are being inundated by people anxious for help, material and advice. They must be able to get all those things as quickly as possible. It is not only the French who have acted. The Germans are spending an estimated £800 million on foreign cultural policy. I am no crude cultural nationalist, but I believe that spreading knowledge of British artistic achievements, encouraging greater knowledge of the English language, and opening up the treasury of English literature to so many people in eastern Europe and beyond is one of the most noble causes that we can espouse. However, we must not be complacent and say, "Well it's there. If they want to learn it, they can, and they can always borrow books from libraries." We must be positive in our thinking.

If there is to be anything like a conflict in Europe, let it be a conflict of different cultures, not a destructive conflict. Let there be a constructive dialogue between cultures. Let us see whether we can propagate more knowledge and awareness of the British way of life and the finest of it—the achievements that we have been and shall be able to obtain from our culture in the past, present and future. Every hon. Member should be able to agree to that.

I do not want to reduce this argument to crude monetary terms, but the thing that worries me is that there is a price to pay—even for hon. Members there is no such thing as a free lunch. The hon. Member for Kensington, who has studied the recent British Council report, will be able to tell me where it stands regarding its recent application for additional funding. It has asked for an extra £10 million from central Government to meet some of the challenges that I have outlined briefly. I hope that the Minister can tell us that he will respond favourably to that request from the British Council.

Many people from eastern Europe want to visit this country to obtain a greater knowledge of our cultural achievements and our cultural way of life. I would not advertise much of worth in our economic way of life and I do not think that we can teach the Europeans many lessons about that. Why is it so difficult for people from Poland to visit this country? Recently the Minister told me that, from October 1989 to September 1990, a total of 2,484 visa applications from Poland were refused. Why? Surely we want to encourage as many eastern Europeans, for example Poles and Romanians, to visit our country. They should be given the opportunity to expand their knowledge of another part of Europe, access to which was probably previously denied to them. I know that visas were abolished for Czechoslovakia and Hungary on 1

October 1990, so why do we still require visa applications from Poland and Romania? Why are so many Polish applications refused?

I also think that it is rather mean of us to charge people £20 for visa applications. We should remember that Polish and Romanian people live in low-wage economies. The fee might be paid in zlotys, but even in local currency it is still a lot of money. The money is not refunded even if the visa application is refused. That is mean and unnecessary and I believe that our practice is unique.

In the light of recent events in eastern Europe, the British Government should make far more grand gestures and display understanding, sensitivity, imagination and verve. We should respond to the people of eastern Europe in the manner that they expect from a wealthy, historically strong and affluent country, notwithstanding 11 years of Thatcherism.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd): Oh, come on.

Mr. Banks: Well, in comparison to some other countries, we are still one of the most affluent and powerful in the world. I hope that we use that affluence and power constructively to take full advantage, in a broad sweeping manner rather than a narrow nationalist one, of our cultural heritage. We must offer to the people of eastern Europe those of our national assets of which it is still worth taking note.

2.40 pm

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): It is a pleasure to speak following my almost neighbour, the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). Today he was wearing the label of clean-cut designer socialism, whereas normally he sports the role of the deputy court jester of the Labour party. It is nice today to see him doing something different.

I have pleasure in contributing to the debate. The British Council has been in existence for over 50 years, during which time it has built up a formidable network of contacts, and contacts make the world go round. The only advice I would offer is that it should consider a change of name. "British Council" is not a sexy name. It does not mean much to many people. Ask people "What is the British Council and what does it do?" and the majority will probably think that one is referring to the local council and they will talk about the community charge. Perhaps the British Council could be called "British Tentacles", or something giving the idea that it can spread itself, can spread the word.

I have been examining the council's annual report, on the front cover of which is a splendid photograph of two characters who appear to be wearing the same carpet. Doubtless on looking inside one would discover that it is some wonderful art form of a far-flung country, and that is what the British Council is all about. It is about bringing British influence and culture to other countries.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Mr. Fishburn) said, there is a tremendous opportunity now for the British Council in eastern Europe. But there is a difficulty in that the council, in extending its activities there, will almost inevitably have to cut its activities elsewhere. That is a pity because, as my hon. Friend said, already about 29 per cent. of its work is done in Africa and only about 7 per cent. in the Americas.

I take a great interest in Latin America. I firmly believe that British influence there, built up over the centuries, should be built on. The Latin American people have great warmth and affection for this country, going back to the time when Canning sent help to Simon Bolivar, the great liberator, to help him with his revolution, which threw out the Spaniards.

It is not fashionable these days to praise British influence, The reason is probably that British influence stems from the days of empire, and today the idea of the British empire is extremely unfashionable. That may be why the British Council is too chary of making its presence known. It is too British in the way in which it goes about things. It understates itself, with the result that its voice is in danger of being lost. That is a shame because we have much to say and we have the prospect of enormous influence, especially in the countries of eastern Europe.

We recently debated European Community aid to eastern Europe. In a brief contribution, I complained strongly about the debate being held at an unreasonable hour. It started after midnight and was confined to an hour and a half. That will send the wrong message to countries that are looking to us for help. That help must come largely from the British Council, which must explain British culture and democracy. This is, after all, the mother of Parliaments. Those countries are looking to us to give a lead in how to develop democratic institutions, and those institutions spread culture. One day, I shall write a monograph on democracy and culture. I shall seek to explain how one springs from the other and how they can help each other. I shall seek the advice and assistance of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West. He has been doing his best to give me advice from a sedentary position. We shall talk about the matter later, and I might even give him an acknowlegement in one of the footnotes.

I praise the British Council for the marvellous work that it is doing. I urge it on in its endeavours to spread the word throughout the world, especially in eastern Europe. I relaise that it will need more funds to do that work. I congratulate it, for that reason, on obtaining more and more money from sponsorship as well as from the Government.

2.45 pm

Mr. Steve Norris (Epping Forest): I find myself much in agreement with my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Mr. Fishburn) and the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks). We should not assume that much that we hold dear about our culture, which we believe is a positive force in the world in terms of our longstanding democratic traditions, as well as artistic and cultural traditions, will automatically be taken for granted in other countries far afield.

Before becoming a Member of this place I travelled quite extensively in north Africa, especially in Algeria. At that time Algeria had much stronger links with the Soviet bloc than with the western bloc. It was noticeable at every level of administration among the nomenclatura, the members of which were guiding policy, that there was tremendous sympathy for eastern bloc aspirations. That derived almost exclusively from the fact that although we are now talking of the eastern bloc coming to us through

[Mr. Steve Norris]

the British Council, eastern bloc countries, fuelled by Moscow, were drawing all the young people to them. The cultural experiences that ensued left a hallmark or a stamp on those young people for the rest of their lives. Whether that meant that they looked to the east for technology or they judged political developments by eastern standards, or whether it merely meant that they had been made aware of a culture of which they would otherwise have been unaware, the result was that we in the west had missed out substantially.

My experience as a traveller, both before and since becoming a Member of this place, is that the British Council is doing a superb job on our behalf. Irrespective of whether additional funds are appropriate, we get tremendously good value from the council. I know that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West is familiar with central America. Following the Nicaraguan elections, which I went to monitor on behalf of an international monitoring organisation, it was remarkable how many people came to me and said, "I hope that one of the consequences of our new democracy is that we can have the British Council. We have felt genuinely starved of what we know the council can offer us."

As I have said, we get tremendously good value from the British Council. The traditions of which my hon. Friend the Minister for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) spoke are so valuable and so important that we should not assume that they will be absorbed automatically by those who are involved in other cultures. We must do everything that we can actively to promote them.

2.48 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Mr. Fishburn) on initiating the debate. I thank the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) for their contributions. I say to each and every one of my hon. Friends and the hon. Gentleman that if they desire to visit any of the operations of the British Council during their travels, they have only to ask and my officials and I will be delighted to do anything we can to assist them. Such visits are extremely welcome. We know that hon. Members generally travel a great deal. Any visits to British Council operations that they care to make would be widely welcomed by the officials concerned.

I am pleased to congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington, because we too rarely debate subjects such as the British Council, whose activities are significant. Its total budget for the year 1990-91 is about £348 million. Half of that reflects the programmes that it undertakes on an agency basis, especially for bodies such as the Overseas Development Administration; about £56 million of the total is earned by the British Council; about £34 million is earned from its English teaching. In addition to that, the council gets £98 million as a direct grant from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, so it is a significant operation which we should debate more often.

My hon. Friend the Member for Kensington made the point that the British Council still spends 29 per cent. of its budget in Africa as against only 7 per cent. in Latin America, but I believe that he made a small slip and that the percentage is for the Americas. That reflects the balance of aid expenditure, mostly in technical training, handled by the council for the ODA on an agency basis, and it does not affect decisions on priorities of the council's own. This can be confusing because so much work is undertaken by the council on an agency basis for the ODA and that somewhat distorts the figures, but it does not have the same effect on cultural activities as my hon. Friend might have feared.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West talked about visa applications from Poland and the large refusal rate from Warsaw about which I informed him in answer to his question. But it must be seen in the context of the total number of applications—a number that was not included in my answer because it was not sought. It puts a wholly different gloss on the matter.

In the first nine months of this year in Poland—the figures that I gave earlier were for October 1989 to September 1990—36,191 applications were received, of which 1,703 were refused. That is not such a bad rate of refusal, and there were only 350 appeals against those refusals.

Mr. Tony Banks: I am not attempting to catch the Minister out. I should just like to know why the Government still insist on visas from Poland and Romania, whereas they appear to have abolished them in respect of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: It is the desire of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to abolish visa regimes when that is possible, but we have to consider wider national interests, and when we are advised that we need a visa regime for security reasons we have to take that into account. We still have to maintain such a regime in respect of Poland even though we have managed to abolish visas for Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West made a point about costs. Anyone can appreciate that for the hard-pressed Poles, who are extremely poor, as for the poor people in Romania and other east European countries, £20 is a considerable sum, but it is rightly our policy to make the visa regime almost self-financing. It is perhaps not self-financing in strict accountancy terminology such as might be used in a commercial venture, but the idea is to cover the costs on a non-discriminatory basis throughout the world. We cannot charge one area of the world more than another. Of course, we are also considering visa applications from all over the world—from countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Whatever view one takes about the desirability of enabling people from eastern Europe to come here, and of course I share such a desire, that policy must be right. We cannot engage in public expenditure as we wish in every possible area. This is one way in which visa costs can provide funds.

Mr. Tony Banks: Would not it be somewhat more generous if the £20 received from successful visa applicants were reimbursed to unsuccessful applicants who have a double disappointment?

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The cost of processing the visa is the same whether the application is successful or not.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow said that the British Council should change its name. I think he said that it was not very sexy. The council's name is not as well known in Britain as it deserves to be, but it is very well

known abroad. I have just been to India where the British library system, an institution paid for by India but run by the British Council, is extremely well known. In such countries the British Council is as well known as any national institution.

India is a fine example of the success of the British Council's work and there is no doubt about the importance of the council's role there. I was especially struck by the libraries which are full of British books and materials. My visit to the British Council library in Calcutta was a truly remarkable experience. It was neat and sparkling clean and had an alert and enthusiastic staff. It sounds almost absurd to say it, but it was so smart and clean that one could hardly believe that one was in Calcutta. I saw nothing else as impressive in any of the hotels or other places that I visited in the city. It was wonderful and a haven of peace and quiet. It is enormously popular and a terrific feature of Britain's diplomatic and cultural presence in the city.

Hon. Members have spoken about our activities in the European Community and, more importantly, in eastern Europe. The astonishing events of the past year or so in eastern Europe have brought to prominence, and in many cases to high office, an impressive roll of former British Council scholars, study fellows and others whom the council has been quietly cultivating and keeping in touch with through difficult times. As hon. Members will recall, one of the first images that President Havel evoked in his discussion with us about our relations with the new Czechoslovakia was that of the British Council's presence in the old Kaunitz palace in Prague just after the war. That underlines what I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow, that the presence of the British Council is as much a living feature in all the countries in eastern Europe as it is in the rest of the world. It was reported and emphasised in a memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1987 that:

> "Britain has a great deal to offer the world. It is right that we should share a culture which enriches the human spirit, enhances international understanding and expands the horizons of men and women throughout the world."

Our cultural achievements serve to enhance our position in a world in which we would be unwise to take recognition and respect for granted. The exchange of academic and cultural experience with other nations enriches us at the same time.

It is important that British excellence in the arts—so regularly attested by awards in international competition—should be more widely known. The council's role in these aspects of cultural diplomacy is paramount and has won it tributes throughout the world. In the past year, the council was represented in more countries than ever before, received more money from the Government, earned more fees from teaching English, and raised more commercial sponsorship than ever before. It was a very good year and one on which the council deserves our congratulations and thanks for a job well done.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute to Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 29 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords]*

As amended, considered.

Ordered,

That Standing Order 205 (Notice of Third Reading) be suspended and that the Bill be now read the third time.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

PORT OF TYNE BILL *[Lords]*

As amended, considered.

Queen's consent, on behalf of the Crown, having been signified—

Ordered,

That Standing Order 205 (Notice of Third Reading) be suspended and that the Bill be now read the third time.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

ADELPHI ESTATE BILL

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the Adelphi Estate Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

Ordered,

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

Ordered,

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

Ordered,

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

Ordered,

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House. —*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

To be communicated to the Lords, and their concurrence desired thereto.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (SUSPENSION)

Ordered,

That so much of the Lords Messages [17th October, 23rd October, 24th October and 25 October] as relates to the Avon Light Rail Transit Bill [*Lords*], the Avon Light Rail Transit (Bristol City Centre) Bill [*Lords*], the British Railways (No. 3) Bill [*Lords*], the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No. 4) Bill [*Lords*], the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No. 5) Bill [*Lords*], the Llanelli Borough Council (Barry Port Harbour) Bill [*Lords*], the London Local Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill [*Lords*], the London Underground (Safety Measures) Bill [*Lords*], the Mersey Docks and Harbour Bill [*Lords*], the Midland Metro (Penalty Fares) Bill [*Lords*], the North Yorkshire County Council Bill [*Lords*], and the Standard Life Assurance Company Bill [*Lords*] be now considered.

Resolved,

That this House doth concur with the Lords in their Resolution.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Mid Glamorgan Health Services

1. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he next intends to meet the chairman of the Mid Glamorgan area health authority to discuss health services provision in Mid Glamorgan.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met health authority chairmen on 10 July and more recently at a briefing seminar in Cardiff on 19 October. He intends to meet them again early in the new year.

Mr. Powell: I thank the Under-Secretary for that reply. During the discussions, was the development of phase 2 of the Princess of Wales hospital in Bridgend discussed? In 1983, the Under-Secretary's predecessor promised me that phase 2 would be developed immediately on completion of phase 1. I do not want, as in the summit in Europe last weekend, a "No, no, no," from the Minister. I want a positive reply, because 250,000 of my constituents have been waiting more than seven years and trying to make do with half a hospital. Is not it about time that the Government fulfilled some of the promises made by Ministers?

Mr. Grist: I appreciate the strength of feeling of the hon. Gentleman and many of his constituents on the issue. I also note how pleased they are with their new hospital. The issue of phase 2 is one for the hon. Gentleman's health authority, which has decided not to put it in its current 10-year programme.

Dr. Kim Howells: Is the Secretary of State aware that rumours are circulating in south Wales that the guidelines issued by the various health authorities dictate that if patients over the age of 70 suffer heart attacks, they should receive less priority treatment than those who suffer similar problems under the age of 70?

Mr. Grist: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman should listen to such rumours.

Mr. Win Griffiths: Will the Under-Secretary reconsider his reply on phase 2 of the Princess of Wales hospital? While the health authority has to make decisions on its capital spending programme, the truth is that, despite the extra money being put into the health service in Wales, it has not kept pace with the inflation rate. As a result, the hospital, which was promised in 1983, has not yet been completed. The consultants at the hospital feel that they have been betrayed by the Welsh Office. Would not it be a sign of real faith in the health service for the Government to declare that the extra funding will be provided so that the health authority can go ahead with the hospital?

Mr. Grist: I think that the hon. Gentleman underestimates the extra funding, which has meant that real funding—after inflation—in the health service in Wales has risen by about 30 per cent. under the Government. I should have thought that the consultants and the others whom he mentioned would also be pleased with the treatment centre in the old hospital in Bridgend, and the amount that was spent on that.

Mr. Barry Jones: Is the Minister aware that the waiting list in Mid Glamorgan has increased this year by 32 per cent., and that since 1979, Mid Glamorgan has lost 679 hospital beds, which must be lunacy? Does he acknowledge the concern felt by the Royal College of Nursing in Wales about underfunding and waiting lists, when all that nurses want is to be able to deliver their professional nursing care to more and more people? I warn the Minister that people in Wales are losing patience with his health service policies, which will lose the Minister his seat and his Government their power.

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman must have a very cool mind, when one considers that under the previous Labour Government, there was only a 6 per cent. increase in the number of patients treated compared with 34 per cent. under the present Government—and that under Labour, out-patient treatment fell by 3 per cent. As to Mid Glamorgan's waiting list, in the 12 months to 31 March it reduced its urgent in-patient waiting list by 14 per cent. —the number of patients urgently awaiting treatment for one month or more—and its out-patient waiting list by 6·5 per cent., or 1,122. Mid Glamorgan also reduced the number of out-patients waiting three months or more.

Carers

2. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met representatives of carers in Wales to discuss matters of interest to carers.

Mr. Grist: I meet and have discussions with carers and their representatives throughout Wales frequently in the course of my ministerial duties—most recently last Friday, at the launch of the upper Afan valley elderly people's project.

Mr. Michael: Is the Minister aware of the concern felt by carers at the undermining of the principles of care in the community? Does he accept that they now receive inadequate support, and will he admit that his strategy for community care is to depend on carers without providing for them? Does he agree that it is inadequate to offer the answers that he has given about care in the community, and that there can be no confidence in a system whose finances are hidden within the revenue support system? There is now real fear of neglect in the community among carers and those for whom they care.

Mr. Grist: I am disappointed that the hon. Gentleman has repeated the parrot cry that he does not trust local councils with the extra money that they are receiving through revenue support grant to provide community care. The hon. Gentleman should trust to the extra flexibility that local councils have to provide community care in the best way possible. The Government are absolutely committed to their community care proposals.

Mr. Skinner: Who is providing the resources?

Mr. Grist: Resources are already being provided. The hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) will also be aware of the increased support announced last week by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Livestock

3. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the current state of the Welsh livestock industry.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. David Hunt): I have had a number of discussions recently with the farming unions, and the Government have taken a number of positive steps to help the Welsh livestock sector.

Mr. Davies: Will the Minister confirm the figures used by the Farmers Union of Wales, which show that farming incomes in the hill areas have reduced by 37 per cent. in comparison with 1986 levels? Does the right hon. Gentleman understand that if the Prime Minister has her way and brings about a further 30 per cent. cut in farm support, it will have a catastrophic effect on the employment, environment and culture of rural Wales? Will the Minister take it upon himself personally to intervene, to see that alternative measures are put in place to offset the worst effects on those who will be hardest hit?

Mr. Hunt: I thought that the hon. Gentleman's own party supported the 30 per cent. reduction in farm support. If there has been a change in policy, the hon. Gentleman owes it to the House to make that clear. It is agreed that there should be such a cut, and discussions are continuing on how it should be implemented, on 1986 levels. As to the Welsh farming industry, I have constantly made it clear that a healthy agricultural sector is vital to the economic, environmental and social future of Wales. We have taken several steps, including advance payments on the sheep annual premium, the suckler cow premium, and beef intervention—the cost of which last week was running at about £6 million. The Government are doing what they can to assist in a very difficult situation.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: My right hon. Friend will be aware, from his meetings with Pembrokeshire farmers, of the serious concern that is felt in the farming industry at present. Can he give the House an assurance that if the GATT negotiations are successful and there are phased reductions in subsidies during the next few year, they will be properly managed and incremental, and that alternative means of support will be given to farmers, especially in environmental improvement?

Mr. Hunt: Of course, I shall consider carefully what my hon. Friend said. He is right to highlight the serious situation that would arise for Welsh agriculture if we were to enter a trade war and thus see many of our better export markets destroyed. That would be a catastrophe for Welsh farmers. Obviously, I am keeping closely in touch with those negotiations, which I hope will be successfully concluded. My hon. Friend is absolutely right to say that any changes must be gradual and incremental.

Mr. Livsey: What representations did the Secretary of State make to Brussels, prior to the announcement at the weekend of a cut so that only one third of farmers in the less-favoured areas in Wales will be included? Indeed, two thirds of those recommended by the Welsh Office were excluded. Could he tell us what representations he made to avoid that?

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that I and my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food had worked out what we felt to be a reasonable bid to the European Community. I have yet to receive formal notification of its decision, but I believe that the bid was realistic and achievable, and I hope that it will be successful. I urge the hon. Gentleman—unless the press report is incorrect—not to contact the French, in particular, to urge support for their attitude to agriculture, because I do not think that that is going down very well in Wales.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. Friend agree—*[Interruption.]*—that the livestock sector in Wales, in Scotland and in upland parts—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is the United Kingdom Parliament.

Mr. Walker: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the livestock sector in Wales, Scotland and other upland parts of the United Kingdom is an essential part of our strategic planning so that we can supply food and resources to meet these islands' requirements? Does he further agree that the problems lie within Europe, where people cannot reach a decision on matters that are fundamentally important?

Mr. Hunt: I am glad that we get that level of support from my hon. Friend, who represents a Scottish constituency. It is vital that everybody throughout the Community realises how important a healthy agricultural livestock sector is for the future of Wales and Scotland.

Mr. Barry Jones: Will the right hon. Gentleman admit that the small family farm is struggling desperately, that financial disaster stares it in the face, and that he cannot expect our people to suffer in silence when they are deeply in debt and cut to the bone? Is not it the case that the right hon. Gentleman has no coherent policy whatever? We want the right hon. Gentleman to use the full weight of his office. We are getting tired of a cosmetic and over-sanguine approach. There is a crisis and he must act now.

Mr. Hunt: I completely agree with the hon. Gentleman about the importance of this subject, but I did not detect that he was putting forward an alternative policy. When he examines the issues, he will see that the important factor to bear in mind about Welsh agriculture is that we must continue to support family farms in Wales. We have very efficient farmers, and that is why we have so much to lose from a trade war. I was sad that he made no expression of his opinion on that important aspect.

Inward Investment

4. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the latest figures are for inward investment to Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I am pleased to be able to tell the House that the inward investment figures continue to be good, and that in 1989-90 about 120 inward investment projects were secured—a substantial increase over the previous year—safeguarding about 6,000 jobs and creating about 6,500 new jobs.

Mr. Greenway: Those are excellent figures and they clearly demonstrate that the Government's policy to rejuvenate the Welsh economy is making excellent progress, but I fear that my right hon. Friend is telling the

House only part of the story. Can he confirm that that trend is continuing in the current year and prove that the voices of gloom and doom have got it wrong?

Mr. Hunt: I totally oppose the voices of gloom and doom in Wales. It has a great success story and we are proud of it. During the first six months of 1990 Wales attracted 61 inward investment projects, compared with 50 during the same period last year. All of Wales has benefited from 6,500 new and safeguarded jobs, compared with 5,944 last year. I praise all the component partners in that marvellous success story.

Mr. John P. Smith: As by far the largest concentration of investment has come to my constituency in the Vale of Glamorgan—although I refuse to take all the credit for that—what does the Secretary of State propose for training initiatives to stop the poaching of highly skilled labour in local labour markets?

Mr. Hunt: First, I thank the hon. Gentleman for the praise—I detected it between the lines—that he bestowed on the Government for attracting such major inward investment to his constituency and for working closely with all the component parts of the partnership that we are proud to have in Wales. He is correct to highlight the importance of training, which is why we set so much store on the new training and enterprise councils. It is important to have a local training strategy that is shared locally, and especially one that is private sector led. That will be the success story of the TECs in Wales.

Mrs. Clwyd: I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Vale of Glamorgan (Mr. Smith) has had such good fortune. May I point out to the Secretary of State that, under his predecessor, Cynon Valley had the highest male unemployment rate in Wales; that under his predecessor's predecessor it also had the highest male unemployment rate; and it is still rising? What plans does the right hon. Gentleman have to reverse that trend and to attract inward investment into parts of Wales, such as Cynon Valley, which have suffered inordinately under the Government's policies?

Mr. Hunt: Now that I have had the opportunity to visit all the 19 valleys—I know that there are some subsidiary valleys that might object to that designation—I am carefully considering how best to take forward the programme for the valleys. I am aware of the problems in Cynon Valley. I have visited it and met representatives of local authorities. As I have acknowledged on many occasions, there are still pockets of poverty that are providing difficult to eradicate and areas with high unemployment rates that must be brought down—and I know that, in that, I share the hon. Lady's resolve.

Mr. Wigley: Does the Secretary of State accept that Members on the Plaid Cymru Benches do not echo the voices of gloom and doom about the prospects in Wales? However, to ensure that all of Wales benefits from inward investment and also to ensure that it is not confined only to the M4 corridor in the south and the A55 in the north, is not there a need to improve our north-south roads? Will he give an undertaking to review our roads programme with that in mind?

Mr. Hunt: Certainly. We are determined to try to do our best to improve all the infrastructure in Wales. However, I wish to take issue with the hon. Gentleman's second point. It is difficult to say to inward investors that we are interested in them only if they come to a particular part of Wales. I know that the hon. Gentleman accepts that. Provided that he joins us, which he does, in monitoring and propounding the success of the whole of Wales, there will be opportunities for all of Wales to share in the prosperity of inward investment.

Salmonella

5. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the report on the salmonella outbreak in Flint, Clwyd.

Mr. Grist: The report was published on 11 September. It made a number of recommendations on the handling of food poisoning outbreaks. These were incorporated in a Welsh Office circular sent to all district councils and health authorities, also on 11 September.

Mr. Raffan: Does my hon. Friend agree that the main lesson to be learnt from the salmonella outbreak in Flint is the need for one person to be put in overall charge of the handling of such an outbreak? Why has he confirmed the current confusing position, under which the medically qualified officer is employed by the health authority, but responsible to the district council chief executive?

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend makes a slight error. Our best advice was that the proper officer should be the district health authority's consultant in communicable diseases control. The environmental health officer could be named as the proper officer, but our best advice is that a medically qualified person should be the proper officer.

Waiting Lists

6. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what review he has undertaken of his Department's policies in respect to waiting lists in Wales; and what fresh initiatives he intends to take.

Mr. Grist: Since the launch of the waiting list initiative in 1986, over £5 million has been allocated separately to tackle problematic lists and, together with the further £1 million support for the three all-Wales treatment centres, that has resulted in the treatment of an extra 23,000 out-patients and 12,000 in-patients.

I am at present considering how to take forward those initiatives in the context of the new contracting process that will be introduced from 1 April 1991 when all health authorities will need to pay particular attention to waiting lists in the contracts that they negotiate with their providers.

Mr. Flynn: What is the Minister's response to the news that 3,000 additional hospital beds will close before next April to comply with the Government's finance first and patients last policies? Some of the beds are in Wales. Most of them, however, are in London, but they have been used over the years by Welsh patients as an escape route from the disgracefully high waiting lists in Wales. Does it mean that this winter will be the worst ever for waiting and suffering in Wales? Does the Minister have no response except to accelerate the conveyor belt surgery into overdrive?

Mr. Grist: I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman is referring to day case treatment as conveyor belt surgery.

I hope not. Last year I had a hernia operation and was in hospital for two nights. There is no reason why many cases could not be treated in a day. I should have thought that that was good medical practice. The hon. Gentleman must also know that the number of beds does not denote the number of patients treated. That has increased by 34 per cent. in Wales under this Government, and it has little to do with the number of beds provided.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Is not the Minister concerned about the state of hospital facilities in Gwent? For example, employees and constituents in Caldicot complain about the cut in facilities at Mount Pleasant hospital in Chepstow. There is also considerable criticism of the cuts in facilities on Ingram ward at St. Woolos hospital in Newport. What is the Minister doing about that, particularly as the local authority members of Gwent area health authority have been discarded in favour of local business men? Does not he agree that the local authority representatives would have been more sensitive to what is happening?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman has put his finger on at least part of the answer: that this is a matter for the district health authority. I believe, however, that the new district health authority membership is much more suited to the new system for running the national health service. Decisions on value for money and outcomes, not necessarily local parochial pressures, will be the test of a good national health service.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Does my hon. Friend agree that waiting lists are in part a reflection of the success of the NHS? Patients are now queuing up for treatments that previously were not available. My hon. Friend has already said that there has been an increase in the number of patients treated, which is a far better sign of what is happening. Could not that number be further improved if only the best practice in treating day patients were applied universally?

Mr. Grist: Absolutely. That is the Audit Commission's view, too. It is also the opinion of most people in the medical profession. My hon. Friend is right about the increase in the number of treatments. That is why, for instance, Rhydlafar specialises in hip replacements, an operation which, not so many years ago, was looked on as being at the frontiers of medical science.

"Our Common Inheritance"

7. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales with which organisations he has been in consultation, and what communications have been received by his Department following the publication of the White Paper "Our Common Inheritance".

Mr. David Hunt: Since the publication of the White Paper I have been in consultation with 22 separate organisations and my Department has received 13 communications. I am placing a list of those in the Library of the House.

Dr. Thomas: I thank the Minister for his reply. Does he accept, following his consultation, that it is important for the Department to have a clear environmental strategy for Wales so that we can make our contribution to maintaining the environmental balance throughout the whole of the Principality? In particular, does not he realise how important it is to relate that to the strategic planning guidelines that his Department is developing, which would provide him with an opportunity to introduce the broader environmental strategy that Wales needs?

Mr. Hunt: The hon. Gentleman may be aware that on the day of the publication of the White Paper in Wales I made it clear that I propose to ask for the issue of green belts to be considered by all those concerned. If necessary, I shall expound and expand on it at a special conference that I am calling of all those concerned. It is very much at the forefront of my mind. We certainly intend to set a good example in Wales, and we are well on the way to doing just that.

Mr. Murphy: Does the Secretary of State agree that there is a major omission in the White Paper about the problems of toxic waste in Wales? Does he accept, for instance, that the importation of toxic waste is particularly bad in the Principality, which has become the dumping ground for some of the world's deadliest poisons? Does he agree that the monitoring and licensing of toxic waste sites is a problem, and, in the light of that, is he prepared to comment on the incident yesterday in the Rhymney valley, where there was a serious explosion of cans and drums of chemical waste?

Mr. Hunt: I have been contacted by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) and other hon. Members about the explosion. I am awaiting a full report. I understand that the health and safety inspectorate is investigating and that the local authority is carefully considering the position. Toxic waste generally is obviously an important matter, and it is dealt with fully in the White Paper.

Welsh Development Agency

8. **Mr. Denzil Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he will next meet the board of the Welsh Development Agency to discuss the future development of the board's activities.

Mr. David Hunt: I am meeting the board of the Welsh Development Agency on 17 December.

Mr. Davies: Will the Secretary of State make it clear that the next chief executive of the agency should be someone with solid experience in manufacturing industry, like the last one? Is he aware that there is considerable fear that the agency is turning itself into a property development agency, especially with the appointment of Mr. Malpas, who I believe is the property development director of Tesco? Every pithead bath now a Tesco? If we have a chief executive with the qualifications that I have suggested, that will go some way to allaying those fears.

Mr. Hunt: The right hon. Gentleman should choose his words with greater care. The vast majority of people in Wales are proud of the success of the Welsh Development Agency. I was sad that David Waterstone decided to move on. It is paramount to have the best possible candidate as chief executive of the Welsh Development Agency. When I consider all the areas and activities of the WDA, I am constantly impressed by how it leads the field in so many different ways.

Mr. Raffan: What progress has been made by the Welsh Development Agency in helping Delyn borough council find a new tenant for the Laura Ashley factory at Leeswood in my constituency, and what grants, if any, will be available to a potential tenant?

Mr. Hunt: Following my hon. Friend's approach to the Welsh Office, I assured myself just before entering the Chamber that everyone was working as hard as possible to find an alternative tenant. Obviously, a range of financial assistance is available, which is an important part of any equation. As yet, I am unable to report any progress.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the future success of the Welsh Development Agency is partly dependent on there being a separate, independent and complementary body for rural Wales? Will he give an absolute undertaking that the Development Board for Rural Wales will continue, and will he consider extending its remit, as its chairman wishes, to include tourism and certain aspects of agriculture?

Mr. Hunt: I regard the work of the Development Board for Rural Wales as absolutely vital. It forms an important part of my future strategy, and that of my ministerial colleagues, for Wales. It is important that all the different bodies work closely together. The DBRW needs to work closely with the Welsh tourist board. I know that Prys Edwards and Glyn Davies meet regularly to ensure that all the strategies are working together for the promotion of rural Wales.

Rail Service, North Wales

9. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on proposed changes to the rail service for north Wales next October.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Sir Wyn Roberts): I am aware of some marginal changes to services from May 1991. I understand that there may be further changes to north Wales services from next October, if replacement rolling stock for inter-city services becomes available. The north Wales coast line may again be closed on Saturday night for track maintenance purposes.

Dr. Marek: Is the Minister aware that British Rail proposes, after the class 47 locos are retired, to service the north Wales main line either by using sprinter units, ensuring that everyone has to change at Crewe, or by introducing HSTs, not on a service direct to Euston, but via Leicester and into St. Pancras, thus making the journey at least an hour longer for anyone travelling from, say, Llandudno junction to Euston? Does the Minister agree that either of those solutions is unacceptable to the people of north Wales?

Sir Wyn Roberts: I understand that British Rail hopes to get its class 158 high-speed diesels to replace some existing stock. I understand that the option of getting inter-city 125s to run through St. Pancras is being considered and that there are certain advantages to that proposal. British Rail believes that there is a good potential market for north Wales and Irish travellers in the east midlands. There will be the Luton connection with the Thameslink services and the south coast. The proximity of St. Pancras to King's Cross obviously enhances the prospect of joining up with the new terminal at King's Cross which will lead directly to the channel tunnel.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Is there any change in the balance of argument for and against electrification of the north Wales rail link to Ireland, given the evident inexorability of speeding up progress towards a single European market in 1992 and also—just to be safe—of European monetary union by 1994 or thereabouts?

Sir Wyn Roberts: My hon. Friend will be aware that it is for British Rail to bring forward any proposal to electrify the line. The Government are prepared to approve investment proposals by British Rail, provided they are worth while. The case for electrification of the north Wales line has not yet been made.

Financial Services Initiative

10. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress he has made on the financial services initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I am very happy to report that the financial services initiative is showing excellent progress, with employment up by 20 per cent. over the past three years. We look forward to further progress, particularly now that the area has been extended to cover mid-Glamorgan and the Swansea bay area.

Mr. Jones: I am glad to hear that answer. I am sure that my right hon. Friend agrees that the financial services initiative represents money well spent. Can he give the House an estimate of how many new jobs it has achieved and the total investment brought about by the initiative?

Mr. Hunt: Some 70,000 people are now employed in financial services. I am delighted to be able to tell the House that, just before I came into the Chamber, I heard the news that Europe's leading legal expenses insurance group, German-owned DAS, is to locate a new United Kingdom claims handling unit at Bedwas, near Newport. That is marvellous news. I am delighted that such an internationally prestigious company as DAS has decided to come to Wales. It confirms that Wales is becoming the favoured location for financial services.

Hopsital Closures, South Glamorgan

11. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what factors he expects to take into account in deciding whether or not to approve the six hospital closures proposed by the South Glamorgan health authority.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend will be principally concerned with the impact upon patients and staff, but will also have regard more generally to all the representations made to him.

Mr. Morgan: How does the Minister intend to resolve the extraordinary position whereby South Glamorgan based its hospital closure proposals on the idea that it could close two hospitals, sell the land and build a new hospital with the receipts? Since then, the Welsh Office has changed the goalposts, sacked the referee and changed the shape of the ball as well. It no longer allows local health authorities to keep capital receipts for future hospital

expansion. How does the Minister intend to get out of this conundrum? Will he now tell South Glamorgan health authority what to do with its hospital closure proposals?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman goes a little far and appears to misunderstand the right of health authorities to retain their funds from capital receipts. He may be muddling this matter with the proposed changes under the new system, which will come into operation, in a phased way, after April 1991.

Telephone Service

12. **Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last discussed the telephone service in Wales with British Telecom.

Mr. David Hunt: I last met the general manager of British Telecom for Wales and the marches on Friday 19 October.

Mr. Coleman: May I urge the right hon. Gentleman to seek a further meeting with British Telecom and to raise with the general manager the abuse of the telephone service by pornographic so-called chatlines? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the considerable anxiety and distress that that is causing—particularly to families that are facing large telephone bills because of the use of these services, usually by young people? Will he take this matter up with British Telecom and get the practice stopped?

Mr. Hunt: Although this is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and for the director general, I should like to express my serious concern about the abuse of the service. I very much hope that the code of practice will put an end to this appalling situation.

THE ARTS

Regional Opera

25. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about the funding of regional opera.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. David Mellor): I have received a substantial number of representations on this matter, including a most persuasive letter from my hon. Friend.

Mr. Greenway: May I welcome my right hon., learned and—now it is official—cultured Friend to the Dispatch Box for the first time as Minister for the Arts and wish him every success? As he knows, there is grave concern about the funding and financial position of Opera North, which receives one third less from the Arts Council than the Welsh National Opera and a quarter less than the Scottish Opera, although all three companies have almost identical programme commitments and have achieved a high standard of performance. Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept the principle that equality of performance and programme should be matched by equality of funding?

Mr. Mellor: I thank my hon. Friend for his typically kind remarks. I am glad to be at the Dispatch Box in this capacity, but, like many hon. Members, I owe a great deal to the distinguished stewardship of the post by my predecessor, and I shall have a lot to live up to in following in his footsteps.

Opera North certainly has a commendable record of success. One of the major achievements in opera over the past 10 years has been the way in which Opera North has established itself and I warmly congratulate the company on playing to 87 per cent. capacity audiences at its Leeds base. The detail of funding is a matter for the Arts Council, but I am certainly familiar with the figures that my hon. Friend has cited and I know that he will be putting them to the Arts Council with vigour.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: I welcome the thanks that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has expressed to his predecessor and I hope that he will do equally well for the arts. In considering national orchestras and opera houses that are located outside London, will he take into account the serious problems of underfunding that they will face with the present level of inflation?

Mr. Mellor: I came to this job having been vice-chairman of the trustees of a major orchestra, so I am certainly well aware of the problems that arts organisations face. But never before have arts organisations enjoyed such buoyant revenues at the box office or such a good spread of funding, with such a substantial contribution coming from the private sector in addition to the continuing contribution that the Government are committed to making and the contributions from local authorities. I repeat that there is a better spread of funding than ever before, but I do not underestimate the problems that inflation is causing and I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I am discussing them seriously with representatives of those organisations and with the Arts Council.

Dr. Blackburn: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that one of the greatest blessings that he has inherited from his predecessor is the long-term funding of the arts, which allows provincial opera and theatre to plan ahead? My right hon. and learned Friend would be well advised to continue that and foster it for the funding of the arts which is so important.

Mr. Mellor: Three-year funding is an important development, because it allows people to know where they stand. It is also dependent on estimates of future changes which sometimes require fine tuning. I hope that we may see evidence of fine tuning shortly.

Theatres

26. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the level of deficits in national and regional theatres in England and Wales.

Mr. Mellor: I understand that building-based drama companies funded by the Arts Council and the Welsh Arts Council have projected accumulated deficits at the end of the current financial year of £6·57 million. There are wide variations in the performance of individual companies, both national and regional, within this estimate.

Dr. Marek: The Minister could have been more honest. For example, he could have been specific and said that the Royal Shakespeare Company has a deficit of £3 million and has just turned off the lights at the Barbican for the

winter. What kind of Government can allow that to happen to one of our most prestigious companies which has an international reputation?

Mr. Mellor: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman chooses to bandy about questions of honesty. If he had asked a question designed to elicit that answer, he would have got it. Unfortunately, he asked a different question and he received the answer to it. He might like to bear it in mind that had we merely index linked the contribution to the Arts Council that was current when the last Government were in office, we would have been paying it £134 million, instead of which this year we are paying it £175 million, a significant proportion of which goes to the Royal Shakespeare Company. I am of course aware of the particular difficulties facing the RSC and of the particular courage and skill with which it is trying to overcome them. I regularly discuss those matters with Mr. Geoffrey Cass and the Arts Council.

Mr. Jessel: Should not we build on our national strengths? As the Royal National theatre is a tremendous centre of excellence and a great national asset which draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to our shores annually, will my right hon. and learned Friend consider most carefully what can be done to uphold its remarkably high standards?

Mr. Mellor: A great deal is being done to uphold its remarkable standards in the sense that the grant in aid for the Royal National theatre has increased above the rate of inflation and the theatre is one of those that are not significantly in deficit at the moment. I am also delighted that it has been possible for funds to be found from a variety of sources to allow the Royal National theatre to undertake one of the longest overseas tours ever made by a British theatrical company. Having been in Japan in the immediate aftermath of its visit, I know how impressed the Japanese were with its performances.

Mr. Maclennan: Will the Minister acknowledge that the predicament of the theatre, with 30 of the 32 clients of the Arts Council in serious deficit, is critical? The theatre is one of Britain's great successes for which the Government could claim some credit, but not if they do not recognise the need to inject a considerable amount of money and not stand behind the shield of the Arts Council. Does the Minister accept that, unless the Government act, the closure of the RSC's London venues will be inevitable, as Mr. Hands has said, and that would be a national shame and disaster?

Mr. Mellor: As I have already said, substantial improvements in funds have been made available to the Arts Council and it has then made them available to a range of clients including many of the theatres that have been mentioned. I am also aware of the problems of deficits which I am discussing with various concerned parties. Obviously, a number of points about financial difficulties form part of the representations that I have made to the Treasury recently.

Sir Antony Buck: While congratulating my right hon. and learned Friend on his new appointment, will he grasp an early opportunity to get around the provinces and visit some of the regional theatres where he will see the excellence of the works that are produced, particularly in the Mercury theatre in Colchester, and hear of their funding problems?

Mr. Mellor: I am extremely keen to travel outside London, and, now that I have finished my labours on the Broadcasting Bill it will be easier for me to do so. Tomorrow, indeed, I have a full day in the west midlands, which will culminate in the inauguration of the Birmingham Royal Ballet at one of the leading theatres in Birmingham. I expect to spend at least one day a week out of London, doing exactly what my hon. and learned Friend has advised.

Mr. Fisher: I congratulate the right hon. and learned Gentleman on his appointment, and welcome him to his new responsibilities. The House knows that he has a genuine and deep love of classical music: indeed, he has the reputation of having the largest collection of compact discs in the whole of Putney. However, he must know that he will be judged not on the size of his CD collection, but on his ability to obtain money for the arts.

As several hon. Members have already said, the arts are facing a financial crisis. He knows that this week the Royal Shakespeare Company goes dark in London, and that the Theatre in Crisis campaign, launched today, identifies 30 of the 32 English repertory theatres as being in deficit. When we add the national theatres, the real deficit figure for the performing arts is £16 million.

Will the Minister tell the House today whether he believes—as we do in the Labour party—that the arts should receive an increase this year above the rate of inflation? On that will depend whether his time at the Dispatch Box is happy or unhappy. One thing is certain: it will be a short time before the next general election and a Labour Government who do value the arts.

Mr. Mellor *rose*——

Mr. Tony Banks: Sell your CD collection.

Mr. Mellor: Or perhaps my season ticket to Stamford Bridge.

Mr. Banks: No, no.

Mr. Mellor: Before we get down to the nasty business, let me say politely to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) that I wish him a very happy birthday. May he pass many happy birthdays sitting on the Opposition Front Bench.

I have already made it clear that the Government have nothing to be ashamed of in regard to the level of state funding. I have made to the Treasury the case for increases, with what effect will soon be revealed. It is also the case that a successful theatre, like any successful arts organisation, must look to others for assistance and must run its affairs properly. State funding is only one part of that. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central would speak from the Dispatch Box with much more credibility on these points if he took the matter up with some of the Labour councils which, for purely political reasons, are cutting their grants to the arts. For instance, how can he justify the position at the Lyric theatre in Hammersmith, where £100,000 of grant is to be lopped off by a council which has increased its staff by 1,000 in the past four years and does not propose to make any of them redundant, preferring to sacrifice the arts instead?

CIVIL SERVICE

European Community

46. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what steps his Department is taking to assist and encourage more Britons to take up positions within the institutions of the European Community.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. David Mellor): Last month I launched the European fast-stream, a new recruitment and training scheme, to help British candidates prepare for the Community competitions. A new unit has been set up in the Cabinet Office to co-ordinate our efforts to improve British representation in the European Community institutions, in conjunction with the European Commission, which has recognised that it shares the responsibility for tackling the problem.

Mr. Field: May I be the first to congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on his new position as Minister for the civil service, and express the hope that—as he is an avid supporter of Chelsea football club—under his direction the civil service will behave considerably better than the Chelsea fans? Can he confirm that those Whitehall warriors who take part in the new European fast-stream scheme will be able to return to a career in the home civil service should they find the task of shooting EMUs not to their liking—or, indeed, the mission of teaching civility to Europe's most uncivil servant, Mr. Jacques Delors, an impossible one?

Mr. Mellor: I am glad of my hon. Friend's commendation of our European fast-stream initiative, the aim of which is to allow people to start off as members of the British civil service so that they have certain guarantees of employment, which would otherwise be very difficult. I am delighted to say that of the 2,600 applicants for administrative appointments in the civil service, half have asked to be considered for the European fast-stream scheme and more than 500 have stated it as their first choice. I hope that, through the scheme, we shall make a large stride towards addressing the under-representation of Britain within institutions in the European Community.

Dr. Marek: Will the Minister check with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science that children in schools throughout the United Kingdom have the opportunity to study the appropriate number of European Community languages so that they are able to take up positions in Europe with the European Commission? It is an important question, because, as the Minister knows, the Government clearly have no influence in Europe any more, and the best that we can do now is to try to influence the European Commission through the civil servants who work in it.

Mr. Mellor: Although the hon. Gentleman has changed seats, his tone seems very much the same—alas. There has been an improvement in the teaching of Community languages in schools. I am glad to be able to say that, because—the hon. Gentleman is quite right—it is an important point. It is a traditional British failing—I certainly share it and perhaps the hon. Gentleman does as well—that there is an inability to speak a foreign language fluently. One of the things that we are making available to people who apply for our European fast-stream course is tuition in a foreign language. I hope that a number of them who get to the point of applying will already be expert as a result of what has happened at school and university.

Mr. Hague: Will my right hon. and learned Friend encourage a larger number of secondments of quite senior civil service personnel to European Community institutions? In particular, will he ensure that a period of secondment is treated as a positive career asset upon possible return to the home civil service?

Mr. Mellor: There is no doubt that a period of secondment to the European Community has been a great asset to my hon. Friend. Certainly we are alive to all the various ways of trying to ensure that our present under-representation ceases.

Agencies

47. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement about progress and future plans on the creation of agencies.

Mr. Mellor: On Wednesday we intend to publish the Government's response to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee's recent supportive report on next steps. On the same day we will also be publishing the first annual review of next steps.

Mr. Beith: Does the Minister agree that, if we are to get the best out of the useful programme of reform, there should be a unit in the Minister's own Department to oversee the effectiveness of the way in which the programme is being carried on and that Select Committees of this House must exercise their responsibility to scrutinise committees? Will he see that the first step is taken? Does he agree that it would be difficult to take the second step while we have no Scottish Select Committee and no Select Committee overseeing the work of legal Departments?

Mr. Mellor: On the hon. Gentleman's second point, as the recent report of the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee makes clear, there is ample scope for a constructive analysis of what is happening. Indeed, there is a great deal of useful material in the report to which we can respond on Wednesday.

On scrutiny within my own Department, I can assure the hon. Gentleman that one of the key elements of the next steps strategy—indeed, it is a fundamental base of it—is setting the agencies a set of tasks and rigorously monitoring whether those tasks have been achieved. Indeed, the performance-related pay of senior staff depends on it. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there is no shortage of monitoring. It is of the essence that we not merely change certain of the frameworks of work activity but actually improve performance.

Mr. Hanley: Is not the next steps programme proving popular to the civil servants who work in it and also delivering better service to customers?

Mr. Mellor: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend.

Conditions of Service

50. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received from the Civil Service trade unions about conditions of service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: From time to time I receive representations from the civil service trade unions on a wide range of issues.

Mr. Skinner: When the Minister meets trade union representatives, will he tell them that he looks forward to the day when he will be able to negotiate civil servants' pay in a mark-dominated European currency?

Mr. Mellor: That will not be part of my presentation.

Mr. Holt: My right hon. and learned Friend may recall that not very long ago an announcement was made in the House that the Ministry of Defence would transfer many of its jobs to the north-east of England and to Teesside. However, it was announced in the north-east last week that that project may well be knocked on the head as a result of representations that have been made by the trade unions of the civil servants who do not wish to move to the north-east of England. Will my right hon. and learned Friend take this opportunity of saying that he will not allow such recalcitrance to stand in the way of a worthy project?

Mr. Mellor: Like the whole House, I note what my hon. Friend has said and I shall certainly pass his remarks on to the Ministry of Defence, which is responsible for the move. It is not one of my responsibilities. However, I am proud of the fact that under this Government four out of five civil servants work outside Greater London. That is a significant and important development, to which we remain committed.

Special Advisers

52. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what is the current number of special advisers in the civil service; and what was the figure 12 months ago.

Mr. Mellor: Thirty-three currently; and 31 twelve months ago.

Mr. Banks: That is a significant increase in the number of special advisers. May I congratulate the Minister on his job and express the hope that, despite having two additional jobs, he will still find the time to kick up a bit of dust down at Stamford Bridge? Does he agree that it is now time to consider the issue of the politicisation of the civil service, given that there have been a number of senior appointments, not only in the special adviser area, but elsewhere, that suggest that we should either become honest and decide that we are going to operate a spoils system or the Government should pull up the stumps and stop appointing people who, under the Prime Minister's dictum, are clearly "one of them"?

Mr. Mellor: Thirty-three out of 500,000 is not a substantial proportion. I note what the hon. Gentleman has said about other political appointments and should be interested to know chapter and verse on that. As far as I am aware, appointment to senior ranks of the civil service is entirely on merit. The hon. Gentleman might need further to particularise the charge that he has made before any of us can evaluate it fully.

Oral Questions

3.32 pm

Mr. Speaker: I have a short statement to make about oral questions next Session.

The House has now agreed to the first report of the Select Committee on Procedure relating to oral questions and to certain changes in the relevant Standing Orders. The main effects of this decision will be that, as from the first day of the next Session, Wednesday 7 November, oral questions will have to be tabled in person by hon. Members, and only a limited number of oral questions tabled will be printed. The Table Office has prepared a short note explaining the exact effects of the changes, and this will be available to hon. Members in the Table Office and in the Whips' Offices.

The Procedure Committee Report left one or two matters to my discretion, in particular the exact number of questions to be printed, and the timing of the shuffle. So far as numbers are concerned, I propose initially to authorise the numbers suggested in the report. Accordingly, for those Departments answering for the whole of Question Time, a maximum of 40 questions will be printed. For those Departments answering until 3.10 or 3.15, the maximum figure will be 30. For the Prime Minister the figure will be 10. Similarly, for the smaller Departments that answer for five or 10 minutes, the maximum will also be 10. As the Procedure Committee recommended, I will review those figures from time to time in the light of experience.

The present deadline for oral questions to be included in the daily "shuffle" will be extended from 4 pm to 5 pm. Again, I will review this when the new system has been in operation for a period.

I hope that any hon. Member who is still uncertain about how the new system will operate will not hesitate to consult the Table Office before the House is prorogued, so that the new system can get off to a smooth start on 7 November.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that any points of order can arise from that—it is an Order of the House.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Could you please explain, the question of —*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call Mr. Cryer first.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The question that arises is about the number of Prime Minister's questions, which has been set at 10. What will happen if hon. Members pull out, as they frequently do, both in Prime Minister's Question Time and in other Question Times? Will the maximum number of questions take it into account that some hon. Members who are lucky enough to be in the first 10 may pull out before Prime Minister's Question Time starts? Will questions then include the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th and so on, as for other Question Times, to replace the withdrawn questions?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Allow me to answer one point at a time. If hon. Members table questions themselves—that will be the procedure in the future—I should be surprised if a large number of them who are in the first 10 do pull out.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I, on behalf of the Procedure Committee, thank you for acting within two working days of the recommendation of the House to bring in something that will, first, benefit the real Members of Parliament——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that that is a bit provocative. We are all real Members of Parliament!

Sir Peter Emery: Allow me to finish my question, Sir. It will benefit real Members who do not take part in the syndicalisation of questions, which is likely——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a heavy day ahead of us. I hope that the hon. Member is coming to a conclusion.

Sir Peter Emery: It is likely to result in a saving to the Exchequer of something over £3 million. The House should be grateful.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You mentioned in your remarks that the limit on Prime Minister's questions would be 10. I suggest that you look at that afresh because you will find, on examination, that in the past two or three years, there have been at least three occasions when 10 was exceeded. There was one occasion when you personally called more than 14 because people were missing and so on. It is not a matter of hon. Members pulling the questions out if they are in the first 10. Towards the end of a Session when hon. Members are missing, as on two previous occasions, we could finish up running short.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We do not really want further points of order on this. It is not for me to second-guess what the Select Committee has decided and recommended. I have already said to the whole House that I shall keep the matter under review. If I think that the maximum numbers need to be increased, that will certainly be done. I shall take one more point of order.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You have kindly said that you will monitor the new arrangements. May I ask in particular that you pay attention to the geographical distance of some constituencies from the House? The extension from 4 o'clock to 5 o'clock will not make much difference to Members from the north of Scotland, the regions of England and Wales, who are not within easy communication distance of the House. Will you ensure that we are not in any way disadvantaged when tabling questions?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot interfere with the shuffle. I hope that the hon. Lady is not asking me to do that.

Child Maintenance

3.37 pm

The Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Tony Newton): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the Government's proposals for a new system for securing the maintenance of children, on which a White Paper entitled "Children Come First" is being published today. Copies have been placed in the Vote Office.

I should emphasise at the outset that, while it seemed appropriate for me as Social Security Secretary to make this statement, the purpose and context of these proposals extend well beyond my Department. The White Paper is presented jointly by myself, my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate. My noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor is also making a statement today in another place.

Governments cannot, of course, ensure that all children always live with both their parents, but they can and should seek to ensure that, whatever the underlying circumstances, the welfare of the children is the prime consideration. An effective system for securing their financial maintenance is an important element in achieving that objective.

The present arrangements are, by common consent, deficient. As the various surveys and background papers published with this White Paper clearly show, they are fragmented, inconsistent, and too often subject to uncertainty and delay. They lack systematic provision for review and updating as circumstances change. Even where a maintenance obligation has been clearly established, it can be difficult to enforce and the caring parent may face great additional difficulties and pressures in protecting the children's rights.

The result is that only 30 per cent. of lone mothers and 3 per cent. of lone fathers currently receive maintenance for their children regularly, and that some two thirds of lone parents and their children now depend wholly or partly on income support. Such a position is in the interests of neither the parents nor, above all, the children, and, of course, it places a large burden on those who pay tax, many of whom are themselves bringing up children on perhaps quite modest incomes. The cost of income-related benefits for lone parents has risen, in real terms, from less than £1·5 billion in 1981-82 to more than £3 billion in 1988-89.

As the House is aware, a number of steps have already been taken, either administratively or through legal changes such as those in the recent Social Security Act 1989 to make improvements within the present system. We shall press ahead with those, since it will clearly take time to undertake wider reform, but the Government have firmly concluded that such wider reform is now required, and the White Paper sets out our proposals.

There are three major elements in those proposals. The first is a clear formula for the assessment of maintenance, which can be applied administratively rather than through the courts. The aim here is to establish a single system available to all, giving consistent and predicable decisions with a realistic relationship to the costs of providing for the care of a child, and the subject to regular reviews. The second is a purpose-built agency to undertake the assessment itself, and the work of collection and enforcement where necessary. The third is measures to enhance the payment of maintenance as a foundation on which lone parents can build greater independence for themselves and their children. I will deal briefly with each in turn.

The assessment formula will itself consist of three main parts. The starting point will be the calculation of a maintenance bill, which the parents will be expected to pay if they can afford to do so. It will be based on the appropriate income support rates, including the caring parent's own personal allowance. That represents the costs of caring for the children, and will thus take account of the number and age of the children.

Once the bill is calculated, the next step will be to assess the amount which the absent parent keeps from his net —I stress "net"—income for his own necessary expenses. That is described in the White Paper as "exempt income" and it will include his reasonable housing costs and the costs of any other children he is liable to support. There will, additionally, be a protected level of income, set by reference to the income support level, to avoid the situation in which the absent parent could be better off on benefit than in work.

Thirdly, the amount expected to be paid in maintenance is then worked out on the basis of sharing the remaining income—what is left after allowing for the necessary expenses—equally with the children, up to the point at which the maintenance bill is met. Once that has occurred, contributions will continue, but taking a smaller share of any additional exempt income and thus, as would be expected in any family, the children will share in the standard of living of their parents. Where the caring parent has sufficient income, he or she will also be expected to contribute towards the maintenance bill.

Absent parents on income support have the same basic resoponsibility towards their children as others, and we therefore think it right both to bring them within the system and, with appropriate exceptions, to expect from them a small maintenance contribution. The White Paper suggests 5 per cent. of the adult personal allowance, in line with the standard deductions made for other purposes. We hope to begin applying the formula within the current system from early in 1992.

The second main element in our proposals is the establishment of a Child Support Agency. It will have responsibility for tracing absent parents, assessing, collecting and where necessary enforcing maintenance payments. It will need powers to make a legally binding assessment, to require information and to determine the method of payment. It will be required to review the maintenance payable every year. In Great Britain, the Agency will operate as a "next steps" executive agency within my Department. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will make similar arrangements in Northern Ireland.

When the agency is fully operational, the courts will no longer decide applications for child maintenance or applications to vary existing awards. The courts will retain jurisdiction over related matters which arise when parents separate or divorce. Those matters include residence of and contact with children, disputed paternity, property settlements and spousal maintenance. We hope that the

agency will begin work in early 1993, though the number of cases potentially involved means that it will be some time before all existing cases can be taken on.

Parents may choose to apply to the agency or make their own private arrangements, using if they wish the published formula. Where, however, the caring parent is receiving income support or family credit for herself and the children—that is to say, where the public can be seen to have an interest—she will be obliged to use the agency's services.

Since it is no more acceptable for a caring parent simply to choose not to seek maintenance than for an absent parent simply to choose not to pay it, we think it right —again with appropriate exceptions—to make it possible for a deduction to be made from the adult personal allowance if he or she unreasonably refuses to help in pursuing it.

The third element in our proposals, to which I also attach great importance, is one which builds on the advantages of regular payments of maintenance in making it easier for lone parents, as many wish to do, to move from reliance on income support into work and thus greater independence. To that end we propose, at the same time as the formula is introduced, to make two significant changes in benefit rules.

One is to introduce into family credit, housing benefit and community charge benefit a maintenance disregard of £15 a week, so that only above that level will maintenance have any effect on the help otherwise given by those benefits to parents who are working. The other will be to widen the scope of family credit for all parents, but in a way likely to be of particular importance to lone parents. We shall make it possible to claim this benefit when working only for 16 hours weekly, instead of the present 24. That should make it much easier for parents to combine work with their responsibilities for caring for their children. A parallel change will be made in the income support rules, so that that can be claimed only when working less than 16 hours.

In making those changes, we shall ensure full transitional protection for the small number of people who might otherwise be adversely affected. The choice of whether to work or not must of course be for the parent, but it is clear that many wish to do so, and where that is so it is right that we should seek to help, as these measures will.

Our proposals for a formula and an agency, including the rights of appeal to whose precise form we are giving further consideration, will require legislation. That will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows. In the first two years, our proposals will give rise to some additional net expenditure, principally in establishing the agency and in making the benefit changes I have just described. From then onwards, however, we expect to see net savings, initially modest but building up in the longer term. More important, however, we shall have a system which better serves the parents and the children themselves. In conjunction with the Children Act 1989 and the wide-ranging review of the family justice system as a whole, which the Government have in hand it is an important further step in making sure that children do indeed come first.

Mr. Michael Meacher (Oldham, West): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that we strongly support the principle of the state assisting with the collection of child maintenance and agree that fathers should be expected to accept responsibility for their children? As the House knows, I issued a consultation paper last year, making that proposal a month before the Prime Minister's speech recommending it, which demonstrates that there is cross-party support in the House for this principle.

However, we have considerable reservations about the means by which the right hon. Gentleman intends to operate the agency. In particular, is it not clear from the way that the Government have drafted the scheme that the main intention is to save public expenditure rather than to remedy child poverty and enable lone parents to gain self-sufficiency? When there has been time for people clearly to read the paper, perhaps they will think that it should have been entitled not "Children Come First" but "The Treasury Comes First."

For a mother on income support, where the right hon. Gentleman is proposing no disregard on maintenance—so the mother is permitted to keep none of the money collected without a corresponding reduction in her income support—it is clear that she gains nothing; only the Government gain, through a reduction in public expenditure. Will not the father feel intense resentment that none of his enforced maintenance will go to the child or to the mother, but only to the Department of Social Security? Is not the lack of a maintenance disregard when the mother stays at home with her child a basic flaw in the scheme, as without it, neither mother nor father will have an incentive to participate? Does not that reveal that the real purpose behind the scheme is to save Government expenditure?

If the mother does seek a job, will the £15 maintenance disregard that the right hon. Gentleman is proposing for family credit, really assist her in gaining her independence when she still has to meet far higher expenses in child care costs and, if she is an owner occupier, in mortgage interest payments? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that, given those large offsets, a mother would probably have to earn more than £150 a week—10 times as much—before she was better off than she would be on income support?

Will a £15 maintenance disregard on family credit offer much of a pathway out of poverty? According to a recent CBI survey, 70 per cent. of lone parents want to work but cannot because there is no child care provision available. Is it not clear that, without those other elements, of a genuine family policy, which the Government have so far grossly neglected, the right hon. Gentleman's proposal will do very little either to cure poverty or to help lone parents to regain their independence?

As to the father—the absent parent is usually the father —will not the requirement for him to pay up to 50 per cent. of his income, after allowances for necessary personal expenses, simply transfer poverty from the first family to the second family if the father has other children in another relationship?

Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that surveys have shown that up to one third of men liable to pay child maintenance are either unemployed or on very low incomes, so that, even given a protected income for the second family at income support levels, the right hon. Gentleman's proposal will simply leave both families on the poverty line? Does he not understand that, if he takes a punitive attitude to absent fathers and forces them to make unreasonable levels of payment, he will create hostility and antagonism and damage the relationship between the absent father and his child?

[Mr. Michael Meacher]

Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that he wanted a scheme along the lines of the Australian and Wisconsin models, whereby the father would pay to support the child, and at much lower percentages of his income—but the Treasury insisted that the father should pay for the full maintenance costs of the mother as well, including her mortgage interest payments, up to the crippling rate of 50 per cent.?

Does not that again expose the fact that it is a cost saving, not a poverty reducing, exercise? Is it not likely that a penal 50 per cent. repayment rate will have the perverse result of pushing more second families into dependence on benefit than it will rescue first families from it? Will the right hon. Gentleman also reconsider the element of compulsion in the scheme, which forces the mother to name the father on pain of otherwise losing up to 20 per cent. of benefit? Will the mother have an untramelled right——

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Some of the children are yours.

Mr. Meacher: —to refuse to name the father when she fears that he might be violent or where she may not be certain that she knows who is the father?—*[Interruption.]*

Ms. Short: They might have illegitimate children.

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. All these interruptions take time. We are in the middle of hearing a response to the Secretary of State's statement.

Mr. Hayes *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Do I understand that an allegation has been made against the hon. Gentleman?

Mr. Hayes: A remarkable allegation was made, Mr. Speaker, by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short)—all the more remarkable, I suspect, to my wife than to me—that I had sired illegitimate children. To the best of my knowledge, I have not.

Ms. Short: I was not referring, Mr. Speaker, just to the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes), but was pointing out to Conservative Members that some of them may have fathered children that they do not know about—and might end up being named.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is an unworthy allegation for the hon. Lady to make. I ask her to withdraw it.

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Ms. Short: The point that I am making is about all men.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Lady specifically mentioned Conservative Members, and it is that remark that I am asking her to withdraw.

Ms. Short: It was clear that I was not speaking only——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I thought that I heard the hon. Lady refer—in fact, I think that she did refer—to Conservative Members. I am asking her to withdraw not the generality of her remark but the allegation against Conservative Members.

Ms. Short: I was making the point, Mr. Speaker, that many men—including those on the Conservative Benches, and on these Benches, and outside——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. Lady to do the right thing. She knows exactly what I am asking her to do, and I ask her please to do it now.

Ms. Short: I am very sorry about this, Mr. Speaker. I have no wish to challenge your authority, but I mean the point that I am making, which is not just about Conservative Members but includes them. I mean it, and I am very sorry, but I am not willing to withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Lady is an Opposition Front Bench spokesman, and she must withdraw her allegation against Conservative Members. That is what she has said, and if she looks at the record in *Hansard*, she will see that that is what she said. That is what I am asking her to withdraw, please.

Ms. Short: This is not fair and not reasonable.

Mr. Speaker *rose*——

Ms. Short: I was making the point, Mr. Speaker, when Conservative Members were heckling——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Time is getting on. We have a very busy day ahead. The hon. Lady knows exactly what I am asking her to do, as does the whole House.

Ms. Short: I have made no specific allegations, Mr. Speaker, against any right hon. or hon. Member.—[HON. MEMBERS: "Yes you have."] I am sorry, but I was making a point about the statement, and about forcing women to name the fathers of their children.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would be deeply reluctant to have to take further action in relation to the hon. Lady. I heard her say it and the House heard her make an allegation against hon. Gentlemen. That is what I am asking her to withdraw. Will she now withdraw that, so that we can get on?

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. No, I shall not deal with the hon. Gentleman's point of order. I am dealing with the hon. Lady.

Ms. Short: I did not, and no one in the House heard me, make a specific allegation about any hon. Member. I am making a point that I mean, and it is important. I respect you greatly, Mr. Speaker, but I am not going to be bullied on this matter. I have not broken the rules of the House. I have not made an allegation against any hon. Member, and I would not do so.

Mr. Speaker: I think that we cannot continue like this. I heard the hon. Lady make that allegation—*[Interruption.]* I am dealing with it. All the hon. Lady needs to do is to get up and withdraw any reflection upon hon. Members in the House. I am not asking her to withdraw a reflection on men in general. That is a matter for her. Will she withdraw any reflection upon hon. Members?

Ms. Short: I was making a comment about men in general and there are a lot of men in the House, and that is the only sense in which it is a reflection. I am not casting

any aspersions on individual hon. Members. I am making a serious and important point about men in general. It just happens to be the case that a lot of hon. Members are men, that is all.

Mr. Speaker: I have said that I do not think that that is good enough. The hon. Lady is a Front Bench spokeswoman. I am asking her to do the right and honourable thing, otherwise I much regret that I shall have to take action which I would deeply regret.

Ms. Short: But it is not fair.

Mr. Speaker: I am asking her to do it.

Mr. Meacher *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: No, order. I am asking her to do it. She has already said that she has respect for the Chair, and I believe her. I am asking her to withdraw any reflection on any hon. Member.

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles) *rose*——

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not need any help. I am asking the hon. Lady to withdraw her remarks.

Ms. Short: I am extremely sorry about this. One of the reasons I came into politics was that I did not like bullying. I am not casting any aspersions on any hon. Member, truly I am not. It seems to me that if you thought there was an aspersion it requires a withdrawal, Mr. Speaker, but I did not cast such an aspersion and therefore there is nothing to withdraw. I mean the other point that I made, and it is very important.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall ask for the extract of *Hansard* to be brought down to me so that I can check and see exactly what was said. If what I think the hon. Lady said is in *Hansard* I shall expect her to withdraw it. We must now get on.

Mr. Meacher: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker.

I was talking about the important point of principle —the compulsion for a mother to name a father. I asked the Secretary of State whether the mother will have an untrammelled right to refuse to name the father, when she fears that he might be violent or when she is not certain who the father is. If not, how will the right hon. Gentleman avoid going down the road of compulsory blood testing, paternity suits and genetic fingerprinting?

I strongly urge him to say, in general, what guarantee he can give that the power to withhold benefit will not be biased in favour of cost saving rather than protecting the basic right of the mother. We are also very concerned that the Government are removing the freedom to choose to stay at home with their children from lone parents on benefit, even if that is in their children's interests.

Does the righ hon. Gentleman accept that the thrust of his proposals is to drive lone parents into work, whatever the needs of their children? Since the absent father will have to pay to maintain the mother if she does not work, he will no doubt pressurise her to work. She will be allowed to keep the £15 a week maintenance only if she claims benefits associated with low pay but not if she chooses to stay at home with her children.

This is potentially a very important new scheme, but its proposed methods of operation are seriously flawed. It will be effective only if its structure is designed not primarily to save the Government money but as part of a wider family policy to remedy child poverty and help lone parents—both mothers and fathers—to gain security and freedom of choice.

Mr. Newton: May I assure the House that I have no intention of taking the risk of making any general observation about women? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a very heavy day ahead of us. There are a considerable number of Lords amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill, and I know that the House is anxious to reach a conclusion on at least one very important amendment. The House will have to sit very late if we do not get on with the statement.

Mr. Newton: I welcome, in the spirit in which I think the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) offered it, his general support for the principle of what the Government are seeking to do and the clear expression that he gave to it. I am sure that others will also welcome his general support. I welcome rather less some of the hon. Gentleman's other comments, not least because they went some way towards misrepresenting our proposals.

It is far-fetched to suggest that the only aim is to save money in circumstances in which the first result of the Government's proposals, including not least the benefit improvements to the in-work benefits, is to increase, not reduce, expenditure. I reject also the suggestion that, where maintenance is paid, there is no gain to those on income support and that the only beneficiary is the taxpayer. Given that the taxpayer has been picking up a bill that was not properly the taxpayer's, simply because maintenance was not being paid, it is far form clear that it is either rational or logical to believe that the taxpayer should continue to pay that bill, even when maintenance is being propertly paid.

Moreover, from the point of view of lone parents, especially those many who wish to work, the fact that maintenance is to be paid to the lone parent will put her in a substantially better position if and when she is able to take work. That is portable income which goes with her; it is hers by right when she moves off benefit. It provides a better platform for the transition.

As for the £15 disregard, the hon. Gentleman has probably not yet had time to study the examples in the White Paper. However, he will see that that, especially when taken in conjunction with what we have done this very month to improve the housing benefit earnings disregard, significantly improves the return that many lone parents will get from working. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that.

We estimate that the combination of the proposals that I have included in the White Paper will enable between 50,000 and 75,000 lone parents who currently do not feel that they are able to go out to work to do so. That is a gain, from everybody's point of view.

One of the hon. Gentleman's last points was his allegation that, somehow, we are compelling lone caring parents to name the father. There is no question of compulsion. It is worth remembering that between 80 and 90 per cent. of never-married mothers readily assist in tracing and collecting maintenance from the father. We shall make the necessary exceptions for circumstances such as rape and incest. Before any action was taken under the proposal that I have announced, there would be a considerable amount of sympathetic investigation by

[Mr. Newton]

trained officers to establish whether a lone parent had reasonable grounds. Where it was found that those grounds were not reasonable, there would be the usual right of appeal under the social security system. That is not a draconian step but a reasonable one in the circumstances of our policy as a whole.

The hon. Gentleman suggested that I had in some way been attracted by one or other of the ingredients of some of the foreign schemes that we have considered. He has misread the position. I was not particularly attracted by the Wisconsin scheme, to which he especially referred. That relates to the absent parent's gross income, which means that the percentage figures that are sometimes quoted represent a much higher figure than those that I have suggested. It makes no allowance for second families, and in many ways it does not seem to be a satisfactory model.

On the point that we are somehow seeking to take half of an absent parent's income, I stress that we are talking about sharing the income that is left after taking the absent parent's net income—his income after tax and national insurance. We are allowing for reasonable housing costs and other obligations and then sharing the rest of the income with the children. The net result, in most cases, is nothing like 50 per cent. but much more like a quarter, and when compared with gross income it is more like 20 per cent. For people on reasonable earnings to be expected to contribute 20 per cent. of their income to the maintenance of their children is in no way unreasonable, and I believe that it will have widespread public support.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): Does my right hon. Friend agree that his statement will receive much welcome from my constituents, many of whom are lone mothers with children and who have been unable to get out of the housing and income cycle because of the absence of support from the father of their children? Will he consider the group of young males, many of whom are under the age of 18, who compete to father as many children as they can? Will he consider particularly carefully the incomes that they will provide? Will such payments be made through their parents until, once they are 18, they can pay for themselves?

Mr. Newton: There is no proposal in the White Paper, nor do I have such a proposal, seeking to take money from parents one generation upwards. The formula that we are proposing provides for, and takes account of, the circumstances when young men have acquired the responsibility that inescapably goes with fathering children. I think that my hon. Friend will find that clearly set out in the paper.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): May I give a general welcome to the Secretary of State's statement? Why, as the Conservative party claims to be the party of the family, has it taken so long to bring forward these proposals, when over the past 11 years the idea that parents should support their children has, for a large group of the population, collapsed as a principle affecting their private conduct? Does he accept that many constituents will be pleased that there may be a saving in public expenditure? Some Labour Members do not wish low-wage earners to contribute to the Exchequer when people on higher incomes could but do not make maintenance payments for their children.

Will the right hon. Gentleman admit that two areas will probably concern many families, particularly women? First, although it is logical to say, "The father should pay maintenance, so why should the mother keep any of it?", public policy does not often work satisfactorily if one allows only for logic. We must work with the grain of human nature, and surely an incentive might make a big difference.

Secondly, while a few mothers may decide to be cussed and not name the father of their children, many other women, for good reasons, will not wish to give his name, and many of them will be frightened to do so. What assurance can the Minister give the House that this policy will be conducted sensibly enough to make sure that not only those who can without any worry to themselves disclose the name, do so, but those who would be frightened to do so do not have to pay the penalty of a cut in benefit if they refuse?

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the constructive way in which he has supported the generality of the proposals, just as he has consistently done over a long period.

I have already commented on the incentives issue. It is right to focus what we are doing principally on in-work benefits rather than out-of-work benefits, for reasons which are set out in the White Paper and which I explained.

I am grateful for the thoughtful way in which the hon. Gentleman put his last point. I have made it clear that there will be provision for no deductions to be made in circumstances where it is judged reasonable that the caring parent should not wish to assist in pursuing maintenance. That must inescapably be a matter of judgment by trained officers on the basis of skilled interviewing.

One of the advantages of setting up a purpose-built agency is that we are much more likely to have that kind of staff than we are under the present arrangements. The hon. Gentleman can have my personal assurance that it is not our intention to "pursue" people in this way—if we want to use that kind of language—where they have a good reasoon for not co-operating.

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that these welcome measures should encourage a greater sense of responsibility, so that more parents stand by their children in the first place? On a point of interest to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short), will my right hon. Friend confirm that courts will have the power to use genetic tests in disputed cases?

Mr. Newton: I said in my statement that disputes about paternity will be matters for the courts. It is open to them to use precisely the same techniques and methods as they use now to establish the truth in a disputed paternity case. On my hon. Friend's wider point, I hope that these measures will have that effect, but they will have the advantage of making the situation that follows a breakdown or separation clearer and less of a lottery and hassle than it too often is at present. That will be a clear social gain for all involved.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Does the Secretary of State accept that, from our point of view, it is right and just that a father who can pay but will not should be pursued? We understand that, if this policy

is enforced inflexibly, it will cause more trouble than it is worth. Any divorce lawyer will tell the right hon. Gentleman that many divorced women happily forgo their right to alimony and maintenance on condition that the former husband forgoes the right of access to the child? Many estranged husbands deliberately use a weapon of torment against their former wives—access to the children of the marriage. Will the right hon. Gentleman assure us that the Child Support Agency will protect women whose husbands say to them, "I am paying for these brats and I will jolly well see them,"—usually at Christmas?

Mr. Newton: The two issues are clearly seen in the White Paper, and perhaps even more clearly seen in my mind, as entirely separate. To the extent that one is used as a lever in respect of the other, I am opposed to that. One advantage of our proposal is that it will make it much more difficult for people to use maintenance as a lever separately from access questions, which need to be separately resolved, because it will be much more difficult to avoid maintenance.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Is it not a scandal that only 23 per cent. of single-parent families are supported by the missing father? Is not the most important point that we have heard today the fact that this agency will pursue these fathers to contribute, which will be of value to particular families? Is it not important that these contributions will frequently go far beyond the benefit level that the mothers have been enjoying and, therefore, the narrow view of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meecher) is not the key point to the mothers concerned?

Mr. Newton: There will certainly be some cases in which the effective establishment of maintenance will obviate the need for income support but, as I have already said, it is my guess that the greater effect—certainly in terms of numbers—will be to provide a firmer platform on the basis of which lone parents can move into work with confidence should they wish to do so. Whichever is the case, and whatever the precise numbers turn out to be—we are talking about behavioural effects, which are difficult to measure with precision—I am sure that the parents involved will gain.

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): May I press the Minister on the question of women and children who are attempting to escape from a physically violent relationship with the man in the family or from mental torture by him? The Secretary of State has not made it clear enough how women and children will be protected from harassment and danger. He ought to acknowledge to the House the fact that it is for the woman and children themselves to judge whether they need to be protected from the man. The new agency will claim the right to intervene in that very private relationship. What safeguards will be introduced to ensure that women and children are not left open to more violence and harassment—the exact reasons why they got rid of the man in the first place?

Mr. Newton: Just as with the present system, cases in which violence occurs or is threatened in the way that the hon. Lady suggests will be a matter for agencies other than the Department of Social Security—most obviously, the police. The officers employed by the Child Support Agency will need to examine carefully all the circumstances, including any record of threats of the kind to which the hon. Lady has referred, in assessing whether or not the attitude of a lone parent is reasonable in a particular case. If the hon. Lady thinks about it, she will realise that there is no other way in which such a system could work.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): On the continuing problem of the enforcement of maintenance orders, will the new Child Support Agency have the powers and trained staff to chase up delinquent fathers who persistently fail to pay maintenance? Can my right hon. Friend reassure mothers that there will be a higher level of payments than at present?

Mr. Newton: I can certainly give my hon. Friend the first assurance that he seeks, and on every calculation and expectation that we have, the net result of the proposals will be to increase considerably the average maintenance payment and the number of those receiving maintenance.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): The Secretary of State will accept that there will be a general welcome for the fact that maintenance payments involving children will no longer be the responsibility of the courts, given that the existing arrangements have caused great anxiety to mothers and have created great bitterness between mothers and fathers in relation not only to maintenance but to access.

It is clear that the distinction will be helpful and the Secretary of State will accept that there will be a general welcome for the fact that the courts will no longer be responsible for the setting of maintenance orders in particular. But I am still worried about enforcement and, having had a brief look at the contents of the White Paper, I confess that I do not find the new proposals very imaginative. There is nothing new there. The agency will simply do the kind of work that the courts have unfortunately failed to do in the past. What new enforcement initiatives will there be to ensure more payments by fathers who at present absolve themselves of responsibility?

Mr. Newton: What is new about the proposals is not the detail of the powers but the fact that, for the first time, instead of having a wide variety of agencies—notably the courts and the Department of Social Security—doing different things in different ways, we shall have a single agency dedicated to the purpose and with the staff to do the job.

Mr. James Arbuthnot (Wanstead and Woodford): Is my right hon. Friend aware that one of the great strengths of his proposals is that they will allow consistency of treatment as between families? Does he accept that one of the factors that ensures that people obey the law is that they know clearly where they stand, and that he should therefore take every step to publicise the proposals so that people know where they stand in relation to their children?

Mr. Newton: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. Let me give an example which is to be found in the White Paper or the supporting documents. In two cases that were apparently similar in terms of obligation and income, one father ended up paying £5 a week and another ended up paying £50 a week. That cannot be defended.

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): The Secretary of State will be aware that Hackney has one of the largest number of single-parent families in the country, more than 17,000. They, in

[Ms. Diane Abbott]

common with millions of other women struggling to bring up children in poverty, will have been dismayed by the facetious way in which some Conservative Members treated this subject this afternoon. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] They would have expected the matter to have been treated more seriously by Conservative Members.

Is the Secretary of State aware that the proposal to dock women's benefit by 20 per cent. if they will not name the father will cause great fear to millions of woman? If a women's partner is violent or a drug abuser, she will feel that she must choose between her personal safety and losing a large slice of her tiny income.

Is the Minister aware that many people outside this place believe that, if the Government were seriously interested in helping single parents to struggle out of poverty, they would address training, subsidised child care and above all, a proper level of child benefit?

Mr. Newton: There are three points there. First, I must state that I detected no element of facetiousness in the responses from my hon. Friends or, indeed, in those made by Opposition Members during these exchanges.

Secondly, I have already said a fair amount about the 20 per cent. Millions of women cannot conceivably have anything to fear from the proposal, given that the great majority, as I have said, co-operate in any event with efforts to trace the father and collect maintenance.

Finally, with regard to training, when the hon. Lady has had an opportunity to consider the White Paper, she will see that we want to do what we can to ensure that training services are properly geared to the needs of lone parents, especially those who wish to return to the labour market. However, that is primarily a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Will my right hon. Friend accept that it is much better that these matters should be taken out of the courts, where there is vast delay and a great deal of trauma involved? Does he also agree that it is highly acceptable that this is, as he said, a platform for working towards independence for women, but most of all it will enable children of the first family to share in the father's prosperity in a way that they cannot at the moment? That is good for them and it is not bad for the father.

Mr. Newton: I hope that it will not be taken as facetious if I thank my hon. Friend and state that I can hardly believe my good fortune in having her praise heaped upon me twice in a week.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): May I ask the Secretary of State about a detail on the assessment of incomes? Is it not the case that the whole issue of housing costs is proving to be a quagmire for the Government because the phrase "reasonable housing costs" is used in the White Paper, yet in practice, the housing costs might be much higher? If housing costs constitute 30 per cent. of a low income, if that factor is not got right, the proposals might push families into greater poverty. What does the Minister assume to be "reasonable" housing costs?

Mr. Newton: They will all vary from case to case. The examples in the White Paper, which I hope are helpful in illustrating what is happening in the calculations, necessarily had to choose ballpark figures. The whole point of using terms like "reasonable" in that context is that there will be circumstances, for example mainly in the southern parts of the country, where "reasonable" housing costs are higher than in other parts of the country because of the general cost of housing. We shall try to take account of that. We do not want to have a position in which someone can deliberately house himself extravagantly as a means of avoiding a maintenance bill.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Will my right hon. Friend accept that his announcements this afternoon are very welcome? However, will he reassure the House that in the new spirit of co-operation within the European Community, there will be an ability to track down European Community fathers resident in this country and also people from this country resident elsewhere in the Community, so that the agency can execute its plans?

Mr. Newton: I certainly hope that, in the area covered by the proposals that I have announced this afternoon —in which I think that we are ahead of most of our Community partners—we shall benefit from the general improvement in European co-operation.

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): I broadly welcome the proposals. Not only is it absolutely right that absent fathers should make a contribution to their children's welfare; it is imperative that lone parents should be able to work to achieve their independence. However, I hope that the £15 disregard is only the first step, bearing in mind the current cost of child care.

I should like to press the Secretary of State further on the question of women possibly being intimidated so that they will not reveal the name of their child's father. Can he tell us what stringent steps may be considered to prevent a father from carrying out such intimidation? It is important both to protect the woman and child, and to ensure that an artificial threat of violence is not used to enable a father to keep quiet and not be brought to the enforcing agency's attention.

Mr. Newton: On the latter question, the hon. Lady has given one good indication of why it would not be sensible for me to make the kind of sweeping statement for which I was asked earlier by certain hon. Ladies on the Opposition Benches. It could easily provide—quite apart from the mother—the absent father with an opportunity to evade maintenance. The essential answer to the first part of the hon. Lady's question—as my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office has reminded me—is that any threat or actual intimidation is a criminal offence, and a matter for the police.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Eltham): Will my right hon. Friend accept that, as well as a welcome for his approach to the matter, there should be a general welcome in the country for the tone and language that he has used? He is dealing with sensitive matters affecting families under great stress, who are sometimes in great poverty. Will he also pass on to his colleagues who have helped to create this approach, and to staff in the courts and the DSS, the gratitude of 650 Members of Parliament for the work they do every week in coping with the financial needs of people who are often in considerable difficulty?

Mr. Newton: I am particularly grateful to my hon. Friend, who has made a point that perhaps I should have

made—that, underlying these substantial proposals has been a huge effort not only by officials in my Department —although that has certainly been huge—but by officials in a range of Departments across Whitehall. It has been a very effective collaborative effort, the results of which have, I believe, made it worth while.

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware, when he talks of this being a matter for the police, that some women experience enormous difficulty in obtaining injunctions and having them enforced? At the weekend, I was dealing with a lady in my constituency who has been repeatedly kicked about the head but cannot get her injunction enforced. Will the Secretary of State explain to the House why, if the majority of women co-operate in seeking maintenance, he insists on compulsion for the minority who may have good reason to resist?

Mr. Newton: I would almost turn round the hon. Lady's last point. The more that the great majority think it reasonable to co-operate—and, indeed, do co-operate —the less proper it is simply to allow others not to co-operate, without good reason. As for her earlier point, the hon. Lady will be aware that the problems of dealing with domestic violence are not exactly new, and certainly have not been precipitated by the White Paper. The Home Office issued a circular early in the year encouraging the police to take much more interest in such matters, because this is a long-running problem that needs firmer action.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): My right hon. Friend's statement will be welcomed by the millions of caring parents who do take responsibility for their children, and who recognise that the hallmark of a responsible society is individual's taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Will my right hon. Friend consider a further suggestion, perhaps with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science—the introduction of nursery vouchers for lone parents, who at present find that they are at a great disadvantage? They are having problems in getting their children educated before the age of five, and are thus handicapped in trying to find work.

Mr. Newton: I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science will note my hon. Friend's proposal. For my part, I believe that the right course is the one on which we have embarked—with better earnings disregards this month—which will be extended through the introduction of the maintenance disregard. That will improve the position of lone parents generally, and help them to meet work expenses—whether in the form of child-care costs or, for instance, travel costs.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Does the Secretary of State accept that, as his proposals are contained in a booklet called "Children Come First", the reservations that have been drawn to his attention, by hon. Ladies in particular, are because of our concern about children and the caring parent, who invariably is the mother? Therefore, will he explain why he regards it as a clear obligation on caring parents who are in receipt of family credit or income support to have to use the services of the proposed agency, as they are invariably the most vulnerable sections within our society? What steps will be taken to observe the total confidentiality of all such parents who are obliged to use the agency service? They are women who are subjected to domestic violence and to other threats. The confidentiality aspect must be dealt with in any legislation that is brought forward.

Mr. Newton: I do not think that I can add to what I said about the reason for thinking it right that those in receipt of benefits—whereas I said that the public can be seen to have an interest—should have to use the services of the agency. The hon. Lady may be labouring under a slight misapprehension in some respects. Many lone parents within the existing system much prefer the DSS to take over their maintenance orders, to do the work, and to go through the hassle of collecting maintenance than have to do it themselves. I see no reason why that role should not be enhanced rather than diminished under my proposals.

Mr. Bob Dunn (Dartford): Making irresponsible fathers act responsibly towards the families whom they have created is entirely to be welcomed. Will my right hon. Friend please remind the House of the time scale within which the reforms will be implemented? Bearing in mind that the need to know the name of the father is an important point in the success of the reforms, will my right hon. Friend confirm the proportion of names that are obtained now easily, correctly and satisfactorily?

Mr. Newton: Of course, it is not always possible to get a name, but often indications can be given that will help a well-organised agency to trace the person in question. We hope that the formula will start to apply within the existing system—the courts and the DSS—some time in the early part of 1992 and that the agency will be up and running in the course of 1993. As I said, it will be some time—perhaps two to three years—before it will be able to take on all existing cases.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I welcome this statement as underlining what should be axiomatic from the concept of fatherhood being for life —that the state, often unwittingly and with the best motives, has undermined traditional notions of parental responsibility in terms of access and support. Will my right hon. Friend go right to the heart of the matter and to what should be our primary concern, and explain how the statement benefits children?

Mr. Newton: It will benefit children, first, by ensuring that maintenance is paid when it is currently not being paid or that more adequate maintenance is paid. Secondly, it will remove a great deal—I have used the word "hassle" several times, and I shall use it again—of the hassle of confrontation between separating parents, to which the present system can give rise. Thirdly, and perhaps as important as anything else, the statement will help by providing the caring parent with a better basis on which to build her own independence and, therefore, that of the child.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Viggers.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): That is the third time from that side.

Mr. Speaker: I have called Mr. Viggers, but I must balance it up.

Mr. Peter Viggers (Gosport): May I also welcome these thoughtful and sensitive proposals? All hon. Members know how often the sadness of separation is followed by the humiliation of the woman having to pursue the father

[Mr. Peter Viggers]

for money for herself and for the children. Does my right hon. Friend agree that what he has done today is important? He has turned back an erosion of principles that has pervaded the past few decades during which there has been a growing feeling that the state is responsible for individuals. In fact, parents are responsible for their children, and they cannot walk away from their responsibility.

Mr. Newton: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks. I hope that we have gone some way towards re-establishing a principle that is accepted by everyone, which is that parents have a responsibility which cannot simply be cast aside.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): What savings is the Secretary of State hoping to make in the third, fourth and fifth years? Why could not those savings be used to help the single-parent families who are living in considerable poverty in this country and some second families who are in acute hardship because of maintenance payments?

Mr. Newton: Very roughly, we think that, in the first couple of years, there will probably be additional expenditure of between £100 million and £150 million on setting up the agency and making the benefit improvements to which I have referred. Even allowing for that, there will then be a net benefits saving of more than £50 million in the third year, which will build up over a long period to a sum significantly greater than that.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): When it is devised, will the formula be sufficiently flexible to take into account, for example, a person being responsible for another person's poll tax; a person being responsible, in some cases, for school fees which are voluntary; and the fact that, if someone is living in a large house before the problems occur, a huge lump sum has been paid to the carer on separation? Will the Secretary of State also take into account the fact that, because of a second relationship, the carer may sometimes be well off when the father of the children is not?

Mr. Newton: I said earlier that some of these matters —including, for example, property settlements—will necessarily remain a matter for the courts. However, as far as possible, we shall seek to ensure that, where any modification of the maintenance arrangements flows from that, it is carried out according to clear and certain rules.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): The Secretary of State will realise that he has had two or perhaps two and a half cheers from Opposition Members about his statement. On at least three or four occasions, the right hon. Gentleman has said that the agency will have enough staff to do the job, but he must be aware of the damning report which was published earlier this year by the National Audit Office, dealing with support for lone parents, which disclosed that the "liable relative" section staff of his Department have been cut by one third in the past eight years and that those are the very civil servants with the job of chasing up fathers to ensure that maintenance is paid. Where is the guarantee that the agency will have sufficient staff to do the job and that there will not be any further cuts that will place a burden on lone parents?

May I also ask the right hon. Gentleman about lone parents' ability to work? I forewarned him of this at business questions last Thursday. Although the report has not yet been published, the right hon. Gentleman knows that, earlier this year, in the Public Accounts Committee his own chief civil servant said on no fewer than six occasions that the responsibility for the changes of policy which had, in effect, made it more difficult for lone parents to go out to work were all ministerial changes. They were not changes made by the Department; they were policy decisions. Where is the evidence in today's statement that the Government have learnt the lessons of the changes that they made when they removed child-care costs from income support—although they had been included in supplementary benefit —which would genuinely enable lone parents to get out into the labour market again?

Mr. Newton: Since there is no very good evidence that the supplementary benefit arrangements were widely understood or widely used, I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's analysis. Obviously, the exchanges to which the hon. Gentleman referred have been reported to me and, equally obviously, I readily accept that changes in policy are matters for Ministers, not civil servants.

On staffing, I repeat the point that I have made once or twice already. Not the least gain from all this is that the staff involved in this area—the same is true of the staff who are involved with national insurance contributions and compliance in our offices—will now be part of a separate distinct agency, purpose-built for the one task. That will make it much less likely that, unlike in the past, insufficient priority will be given to that work in the future.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on responding to the wishes of the many single parents who wish to resume some form of work, and on the changes that he has made to the family credit arrangements? How many people will the changes benefit in terms of enabling them to come off income support? Finally, what steps will my right hon. Friend take to ensure that there is widespread uptake of the enhanced family credit arrangements?

Mr. Newton: As with family credit, under the present arrangements we shall try to bring the provisions to people's attention in every possible way. We have had a good deal of success. Give or take the uncertainties of behavourial effects, we estimate that between 50,000 and 75,000 lone parents will find it possible to move into work as a result of these proposals.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): Is the Secretary of State aware that the public are interested in primarily two issues relating to this matter, one of which is that absentee fathers should face their responsibility—there is no difference between us on that? The second concern—I put this matter to the Prime Minister in a question last Session —is: who will benefit—the Chancellor or the child? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that when I asked the Prime Minister that, she said that the benefit would go to the child and the mother? In the light of that, will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that the Treasury will gain from

this move from the third year onwards? Will he also confirm that single mothers who stay at home will not gain at all from these measures?

Mr. Newton: I am becoming increasingly resistant to the way in which Opposition Members talk about "the Treasury" as if it were somehow disembodied from all the people in the country. When the hon. Gentleman talks about "the Treasury", he means the taxpayer.

Dr. Reid: No.

Mr. Newton: "The taxpayer" includes many families in which the parents are working to bring up their children, often on modest incomes. I see no reason why we should ignore their interests in all this.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Will my right hon. Friend accept that many of my constituents will welcome the fact that financial responsibility is being returned firmly to the childrens' parents? May I suggest that my right hon. Friend and his colleagues might consider broadening the use of the Child Support Agency in the long run into a number of other areas, such as housing? I have a number of violent husbands—*[Laughter.]*—who continue to occupy council houses, whose wives are either unable or unwilling—understandably—to pursue them through the courts. Many of those women and their children would benefit greatly if this arrangement were extended to housing.

Mr. Newton: In so far as financial payments for whatever purposes are concerned, it is clear that everything that I have announced today will contribute to easing the problems that concern my hon. Friend.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Will the Secretary of State accept that it is the daily reality of the Scottish courts that the issue of access is normally linked to aliment, and will he take account of that? Does the right hon. Gentleman recognise that many of the people who go to these lengths to avoid payment feel the greatest bitterness, and will he therefore accept the pleas made by hon. Members of all parties not to pressurise women into pursuing these people on pain of penalty? Finally, will the collection agency collect on behalf of women who are in work, as well as women who are on benefit, and if not, is not that a disincentive to going out to work?

Mr. Newton: The agency will be ready to collect on behalf of anybody who wishes to use it. When I said that using the agency would be a requirement for those on certain benefits, I also made it clear that parents in other cases who wished to use the agency would be free to do so. I do not accept the terminology used by the hon. Gentleman or words such as "pressurise". On that front, I cannot add to what I said earlier.

Mr. Tony Banks: Is the Secretary of State aware that, unless he is a little more forthcoming about what constitute "reasonable grounds", it will appear to Opposition Members that the agency's role will be more to save money than to give first consideration to the welfare of the child? Surely the right hon. Gentleman has been impressed by the arguments made by hon. Members of all parties and by the fact that there is genuine concern that mothers who have separated from violent partners are the very people about whom we should be most concerned, because they will be the most reluctant to give the name of their partner? Will the right hon. Gentleman bear that point very much in mind?

Finally, what arrangements are being made to achieve reciprocal arrangements with other Governments? Many partners leave this country and go to other parts of the world, but, as far as I can tell, under these provisions it will be difficult for the agency to make a claim. What steps are the Government taking to make some reciprocal arrangements?

Mr. Newton: Obviously, I shall explore the possibilities on the last point that the hon. Gentleman raised. On his earlier point, I hope that it will be of some encouragement to him that the estimates that I have given include no estimated saving from the proposal for a possible 20 per cent. deduction. We do not expect it to have a massive saving effect. It is simply an appropriate provision to avoid unreasonable non-co-operation. I am reluctant to be drawn in the direction that the hon. Gentleman asks because it would all too easily provide any husband with an easy let-out. He would simply have to make a particular threat.

Mr. Speaker: I have now had an opportunity to send for the extract from *Hansard*. I find that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) said:

> "Some of the children are yours."

That appears to be a reflection on me—*[Laughter.]*—but I take it to be a reflection on the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes). He subsequently said:

> "A remarkable allegation was made, Mr. Speaker, by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short)—all the more remarkable, I suspect, to my wife than to me—that I have sired illegitimate children. To the best of my knowledge, I have not."

Ms. Short: To the best of his knowledge. *[Laughter.]*

Mr. Speaker: I now say to the hon. Lady that that was undoubtedly an unparliamentary allegation. I ask her to withdraw it so that we may get on.

Ms. Short: I dispute the words that you read out from *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, as I have informed the Editor of *Hansard*. Therefore, as I did not utter the words, I am happy to withdraw them. For the record, several Conservative Members were saying, "Why shouldn't women name the man?" I was pointing to them as a series of men, not to any one of them. I was saying that the implication for men was that they might find themselves named in such circumstances. That was my point, and the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) knows very well that I was not talking about him in particular.

Mr. Speaker: This just goes to show—it has taken rather a lot of time—that comments of that nature from a sedentary position do not help the House.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. During the altercation earlier, the words that you read out about my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow were not in dispute. The altercation between you and the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) was about an allegation against all Conservative Members. You requested a withdrawal, but none has been made. I ask you to press that point.

Mr. Speaker: The extract that I read from *Hansard* is what was actually said. I am prepared to accept that the remark has been withdrawn. We now move on——

Mr. Holt: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. One day the hon. Gentleman may find himself in this Chair but while I am here, will he please allow me to deal with the matter?

Mr. Holt: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that you wish to be fair to the House. Being fair to the House means being fair not only to the hon. Member for Ladywood but to all the men on this side of the House. You read out what you wanted to read out, as far as it went. But the rest of the allegation against Conservative Members was further on in *Hansard*. I am sure that you are aware of that.

Mr. Speaker: As a matter of fact, I am not, because I have only one sheet from *Hansard* which has taken some time to be brought to me. As far as I am concerned, the matter is closed.

Iraq (Reparations)

4.53 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): It is not in a spirit of posturing, but because some of us sincerely believe that precedence should be given to the subject, that I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20 so that the House of Commons can discuss a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"Reparations in relation to Iraq."

The issue is definite in that it is being discussed this afternoon and this evening at the United Nations.

I must persuade you, Mr. Speaker, that it is urgent and should take precedence. The House of Commons often shuts the stable door when the horse has bolted. If we are to have a feed-in, and to have any influence whatever on events which are absolutely central to our country, we really must discuss such matters before the event and not after it.

When the Prime Minister comes to make her statement tomorrow, it will be too late to discuss, first, reparations and secondly, dare I say it, the whole question of war crimes. Those issues were not properly discussed when the House of Commons was recalled for the emergency debate in September. The disgraceful truth is that many leading politicians have uttered statements on highly sensitive issues such as this, and the House has had no opportunity whatever to pass comment on them.

I believe that the matter is important, and that loose talk about reparations, let alone war crimes, makes the Iraqis more intransigent, the chances of a peaceful settlement less likely and, therefore, the hideous prospect of war more likely. That is why it is of overwhelming importance that General Norman Schwarzkopf was quoted this morning in the *Daily Telegraph* as saying:

"War 'could be as bloody as Vietnam . . . it could last a long, long time and kill an awful lot of people.'"

Derek Wellman from the Ex-Services Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament said in a letter to me:

"Most of our own members saw active service in World War Two—some even in WWI—and we have been appalled by the cavalier attitude of most of the media to the idea of 'using force'. The impression given is almost that we would embark on something akin to a pub brawl rather than the obscenity of war."

I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that the matter is more important than dogs.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has had his time. He made his point succinctly.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"United Nations policy in demanding reparations from Iraq."

I in no way underestimate the importance and significance of what the hon. Member put to the House but, as he knows, under Standing Order No. 20 I have to announce my decision without giving my reasons. I also have to take into account whether the subject that he raised should take precedence over the business set down for today or tomorrow. I regret that the matter that he has raised does not meet the requirements of the Standing Order, and I therefore cannot submit his application to the House.

Craig Walsh

4.57 pm

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): I beg to seek leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, so that we may discuss a specific, important and urgent matter, namely,

"The death last Friday of Craig Walsh, aged 15, while in custody in Glen Parva young offenders institute near Leicester."

The matter is specific. Craig Walsh, aged 15, hanged himself while in custody. He faced a 30-month sentence for aggravated burglary. The matter is important. His death was not an isolated incident—36 young people aged under 18 have killed themselves in custody this year and 160 others have attempted suicide. There is something very wrong with the way in which we handle young offenders when so many like Craig find such bleakness, despair and lack of hope that they take their lives.

The matter is urgent because many other young people are in custody and many of them are at risk. Indeed, with Craig Walsh in Glen Parva was another young Stoke-on-Trent man who has already cut his wrists during his court case.

I know that the Home Secretary recognises the problem —he said that in recent evidence to the Select Committee on Home Affairs—but the matter is so important and so urgent that his concern is not enough. He must act now to ensure that, in this case, there is a full public investigation into the circumstances of this young man's death. Why was he sent to an institution such as Glen Parva? Did the court that sent him there have evidence before it making it clear that Craig was a potential suicide? Why was that young man not transferred to an institution for the treatment of young offenders, such as Glenthorne? Will the Home Secretary also set up a more general investigation into this national growing problem?

However serious the offence, as indeed Craig Walsh's was, locking up such people for 15 years is not the answer to their problems. If the Home Secretary acts now, some slight good might come out of this tragic and unnecessary death. If he does not, more young people will take their lives in custody before Christmas and still more will do so next year making a roll call of death and misery for which we, society, and the House, must, in some small part, take responsibility, and of which we should also be ashamed.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The matters arising out of the suicide on Friday of Craig Walsh, aged 16, while in custody in Glen Parva prison".

I have to say to the hon. Gentleman that I am sure that his remarks will have been noted by the Minister of State, Home Office, who is on the Front Bench. I must rule, however, that the matter that he has raised does not fall within the requirements of Standing Order No. 20. I therefore cannot submit his application to the House.

Orders of the Day

Environmental Protection Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the Lords Amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill be considered in the following order, namely, Nos. 1 to 173, 296, 299 and 436, 174 to 295, 297, 298 and 300 to 435.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

5.1 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I know that such motions usually go through without discussion, but a terribly important issue is involved. If the Minister allows the list of amendments to go forward as they stand, it will make a nonsense of parliamentary debate and of aspects of our democracy.

Amendment No. 296, which deals with dog registration, if debated today, as seems likely, will create a parliamentary mess and a mess for our legislators. That will happen unless we can also consider the alternative European proposals that I have just received from Brussels contained in document A3-156/90. Hon. Members should be aware of those proposals. The fact that most hon. Members are unaware of them demonstrates the importance of the issue involved.

Amendment No. 296 calls for a British plan of registration, but the Government's amendments place obligations instead on local councils. It will be utterly worthless to discuss those proposals if they are overturned within the next 18 months by the new European plan which we know is on the way.

I shall endeavour to make a simple case for my plea so that I can get the mesage across to those who might disagree. What on earth is the point of my dog, Corry, having a mark placed on his left ear if the Common Market introduces a law next year that says he should have a mark on his right ear? What is the point of having a mark tattooed on his leg because we think it is important in Parliament if, as seems likely, the EC proposes a number and a nationality mark?

We must face up to this situation, which is not unique —such things will continue to happen. If hon. Members doubt that, they should consider what happened as a result of all the long discussions we had on the Merchant Shipping Bill. Hon. Members will recall that we had a British quota of fish and that we passed a law to say that they should be fished by British ships. We thought that that was the law, but the European Court in a flash said that the law was dead, because in its view it was contrary to the treaty of Rome, and that Spanish ships should be allowed to fish as well.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Disgraceful.

Mr. Taylor: Whether it is disgraceful, correct or all about looking forward to Europe, there is no point in us carrying on with a constitutional nonsense.

What stage have the European plans reached? The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection decided by 24 votes to nil, with one exemption, a proposal for dog registration schemes to prepare dogs and cats for 1992 and free movement. That decision was approved on 8 June 1990 and it will be considered——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I am finding it difficult to relate what the hon. Gentleman is saying to the motion before us. The motion deals purely with the order in which the Lords amendments should be taken. The hon. Gentleman must relate his remarks to that.

Mr. Taylor: I am raising an extremely serious point. We must discuss the proposal, but why discuss amendment No. 296 today? That amendment should come at the end of our proceedings to enable hon. Members to obtain copies of the European document so that they are aware that we may well face another problem.

The European proposal was debated by the European Parliament on 19 November. From there it goes straight to the Commission, which is advised by the Parliament to prepare a directive. What is the point of hon. Members making up their minds on amendment No. 296 if they do not have a clue about what is in the other directive? Some people may say what does it matter and that we can take that into account in our debate. However, to say that the views of the European Parliament are as remote and as silly as the views contained in a motion passed by some rural women's institute is not true. Ministers and some Opposition Members have told us that the European Parliament has more teeth and more standing than that. We are aware of more than 100 amendments proposed by the European Parliament that have subsequently been accepted by the Commission.

What about the House rules? We should consider Standing Order No. 26, which deals with anticipation. It says that Mr. Speaker has the power to say that we should not discuss something today if we are going to discuss it soon.

Are there any inconsistencies between the British and European plans? I am afraid that they are huge. The European plan speaks of a tattoo mark on the animal's ear, another tattoo mark on a dog's thigh, a computer chip inserted in a dog's neck and a nationality certificate indicating the dog's or cat's nationality. *[Laughter]* This is a serious matter. How can we discuss amendment No. 296 today and go ahead with a British plan if, in a short time, we have a European plan which requires us to give every dog and cat in Britain a nationality certificate?

Another major problem arises over neutering. I know that Britain, by and large, has been neutral on the question of neutering, but the EEC proposals argue for a cheaper dog registration fee for neutered dogs. The idea is to try to encourage neutering.

The European plan would subsidise neutering and requires that every dog should have a national passport of a kind. No matter whether we think that that is good or bad, how can it be right for Parliament to discuss amendment No. 296 without the European information? This raises an important issue of principle. I am seeking to defend Parliament. Some of my colleagues and I are worried that we are being deliberately denied information.

On trade, for example, we know that we are shortly to have another discussion on European monetary union. What is Britain's trade with other countries? Until three months ago, we could ask that question and receive the information, but now the question is transferred to the Chancellor, who always says that one can find the information in the database. We cannot get that information.

We shall shortly be discussing agriculture and——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am finding it increasingly difficult to relate the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the motion before us. He must stick to that motion.

Mr. Taylor: Should we discuss amendment No. 296 today, without all the necessary information? If the House choose to do so, fair enough, but what on earth is the point of discussing a dog registration scheme today when the whole thing could be swept aside by a European proposal, the details of which are not available to most hon. Members?

If you think this does not matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you should go to the Vote Office and say, "Can I please have a copy of the Euro-regulations?" Others have asked, but those regulations are not there.

This issue is fundamental to our democracy. Why on earth should we discuss amendment No. 296 when we cannot obtain the European plans? Unfortunately, this is not a new problem. I know that some hon. Members have made great play about food mountains. They should table a question on the Order Paper today and ask what is the current size of the food mountain. They will not receive the information because the Government have said that they will transfer it to the database.

If anything matters at all in the House, it is that hon. Members should be informed about issues that they are discussing. Some people say, "What the hell—what does it matter if we pass our British plans and then a Europlan is passed?" It matters that time is being taken up in the House of Commons debating something that could soon be overturned. We have already done that—the Merchant Shipping Bill is a clear example. I know that our splendid Transport Ministers put forward overwhelming arguments about why we should have that Bill. There was a great debate and we spent 18 hours on the subject, but then it was overturned by a Euro-decision.

I am desperately trying not to make a pro or anti speech —*[Laughter.]* Hon. Members may laugh but I am trying to say that there is a new democratic position. What is the point of us trying to pretend that it does not exist? One sensible way, of which we might hear from an Opposition Member, is that we could always send all our legal proposals to Mr. Delors. I know that he is a busy man, so perhaps we could send them to his secretary. We could say, "Here is what we have in mind to discuss—will it contradict any of your Euro-plans?" That would be one way of avoiding our problem.

The 1992 plan for dogs and cats is totally different from what we are to discuss tonight. I am also thinking of animal welfare. What is the point of me having to have a British mark placed on my dog when it will have to have a Euro-mark, with its nationality on it, if the Europlan comes through?

Hon. Members may say that the Euro-plan is nuts. They may say that the proposal is good and the British plan is grand. They may say that the British plan is nuts. But why should hon. Members go ahead tonight and debate a proposal on dog registration that can be fundamentally overturned by a European decision?

We must wake up to this. Even though the Government do not want us to have the information and have taken effective steps to ensure that we do not, even though we cannot go to the Vote Office to get the Euro-document, which is a scandal, we should realise that we are living in a different world and playing a different ball game. The

Government must not waste our time. There are still some things that Parliament can do and talk about. We should talk about those matters with the help of information.

This is a serious issue, so I make the following appeal to the Government: if they care about democracy, do not want us to waste our time in the House talking about something that may be completely overturned by a Euro-decision and do not want to cause harm to animals, could they not say that they will not propose the motion, but instead table a manuscript amendment to put amendment No. 296 at the end of our debate so that it is the last one we discuss? What would the Government lose? They would lose nothing at all: the debate would still take place.

The only difference would be that, between today and tomorrow, all Members could get a copy of the report, which was passed by 71 votes to nil, and would have the information. In addition, a Minister should come and make a statement to say just how near the Government believe the Euro-proposal to be.

Therefore, I ask the Government, and the Chief Whip, who sometimes gives advice although he never speaks: what would be lost by putting amendment No. 296 at the end? We should not discuss amendment No. 296 now. Under my proposal, no one would lose. We would merely have the debate tomorrow, not today. Does anyone lose in any way? It will not curtail the debate—we would still have it—and it will not meant that other things will not be discussed. It is simply a tiny change to show that we care a little about democracy.

I am sure this will not happen because the Minister is a decent guy, but if by any chance we go ahead and discuss dog registration tonight without knowing about the Euro-plans, we will not only be making a nonsense of Parliament, but insulting our constituents and being unfair to the dogs that we allege we are trying to protect.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. McWilliam.

5.15 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is this a point of order, or does the hon. Gentleman wish to speak in the debate?

Mr. Cryer: On that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Perhaps I should make it clear that the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) was speaking to the motion and was not on a point of order. Does the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) wish to raise a point of order?

Mr. Cryer: I shall speak to the motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not entirely in favour——

Mr. John McWilliam (Blaydon): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe that you called me to speak on the substantive motion. It would be deplorable if an hon. Member was allowed to barge in on a point of order.

It seems that the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) has a point. One of the problems that we shall come to later——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thought that the hon. Member for Bradford, South was rising on a point of order, but it now appears that he wishes to contribute to the debate. I called the hon. Member for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam) first, so he should speak first, and then I shall call the hon. Member for Bradford, South.

Mr. McWilliam: I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I shall not delay the House long, but the hon. Member for Southend, East has a real point. In the face of the Single European Act, under which the determination of the issue will not be a matter for majority, veto or the House—except in a secondary sense—it seems difficult to go on to debate an amendment which, if carried tonight, will entail considerable costs for local authorities when they are strapped for money. According to the hon. Member for Southend, East, that cost will be otiose and the money will be spent on things for which Europe is not asking and not spent on things for which Europe is asking.

It seemed that the hon. Member for Southend, East made a reasonable request and that we should at least delay the debate until tomorrow when we have had time to see the document and make up our own minds about whether we are prepared to waste local government money in this way before we vote. I hope that the business managers of the House and the Minister for the Environment and Countryside, who moved the motion, will at least listen to the reason behind the motion, which is not pro or anti, but which tries to react to the realities that face us. It seems to be a fundamental point that in any debate in the House we should have in front of us all the relevant documentation. It is quite clear that we do not have that. I believe that the reasonable request of the hon. Member for Southend, East should be met.

Mr. Cryer: I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam) will realise that there was no attempt to intrude in the debate. On several occasions, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Deputy Speaker said that the motion should be adhered to and the debate was going a little bit wide, so I thought I would begin on a point of order, but I am happy to speak on the motion.

The basis of the questioning of the motion is that amendment No. 296 should be deferred because of the dog registration scheme proposed in the Common Market Assembly. I believe, and have long believed, that the House should be prepared to stand up for its legislation and pass legislation on the basis that it applies in the United Kingdom. I believe that the Government should be prepared to resist any legislation emanating from the Commission because the Assembly is not a Parliament. It calls itself a Parliament, and until the Single European Act, the Government called it an Assembly, but the Government now claim that they will stand apart from the Common Market on the issue of monetary union, a common currency and a central bank.

The Government put through the Single European Act on a three-line Whip. That Single European Act changed the title of the assembly to Parliament, but the reality has not changed, which is that it is a consultative assembly with no legislative powers. It has been tarted up a bit since——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am finding it difficult to relate the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the motion, which

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

involves purely the order in which we should debate the Lords amendments. The hon. Gentleman must stick to that.

Mr. Cryer: The proposal was that a section of the business should be deferred to the end of our debate because of a report being produced by the EC Assembly. I am pointing out that that report does not at present have the position of legislation and so does not represent a clash with the Government's view. *[Interruption.]* However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), who is now a Euro-fanatic, murmured from a sedentary position, it will, which is the issue that I want to address because it is relevant to the motion.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is my hon. Friend suggesting that if this Euro legislation—which we detest—is passed, we shall have to buy dog collars in mark-dominated Euro currencies? Will it affect the royal corgis? We do not know where all this will end. My hon. Friend is right to say that the amendment should be moved to the end of the proposed order for debate.

Mr. Cryer: My hon. Friend has raised issues that are rather broad of the motion.

The EEC Assembly will discuss the report, which will then go to the Commission and the Council of Ministers—and this initiative was probably taken as a result of their attitude—and Commissioners appointed to £100,000 a year jobs plus tax-free expenses will produce a directive. It is at that stage that the Government can say, "Our legislation is adequate. We spent a great deal of money introducing it in the United Kingdom and we shall resist any suggestions from the EEC that the scheme should be altered."

Mr. Terry Dicks (Hayes and Harlington): Surely the whole point is, as my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) said, the effect on the animals. What is the point of passing legislation today that will mean animals being pierced with lead, if we then have to undo the legislation because of a European directive?

Mr. Cryer: The Government should resist the EEC directive, and they well know that it is possible to do that. Indeed, it is possible to resist a directive for many years. The Government have ignored, delayed or resisted directives for more than 10 years. They implement some parts of directives by statutory instrument—the usual procedure—but leave other parts lying in desuetude. They are never brought into operation.

The Prime Minister wants to resist the Common Market onslaught for a common currency, a completely irresponsible central bank and all the rest of the paraphernalia of federalism that is being peddled around the Common Market. Are the Government supporting her attitude? The deputy Prime Minister appeared to be deliberately undermining her, in what I thought to be a disgraceful fashion, when he appeared on the Walden programme. It was a complete breach of Cabinet unity and collective responsibility——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is again straying from the motion.

Mr. Cryer: I shall return to the narrow motion by giving way to the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor).

Mr. Teddy Taylor: We cannot resist the directive, although we can vote against it. However, as it is in preparation for 1992, it can be decided on a majority vote. The Common Market can and probably will pass directives laying down things that must happen to our dogs, such as the necessity for dog passports. The hon. Gentleman must accept that, whether we like it or not, if the EEC says that a dog must have a passport or a computer chip we must comply. Hon. Members should be aware of what is involved before we debate the issue tonight.

Mr. Cryer: One problem is that other member states apply EEC directives in a leisurely and selective manner to suit their circumstances. The Government have a new-found air of independence, and I suggest that they take the same attitude that they are taking towards a central bank and monetary union. Directives are pouring out of the Common Market. I am in favour of a dog registration scheme. The proposals that we shall debate later tonight are useful and important. Local authorities need some certainty, and the Government should not allow Parliament to be sabotaged by a collection of appointed Commissioners and through majority voting in the Council of Ministers. We must be prepared to retain the sovereignty of Parliament.

The hon. Member for Southend, East said that we cannot resist. It has always been an important negotiating weapon that Britain is prepared to say that we have a continuing right to withdraw from the Common Market and that we shall never forgo it. If we use that power, some of the Commissioners—who are, as Henry VIII described his barons, over-mighty subjects—will realise that we are serious. By all means, let us work with other countries, not only in Europe but throughout the world. The Opposition are international socialists and we look rather wider than the narrow confines of a handful of states in western Europe. We are not prepared to accept the dictates of the Commission.

I look forward to a Government statement that will help us to examine the business motion. We must be certain that our work in Parliament today will not be wasted in the way suggested by the hon. Member for Southend, East.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: This is a tremendously important issue. Not many of us have the privilege of having in our possession documents from those who are our masters. The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) said that Parliament should resist the directive and fight, but they are the masters——

Mr. Skinner: Who are?

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: The Common Market is the master. Once it lays down regulations——

Mr. Skinner: Does not the hon. Gentleman realise that when those in the Common Market read his words, they will think that the Conservative party has caved in? People such as Leon Brittan will be laughing like a drain. The hon. Gentleman should understand that alliances and treaties

in Europe do not last for centuries. Some people think that alliances such as the Common Market go on for ever. They should read the history books——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) were to respond to that intervention, he would be out of order.

Mr. Skinner: Let me put it another way——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I shall not respond to the intervention, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Every hon. Member should realise that, once something becomes Common Market law, if individual countries do not obey they can be taken to the judicial court and be forced to enforced the law. Those of us who are pro-Common Market by nature are trying to explain that if we surrender our rights, as we are being asked to do, we do not know where it will all end. Dog registration is a comparatively minor issue, but the principle is not.

The European Member of Parliament for Highlands and Islands—the Common Market calls her Mrs. Ewing because it is easier to remember—tabled a motion under rule 63 of the EEC's rules on procedure. As we might imagine, the ladies and gentlemen in Brussels refer to that document as (B9/0390/89), and for five pages they go on and on about dogs. We are meant to debate an amendment tonight for five, six or seven hours, and then to pass needless legislation. In due course, we shall be told what to do by our betters in the European bureaucracy. Does any hon. Member realise that the bureaucrats on the Commission intend to remove all barriers not just to trade —in which they constantly interfere—but to the free movement of dogs between member states?

I agree that the Common Market is a powerful institution, but why should it be allowed to decide what is good for our country? Why should it be allowed to determine when rabies has been extinguished in Europe or in the world? Is this country and this Parliament left with nothing to decide? Is the Common Market to decide what we do with our dogs and cats? Why should it be allowed to dictate to us in that way?

5.30 pm

Mr. Dicks: Perhaps my hon. Friend is doing the Minister an injustice. Perhaps he will be able tell the House clearly that he has taken our points on board and that we will all have an opportunity to read the document. My hon. Friend should not be too unfair to the Minister, who I am sure will make the documents available, and will not make any statements tonight that could in any way impinge on the EEC directive.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will enlighten us in the near future. None of us wants to be difficult or to stand in the way of progress, and nor do we want to stand in the way of this country, France, Germany or the other member states deciding the issue for themselves and how they shall treat their pets. Britain has managed perfectly well, generation after generation, to decide what is good for its dogs and cats.

I would have known nothing of all this had it not been for the generosity of my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), who has served as a bastion in defending British interests. I did not know that five pages of rubbish from the Common Market existed and that they were to be the subject of a motion. Why should we waste our time if, whatever we decide tonight after hours of firm debate, and having listened to the views of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals —whether or not we agree with them—we are then told that we must anyway abide by a directive?

We are used to Bills returning to this House from another place with a message that Her Majesty the Queen has acceded to them and commands our presence in attending to that law. But we may now expect to come through the door into this Chamber not the Queen's representative but Jacques Delors's representative, saying "By the way, this is what jolly Jacques says that you must do." If that is so, let us not waste time in debate, but instead all go and have a good dinner until we know what the Common Market wants. However, we may think it right to defend our country and our rights to decide matters affecting our cats and dogs, and not wait for Jacques Delors to come through the door.

Too many people in this House and in the country are willing to sell us out and to sell us short. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East, I shall have no part in it.

Mr. Richard Shepherd (Aldridge-Brownhills): My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) made important points concerning the competence of the House and the availability of relevant documents that could inform our debate. When I was elected to the House in 1979, I thought of it as a sovereign House of Commons because it represented a sovereign people. However, we see increasingly that this House cannot make decisions. We may protest and pass Acts of Parliament, but my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East cited the case that demonstrated that this House is not competent on a whole range of issues. I refer to the Merchant Shipping Act 1988. I have always understood that when Parliament passes a law, it gainsays those previously enacted. We now have a House of Lords that is dancing on the head of a pin trying to justify the supremacy of a preceding Act of Parliament, demonstrating that a 1972 Act of Parliament takes precedence over subsequent legislation.

Today, we are being asked to address ourselves to an issue in which none of us doubts the Common Market has competence. I know that the Government do not want to pass legislation that conflicts with the views of the Community or the Commission. We went through the performance of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, when we tailored it to meet what we thought were the Commission's requirements and those of European law. As it happened, we found otherwise.

The most startling new development in our constitutional history is the Law Lords, in recognising where power lies—as they traditionally have done—trying to make judgments to accommodate the view of the European Court. That is increasingly happening.

Today, in an area in which the Community clearly has competence under the 1972 Act and under subsequent legislation, such as the Single European Act and that concerning majority voting, this House is having imposed upon it, through our own Law Lords, subordination to the European Court. The Government could avoid the dilemma by proceeding with their own reckonings and allowing the House time to consider the matters that are to come before it shortly.

[Mr. Richard Shepherd]

I support my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East in that respect, and if it comes to a vote, I shall certainly vote in favour of his proposition.

The Minister for the Environment and Countryside (Mr. David Trippier): The purpose of the motion is to decide whether amendment No. 296 should be taken sooner rather than later. Hon. Members suggested that it should be taken today, and I personally hope that that will be the case. The House has not yet made up its mind whether it will accept the views of another place. The motions on the Order Paper make it clear that the Government seek to overturn the Lords amendment and to propose amendments in lieu of them.

I moved the motion because, were we fortunate enough to put the debate on the record, in *Hansard*, it would then at least be courteous to another place to consider the arguments that were advanced. If the amendments—I emphasise the word "if"—are overturned, what then would be the point of the ordering motion? I was interested to hear the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) and of other hon. Members, but they were referring to a proposal which has been debated in the European Parliament and gone no further than that. Were it to get any further, it would have to be considered by others, not least by the Council of Ministers. Whether or not I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East, the outcome is a matter for conjecture or hypothesis and is not a matter of fact.

You may agree with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the views aired in this debate could have been aired when the question of dog licences was previously debated in this House. I have no doubt that hon. Members will try to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at a later stage.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Unusually, I support the Minister, and think that we should get on and vote. If it takes as long for the 11 other nations of the European Community to resolve a matter that it has already taken the British Parliament two years to resolve—I refer to the question whether we should introduce a dog registration scheme—the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) need have no worries. It may take a proportionately longer time—or at least 24 years—for the European Community to determine the matter. We have taken two years to reach the point of deciding on a logical replacement for the abolished sheep dog licence scheme. The sooner that we can get on and establish that replacement, the better. If we can establish one tonight and defeat the Government in the process, even better still.

Mr. Peter Fry (Wellingborough): I am in a dilemma. My hon. Friend the Minister made it clear that the Government intend to overturn the amendments that have come from another place. We are entitled to know whether the Government want to overturn those amendments because they are against dog registration for ever. If the Government are saying only that they oppose such a measure but will have to accept it in accordance with the European guideline, that is a very different argument.

Those hon. Members who happen to take this matter seriously believe that we should not put ourselves in a ridiculous situation. I accept that, because of the Single European Act, the Government are in great difficulty. My credentials are that I was one of 11 Conservative Members to vote against the Single European Act on Third Reading. This issue illustrates the sort of difficulty that the Government will get themselves into. Perhaps it might be better if my hon. Friend the Minister made his and the Government's position clear on registration. If he is suggesting to the House that the Lords amendment should be overruled, we shall expect him and the Government to fight hard against some of the extreme legislation that emanates from the European Parliament.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): My hon. Friend the Minister is well aware that I have always supported the principle of dog registration, and I shall do so in the Lobby tonight. Before we move on from this short debate, one allegation has been made which will clearly be picked up by the popular press if it is not refuted immediately and it will cause alarm. I should like to give way to my hon. Friend the Minister so that he can assure the House that under no circumstances would the Government agree to any European directive or legislation which would weaken our control against rabies. I look to my hon. Friend for an answer.

Mr. Trippier: I am certain that I can give my hon. Friend that assurance.

Mr. Gale: I am most grateful.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): I am a firm opponent of dog registration. I take seriously the argument made about debating this matter when only three hon. Members on this side of the House have read what the European Community is suggesting. The Government's policy and my own on dog registration is that we think that registration is simply bureaucratic nonsense. However, the European Community is trying to say that it has serious problems with rabies and other infectious diseases in the rest of the European Community—in at least 10 of the other 11 nations. Therefore, it is asking for permanent identification on the animal to tie in with its inoculation records.

We cannot properly debate this issue when most hon. Members have not considered that part of the argument and therefore whether, in a few years' time, the European Community will say that it cannot allow our special regulations for keeping rabies out of Britain because we attempted to overturn its regulations for dealing with that disease; that is its regulations on the vaccination of dogs against rabies and allowing vaccinated dogs with identification marks into the United Kingdom.

Without seeing this document or understanding what the European Community is driving at, we do not have the necessary information to come to a proper decision.

Mr. Derek Conway (Shrewsbury and Atcham): I am somewhat disappointed by some of my hon. Friends' arguments and I hope that they will take my hon. Friend the Minister's advice. Like one or two other hon. Members I, sadly, felt obliged to join the Opposition when they declined the invitation of the Patronage Secretary to vote for the Single European Act, precisely because of the majority vote that that Act provided. It staggers me to listen to a debate among my hon. Friends who also defied that three-line Whip to vote against the Act, but are now saying that we should postpone what we are doing until we find out what the Europeans are playing at. Surely that is contrary to what we are driving at. I hope that the House

will get on with the debate tonight and tomorrow, get it out of the way and not give a damn about what the European Parliament is doing. But if the Government are stupid enough to get themselves on the hook, in six or 12 months' time they will be wriggling and perhaps will not receive much support from Members on their own Benches.

The tenor of the debate—that we should stop what we are doing tonight to enable the Europeans to crack on with it——

Mr. McWilliam: I am worried that local authorities will be required to spend money that they do not have. The legislation will be funded by the poll tax, which will be otiose because it will be overtaken by other legislation that we know is coming but, because the document is not available in the Vote Office, most hon. Members do not know exactly what is happening. It is important that we put this debate in context. The only way that we can do so is to read about what is intended and thus avoid spending money needlessly.

Mr. Conway: The hon. Gentleman is right to take these matters seriously. He and I have long experience of local government. I believe that many local councils are itching for an opportunity to bang up the poll tax and would probably use this measure as just another reason, so I cannot accept his arguments.

I hope that the House will reject this attempt by their unelected Lordships to impose yet another tax on our constituents. Some hon. Members who have spoken are quite wrong. The sooner that we get this measure through and put the views of the House on the record, and thus defy what overpaid and underworked Europeans are trying to do, the better.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That the Lords Amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill be considered in the following order, namely, Nos. 1 to 173, 296, 299 and 436, 174 and 295, 297, 298 and 300 to 435.

Clause 1

PRELIMINARY.

Lords amendment: No. 1, in page 2 line 13, after ("and") insert ("the air within")

5.45 pm

Mr. Trippier: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments No. 4 to 6 and No. 285.

Mr. Trippier: The amendments in this group are drafting and technical amendments, and I am sure that the House will not wish me to dwell on them, although I shall be happy to answer any questions hon. Members may wish to ask. While on my feet, I take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) on her recent election to the shadow Cabinet.

Mr. Fry: I wish to ask my hon. Friend the Minister a few questions about the Lords amendments, which I understand were intended to tighten up the original wording of the Bill. The reason for my questions is that these clauses have serious implications for certain aspects of British industry.

One of the great problems which often arises with such legislation is that clauses refer to regulations which may be drawn up by the Government. I am sure that the House is aware that regulations made long after the original legislation are often lightly debated in the early hours of the morning, and British industry wakes up to discover that a statutory instrument has been passed and it is not even aware of its significance.

For example, statutory instrument No. 1159, which was issued just before the summer recess last year, stated that any trade effluent discharges which raise the concentration of prescribed substances above background level meant that sector fell under integrated pollution control even if the presence of prescribed substances was occasional or intermittent. I think that my hon. Friend the Minister and hon. Members are aware that I act as a consultant to the British Leather Confederation which is very worried about the implications of these clauses and the regulations that will flow from them.

As I understand it, with the absence of any de minimis exemption, small companies with as few as a dozen workers could come under full integrated pollution control, with all the associated monitoring and registration costs.

My hon. Friend the Minister has always given a sympathetic hearing to the leather industry, and I remind him that that industry is now presented with real problems. For example, under the proposed regulations to which these clauses relate, the industry could find that, although a firm is not responsible for polluting a waterway, because skins were treated with some sort of insecticide, it could unknowingly affect the water supply and be prosecuted.

I therefore hope that my hon. Friend will take note of the industry's very real anxieties and those of other related industries, and will give me an assurance that, when the regulations are drawn up, they will take the interests of British industry into account—especially the interests of many small firms, which could become hopelessly enmeshed in bureaucracy and might never be able to afford the measures needed to avoid prosecution under the Act when it becomes law.

Mr. Trippier: I am concerned about the anxiety expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Fry). I have had the opportunity, which I valued, of meeting both my hon. Friend and representatives of the British Leather Confederation. The difficulty is that tanneries discharge an obnoxious substance that affects the water. It is included among the red list substances that are referred to in part I.

I can give my hon. Friend two assurances. First, the Government do not intend to introduce legislation that would result in these companies having their backs against the wall. We hope to reach an agreement with the industry. We want Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution to sit down with representatives of the industry. I would not accept the introduction of such legislation. I hope that my hon. Friend will welcome that assurance.

Secondly, the views of the British Leather Confederation and the Chemical Industries Association have been consistent throughout. They welcome the main thrust of what we are trying to achieve in part I: higher

[Mr. Trippier]

standards for the control of emissions and for those polluting processes that affect the land, water and air. They also want the regulations to be fair. I have repeatedly given assurances about those matters to them.

The new regulations for the British Leather Confederation would not be introduced before 1996. I am giving small and medium sized companies a period of between three and five years after Royal Assent to comply with the new regulations. I hope that my hon. Friend is satisfied that we are concerned and that he will accept my assurance that we intend continually to review the matter.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 2, in page 3, line 9, at end insert ("(which in this Part means a river purification authority within the meaning of the Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) (Scotland) Act 1951)")

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 7 to 11, 15, 21 to 23, 35 to 38, 41, 323 to 326 and 142.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Both Lords amendment No. 2 and the other Lords amendments are technical and consequential.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 2

PRESCRIBED PROCESSES AND PRESCRIBED SUBSTANCES

Lords amendment: No. 3, in page 4, line 19, at end insert ("and to which conditions as specified in directions in accordance with section 7(3A) below shall apply")

Mr. Trippier: I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient also to consider the following amendments: Lords amendment No. 13 and the Government motion to disagree; Lords amendment No. 14 and amendments *(a)* to *(d)* thereto, and the Government motion to disagree.

Mr. Trippier: As the Opposition have tabled several amendments to Lords amendment No. 14, I fully respect their wish that there should be a debate on this issue, which involves the Valdez principle. In those circumstances, it would be appropriate for the Opposition to open the debate so that I have to speak only once.

Mrs. Ann Taylor (Dewsbury): I am grateful to the Minister for providing the Opposition with the opportunity to outline their case. If he listens to the debate, I hope that he will reconsider the Government's position on Lords amendment No. 14, which was added to the Bill in the other place after a constructive debate. Ministers in the other place did not answer the case put forward by our colleagues there.

If the Government insist on rejecting the Valdez principle, their rejection of it will be even further proof that they are not using the Bill to improve environmental protection and that they are continuing to waste the opportunity that the legislation could provide. We have said all along that the title "Environmental Protection Bill" is very grand, but the contents of the Bill do not match its title.

The fact that the amendment is incorporated in part I, which deals with integrated pollution control, is significant. Integrated pollution control is a principle that the Opposition have supported throughout consideration of the Bill—in Committee, on report and in another place. The problem is that the Government have taken a good principle and implemented it in a second rate way. They have not laid down with sufficient clarity the principles on which authorisation should be based. They have never said that they are ambitious about implementing integrated pollution control. They refer to changing the structure of applications instead of to the imposition of new and progressively tighter controls on industry.

The Government's attitude led the Opposition in the other place to table the amendment that incorporates the Valdez principle. We are keen that that principle should remain part of the legislation. We want to take the matter further and use part I to establish an environmental protection agency to co-ordinate all the policy aspects that ought to be taken into account when considering integrated pollution control and all other aspects of environmental protection.

I remind the House of the Valdez principle. It is strange that the Minister should seek to reject it. It is not only Labour politicians in this country who have put forward such an amendment. The Valdez principle was established in the first place by United States investors, for ethical reasons. That group of people will grow in number and influence. I hope that the principle that the group advocates—that companies should carry out environmental audits—will be taken on board by the Government. The Opposition regret that they have not yet done so.

According to the Valdez principle, certain other policy aspects ought to be taken into account when considering integrated pollution control. The ones that are mentioned specifically in Lords amendment No. 14 are

"(a) The minimisation of pollution to environmental media;
(b) the protection of the biosphere;
(c) the development of the sustainable use of natural resources;
(d) the reduction, minimisation and acceptable disposal of waste;
(e) the conservation of energy;
(f) the minimisation of environmental health and safety risks to employees and other persons;
(g) the adoption of voluntary controls over the safety of goods and services produced for sale;
(h) the undertaking of adequate provision for compensation . . .
(i) the disclosure of adequate information . . .
(j) the undertaking of periodic assessments and audits".

I am at a loss to understand to which of those principles the Government can object. The principle to which the Government may object is that which involves energy conservation. When the matter was debated in Committee, we pressed the Government to a Division on incorporating energy conservation in the integrated pollution control conditions. The Secretary of State was present on that occasion but even he voted against it.

The Government's record on energy conservation is absolutely pathetic. The Government's White Paper states:

"Energy efficiency is the cheapest and quickest way of combating the threat of global warming."

However, the same Government and the same Ministers have significantly cut the energy efficiency budget. They say that energy efficiency ought to improve in the future. In real terms, the energy efficiency budget was halved between 1986-87 and 1989-90. The real advances that could have been made on energy efficiency have not been made. That may be one reason why the Government object to the amendment.

Hon. Members received an interesting letter today from the CBI on the amendments that the Opposition have tabled and the inclusion of the Valdez principle in the Bill. The CBI seems to be panicking enormously about the prospects of including such measures as I have mentioned. The minimal brief that it sent shows that it does not seem to understand the implications of the amendment passed by the other place.

6 pm

The fact that the CBI sent that note to hon. Members asking them to reject the Valdez principle, and the fact that the Minister will ask us to reject it, shows that Ministers and industry have far too negative an attitude on environmental protection as simply a cost rather than an opportunity. It would be in the interests of industry to push it to have industrial environmental audits and energy efficiency programmes. The Minister knows that many problems could be alleviated if industry changed its attitude, and environmental audits are certainly one opportunity.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Lady is being uncharacteristically unfair and is giving the House the impression that perhaps part I of the Bill was the idea of the Opposition. She cannot be allowed to get away with that, because it is perfectly clear that part I, which we put together and which, admittedly, was amended from time to time by the Opposition, is intended to raise standards of pollution control. It was entirely the idea of the Government and it is entirely to our credit that the legislation is before the House. It certainly will not be easy for industry to comply with the new regulations. Is the hon. Lady trying to deny that?

Mrs. Taylor: The Minister is mistaken. I did not claim credit for the ideas behind the Bill. We can claim credit for trying to widen the implementation of IPC to ensure that industry takes on board all the needs of environmental protection rather than the narrow definition that the Government are giving it. If the Government persist in trying to implement IPC in this limited way, they will not be serving the best interests of industry. If they continue to say to industry, "All environmental protection is a great cost, and that is the end of the story," we shall not get industry to move in the direction that we want. If British industry does not take on board environmental considerations, it will be left behind because industries and companies elsewhere are becoming the leaders in many areas of clean technology. If the Government continue to send out the wrong messages, we shall slip further behind, instensifying the economic problems that we face.

I am sorry that the Minister persisted in insisting that there should be a negative approach to those problems. The concept behind IPC is an integrated approach to pollution control. Where better than the Bill, therefore, to introduce all the other considerations that I have mentioned, from energy conservation to environmental auditing? If the Minister persists in talking down industry and talking about the problems of environmental legislation rather than the opportunities, he will not be doing industry any favours, and he certainly will not be doing the environment any favours.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I congratulate the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) on her election. I hope that it is a sign that I, too, will benefit from having responsibility for this subject. When she left the House temporarily, I inherited her office. It may therefore be a good place to do one's apprenticeship on the way up the environment-political ladder.

The Lords amendment was sponsored jointly in the other place by the Labour party and Liberal Democrats, and my noble friend Lord Ross spoke in support of it for my party. I do not therefore need to elaborate on the view that we hold—that it is entirely appropriate to set out the specific principles for defining integrated pollution control.

The list, which has come to be known as the Valdez principles, sets out directions that the Secretary of State should give when permission or authorisation is sought. As the Minister will readily concede, the directions are general and cover subject matters rather than specific requirements. For example, they relate to the requirement that the conditions develop

"the sustainable use of natural resources".

I should have thought that he would happily welcome that principle. They require that the consequences of the conditions are

"the reduction, minimisation and acceptable disposal of waste."

I should have thought that that was entirely acceptable.

I am aware, for example, that if waste disposal were environmentally best achieved by incineration, the consumption of energy would be higher than if another method of waste disposal were used. In absolute terms, therefore, one could not say that that method was the most energy efficient. That, however, is not inconsistent with the principle, in as much as it can be achieved, of "the conservation of energy", as set out in paragraph (e) of Lords amendment No. 14.

I join the hon. Member for Dewsbury in saying that the CBI's fears, which are set out briefly, appear to relate to a misunderstanding of the principles of Lords amendment No. 14. The CBI asked the House to reject the amendment for three main reasons: that the principles impose on industry

"absolute liability for damage, compulsory environmental audits and total disclosure of information."

The proposal on absolute liability for damage is that there should be an undertaking of adequate—I underline "adequate"—provision for compensation for damage

"caused by the person authorised, or his processes or products."

It is an entirely proper principle that somebody who pollutes is required to pay adequate compensation.

The proposal on compulsory environmental audits reads:

"the undertaking of periodic assessments and audits to monitor the effectiveness of any principles of actions adopted."

I should have thought that the CBI would welcome that. It should be built into the practice of industry and business that it periodically assesses, audits and monitors the effectiveness of its work. I do not see that Government or industry could have any objection to that. Yes, it may cost

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

more, but the price of the environment is worth paying, and Parliament should be saying to industry and individuals, "You should pay it."

The principle on total disclosure of information—I remind the House that the amendment received sufficient support in the other place for it to have been passed only a couple of weeks ago—is that there should be

"the disclosure of adequate information to employees and enforcement agencies on matters relevant to the environment and health and safety".

That is not total disclosure of information, but adequate information to employees and enforcement agencies on relevant matters.

Other provisions in the Bill protect proper confidentiality, and we shall debate amendments on that in a few minutes. I do not think that the CBI is right to say that, if the Lords amendment is passed, it would detract from the need to bring integrated pollution control into operation as smoothly and quickly as possible. The fact that there has not been enormous consultation on the principles is a less strong point because, first, there is international precedent for the desirability of the principles being incorporated into enabling legislation and, secondly, because the principles are consistent with an enabling part of the Bill. I ask the Minister to say that they do not tie his hands.

The amendments deal with the Labour party's proposal for an environmental protection agency. The hon. Member for Dewsbury may have read our document, which was produced this autumn a little before her document, and even before the Government's, and was entitled "What Price Our Planet?" In it, we reiterated the view, which my colleagues have enunciated for several years, that we support the idea of an Environmental Protection Agency. My only reason for not adding my name and those of others to the Labour amendment is that that would have been unfair to the hon. Lady and her colleagues. The details in one Labour amendment about the agency's functions are slightly different from ours. Given that the amendment was on the amendment paper, I thought that it was a sufficient peg on which to hang our support for the principle, without being tied to every word of the Labour party's proposal.

We think that there should be a Department of Environmental Protection, which would take some of the functions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Trade and Industry and even the Foreign and Commonwealth Office where it deals with international environmental issues. We believe that there should be an environmental protection agency, bringing together the functions of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and of the National Rivers Authority, funded by but independent of the Government and backed up by a national environmental information law centre.

I want to give one example showing why such a system would be important, and today is an appropriate day to do so. As we all know, the Secretary of State for the Environment is not here because he is in Luxembourg at the meeting of European Community Environment Ministers before he goes on to Geneva and the world conference on climate change. The most controversial item on today's agenda is the limit to be set on CO_2 emissions. The Government have made clear their policy. They believe that we should seek to achieve a limit at present levels by the year 2005. As we all know, their reason is that there will then be more emissions and first a subsequent reduction, so in 15 years we shall only be back to where we are now.

The Labour party argues that this level could be achieved by the year 2000 and prays in aid other countries that have achieved that. As the Minister knows, the Liberal Democrats argued for a better principle, for a tougher target. We argue—this is not unsupported by precedent elsewhere—that there should be a 30 per cent. cut in CO_2 emissions by the year 2005, a 50 per cent. cut by the year 2015 and a 55 per cent. cut by the year 2050. We believe that that is achievable by a range of policies—taxing pollution, energy efficiency, renewable technology, more public transport and less private transport and a reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels. The Minister is unwilling to accept that as a target—indeed, he would give the Secretary of State a bit of trouble if he did so, given that the right hon. Gentleman is seeking to persuade the European Community differently in Luxembourg.

The benefit of having an independent environmental protection agency is that we would have a body that could say with authority to whichever party was in government, "We believe that this is the best advice." If an environmental protection agency existed now, it would find that the Government's environmental policy was inadequate. I may be wrong, but that is suggested by the evidence.

The argument for an independent agency of Government to advise the Government on environmental protection has never been stronger. I hope that the time will come when the Government accept that all environmental wisdom does not lie with them. We have never believed that it lies with politicians and, increasingly, politicians are aware that their views have been behind those of experts. I hope that even if the Minister does not accept the amendment for an environmental protection agency, he will say that the Government have not rejected the idea. The hon. Gentleman would find such a body a helpful ally, certainly for the environment.

6.15 pm

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Listening to the claims and counter-claims of the Labour party and the Liberal party one could be forgiven for forgetting that it was the incoming Conservative Government in 1970 who first established a Department of the Environment and the present Government who have brought forward this large Bill—the first serious attempt to deal with a range of environmental problems. *[Interruption.]* The interventions from the Labour Front Bench remind me that the 1974 Labour Government took public transport away from the overall responsibility of the Department of the Environment and we have been regretting the consequences for many years.

Clause 2 refers to "Prescribed processes and prescribed substances". The one prescribed substance which, sadly, is eliminated from consideration under the clause is carbon monoxide emitted by the internal combustion engine. I hope that that omission will be rectified in future legislation.

I am conscious of the fact that one or two of my colleagues may not agree with me about pollution emanating from aircraft, but aviation fuel, particularly aviation exhaust, is an increasing problem in small pockets of the countryside around airports. I hope that, in due

course, whether under the aegis of an environmental protection agency or through another organisation, transport matters will be brought back under the general heading of the environment and that, sooner or later, some Government will bite the bullet and include emissions from the internal combustion engine and from aircraft in the term "prescribed substance".

Mr. Alan W. Williams (Carmarthen): Lords amendment No. 14 deals with the Valdez principles. I do not understand why the Government object to these nine or 10 principles which are to be incorporated as conditions to be considered in the granting of licences. They are all reasonable targets for all industries, obliging them to minimise pollution and waste, to protect the biosphere, to conserve energy, to conduct periodic environmental audits and so on. These principles are at the heart of the Bill. Without them, what is the Bill about?

Our amendment deals with setting up an environmental protection agency. In many environmental issues, Britain is 10 years behind Germany, Sweden, the United States and so on. Through the EPA, the functions carried out by the NRA, Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and the Nature Conservancy Council and the environmental work of local authorities would all come under one umbrella organisation.

The National Rivers Authority involves the right kind of regional infrastructure and could provide the basis for such a powerful environmental organisation. Working independently of the Government, the body would monitor the environment, conduct research, advise the Government on new legislation and enforce existing legislation. It is a disappointing fact that, although the NRA is a powerful body in many respects, the enforcement of its work in connection with river pollution is not nearly strong enough.

Meanwhile, the pollution inspectorate is plagued by all sorts of problems. For example, it is in charge of air pollution, in respect of which there have been only nine prosecutions in the past 10 years. Those figures speak for themselves and clearly illustrate the limited extent to which the relevant provisions are enforced. An environmental protection agency responsible for enforcement is therefore desperately needed.

Amendment (b) calls for the creation of a Minister for Environmental Protection. At the moment, the full range of responsibilities falls to the Department of the Environment, which also has to deal with the community charge, housing, local government finance and so on. The Department has far too many responsibilities and they are too disparate for one Secretary of State to deal with them. The establishment of such a post would constitute a recognition of the importance of green issues and the environment. A Minister for Environmental Protection should take over some of the responsibilities of the Departments of Energy, Transport and Industry and especially of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The amendments would greatly strengthen the Bill. Having served on the Committee, and having been involved at various stages in the consideration of the Bill, I believe that at present it is a weak Bill. When one considers that the Government have been in power for 10 years and that this is their first major Bill dealing with the environment, it is remarkably weak. For example, it involves hardly any financial commitment, although we know that the problem of acid rain will take billions of pounds to tackle, as will the problems of sewage and our beaches. The curbing of the greenhouse effect through energy efficiency measures will also require billions of pounds worth of investment.

Instead of tackling those major problems, the Bill deals mainly with peripheral issues. The Opposition acknowledge that, under parts I and II, structures are being set up for integrated pollution control and the better regulation of toxic waste, but nevertheless believe that the amendments would greatly strengthen the Bill.

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green): I should like my hon. Friend the Minister seriously to consider the Opposition's two main proposals. The Valdez principles are important principles and important policy objectives, and I should like the Government to endorse them as acceptable principles and objectives to follow. Whether they are proper subject matter to be enshrined in an Act of Parliament, and whether they are capable of enforcement, is an entirely different matter. Personally, I do not believe that, if we state them in the Bill, as the amendment proposes, we shall be doing anything more than state a series of platitudes. We shall diminish their importance if we list them as proposed, because they cannot be made effective in terms of legislation. Nevertheless, I repeat that I should like my hon. Friend to confirm that the Government endorse those objectives and would like them to inform our view of the problems of the environment and environmental pollution.

The amendment would also require the establishment of an environmental protection agency. I do not think that I need say a great deal about that on this occasion. I have spoken about it extensively and I have also written about it. The House will know that, in its toxic waste report, the Select Committee on the Environment put forward the concept—before it became part of the policy of any of the political parties. I support such a concept because, at present, the way in which we deal with environmental monitoring, auditing, regulation and control is far too fragmented and leaves a great deal to be desired.

Having said that, I agree that we cannot rush the establishment of an environmental protection agency through at the tail end of our proceedings on this Bill, as the Opposition propose. I should like the Minister to tell us that the Government do not dismiss out of hand the establishment of such an agency, that the Department will continue to work out the details of how the matter can best be legislated for and that, eventually, we will introduce legislation that will establish a proper agency of the kind envisaged by the Select Committee.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Are the Valdez principles merely platitudes, as the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) suggested, or are they practical guidelines that should govern our conduct towards the environment? That is the question before the Minister, and I hope that he will respond in detail on the Government's attitude. If the Government reject the principles as laid down in detail in the amendment, we should be told, why they are doing so and, what they propose to put in their place. How will the good will expressed on both sides of the House be turned into practical measures? The amendments deserve a detailed

[Mr. Andrew Welsh]

response from the Government, because they provide both a theoretical and a practical basis for tackling environmental problems in the long term.

The amendments are intended to probe the seriousness of the Government's commitment to genuine environmental improvement on a practical basis and founded on internationally agreed general principles. In implementing the Valdez principles, the Government would be following what is now becoming accepted international practice. If they reject them, they will be stepping out of line, and I should like to know why. The Valdez principles are internationally agreed and accepted, and the amendments are merely an attempt to integrate United Kingdom practice in that international context.

The principles relate directly to industry and industrial practice and attempt to integrate them into good environmental systems and practices. I doubt whether many people in this country would object to the protection of the biosphere or the sustainable use of natural resources or the reduction, minimisation and acceptable disposal of waste or the wise use of energy. I doubt whether they would object to environmental risk reduction or the marketing of safe products and services or to damage compensation—that is very much of live issue—or to the disclosure of incidents or to the appointment of an environmental director. That should become the industrial norm, as should environmental assessment and annual audits in industry.

In a practical way, the amendments would bring industry into consideration and allow it positively to contribute to an improved environment. I hope that increasingly, environmental or compliance auditing will become standard practice in industry and that it will be accepted as a natural and important part of business practice.

The amendments are a taste of the future. Sooner or later, they will be accepted, out of common sense and fairness towards the environment. I hope that they will be accepted sooner rather than later, and that that is what the Minister will say in his response.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): In Committee, my hon. Friend the Minister made it clear that he would consider these matters in relation to the publication of the White Paper on the environment, and the agency was, indeed, mentioned in the White Paper.

Another matter that is relevant to the amendments is the experience that we have now gained in relation to the National Rivers Authority—in many ways, the first stage in the creation of an environmental protection agency. In that respect, I agree with what my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) said: we must not do everything too quickly.

We have now had some experience of the NRA, and we can see how it is operating. I do not fully agree with the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams), who referred to the NRA's weakness. Over the past few months, the opposite has been the case. There have been a number of prosecutions, most notably against various oil companies in the north-west, which have proved highly effective and have acted as a good discipline against those worst polluters of the environment.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Does my hon. Friend recall that the first prosecution took place on the very day that the authority came into operation? It was certainly quick off the mark.

6.30 pm

Mr. Mans: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing that out. That proves that the NRA is effective.

We should not stand still. We should move quickly towards the creation of a fully fledged EPA to cover subjects other than water pollution. We are already entering slightly dangerous territory in which there is a demarcation dispute between HMIP matters and NRA matters. We must progress towards a situation in which we have a fully fledged Environmental Protection Agency which is separate from the Government. In that respect, I agree with the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) about the need to remove some of the expertise from local and national Government and place it in an environmental protection agency.

Unless we make progress relatively quickly, we will be duplicating a lot of work on the environment. There will be little departments at district and county level and also within the Department of the Environment dealing with exactly the same matters which one EPA could deal with. With a lack of environmental expertise in the first place, there is a danger that we might spread that expertise too thinly. We might not achieve a firm view of the policy that we should adopt in this country towards the different aspects of pollution control, which must increase in importance in future.

Mr. Trippier: I was quite amused by the reference by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) to his temporary location in the office that was formerly occupied by the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor). A wonderful thought flashed through my mind: if it is as lucky for him as it has been for her, he might find himself in a shadow Cabinet. My next thought was that he is already in a shadow Cabinet. It may not be a very big shadow Cabinet, but he must be a member of one. In fact, I suppose all the Liberal Members must be members of such a Cabinet.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Not quite all.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman must enlighten me further about that important issue later.

If the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey were to be a member of the Cabinet of Her Majesty's Government, in the unlikely event of the Liberal party ever taking office, it is safe for me to say from the Dispatch Box that the hon. Gentleman can say any darn thing he likes about pollution control target dates for CO_2 emissions, because they are unlikely to be delivered. Although I hugely enjoyed the hon. Gentleman's catalogue of proposals about how the Liberal party would introduce stabilisation and then the reduction of CO_2 levels, he should have included the proposals incorporated in the alternative White Paper put forward by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) and the hon. Member for Dewsbury.

The Labour party's alternative White Paper refers to stabilisation by the year 2000. At present CO_2 levels, all the research, particularly that undertaken by the Department of Energy, shows that it will be impossible for that to be achieved unless there were nil economic growth

—no Opposition Member mentioned that—and half the coal mines were closed. How on earth the Labour party can square that with Arthur Scargill's National Union of Mineworkers stretches credulity to breaking point, but it might be hugely amusing.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I assume that the Minister, like the Secretary of State, has seen our alternative to the Government's White Paper, which we published in September. The Minister must not ask me to defend the Labour party's fossil fuel policy, which I believe prevents the circle from being squared with regard to stabilisation by the year 2000. The Minister will be aware from reports in the press today and over the weekend that the target of stabilisation by the year 2000 is easily achievable, because the Government's advice that there would be a great expansion of CO_2 emissions by the year 2005 is inaccurate. The projection was an overestimate.

Therefore, the Labour party target is not difficult, although we believe that it is inadequate. The Minister should reconsider. I would not be content with resting on the laurels of the Labour party as a sufficient backstop as a second choice for the Government's policy.

Mr. Trippier: I would not rest on the laurels of the Labour party, and I do not want to be taken down this side street. However, I know that the hon. Gentleman would not want knowingly to mislead the House. With regard to his earlier comments about the presence in Luxembourg of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, no hon. Member should assume that any member state has made the target level as categorically clear as this Government have. That is disquietening. When I attended Council of Ministers meetings in Europe recently, I found to my horror that people are saying what they think they might be able to achieve, but are not prepared to sign up to that while others say that there is an aim or a target, but no commitment. The difference is that we have a clear commitment. When this Government sign any document, we deliver. We are respected for doing that, and I wish that that applied to many other countries.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Not about dumping in the North sea.

Mr. Trippier: I do not know about that, but I look forward to debating the matter tomorrow.

There is not much between the Opposition and the Government on how tough integrated pollution control should be. The measures enshrined in part I of the Bill were taken from recommendations made by the Royal Commission on environmental protection, which have been applauded and welcomed.

The only question that arises is: how tough should those measures be? Although I was interested to hear Opposition Members say that they should be tougher or very tough, I wonder whether they have squared that view with some of their trade union colleagues or those sponsored by them who might have something different to say if it meant that, in the rush to achieve the much higher standards enshrined in the legislation, thousands of people were to be laid off work. That is the difficulty which the Government must address. We have struck a balance between economic development and environmental enhancement. I am entirely content with that.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: With regard to jobs, the future and the future of industry, does the Minister agree with the Secretary of State, who said over the weekend:

"British business has been losing opportunities in European markets by failing to take a lead on the environment"?

Surely the Secretary of State is acknowledging that jobs can follow environmental protection.

Mr. Trippier: I could not agree more. In trying to achieve the balance between economic development and environmental enhancement, many opportunities arise as a result of our being the pathfinders and trail blazers within Europe on integrated pollution control. If anyone doubts that, I can state that we have been asked to send a secondee from the Department of the Environment to Europe to help put together a European directive with which we can easily comply, but which many other countries will have to run very quickly to keep abreast of.

I have no difficulty in agreeing with the hon. Member for Dewsbury. Indeed, we lead the world on water consultancy, and a great deal of business can be done on that, not least in central and eastern Europe now that those areas have been emancipated.

We have debated this issue several times in the past in Standing Committee; however, I must address the concern expressed by a number of hon. Members—not least my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi)—with regard to the structural alterations affecting Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution. From what was said in the White Paper, it must now be clear that we did not consider the time right to think of further major structural changes to the system, such as the amalgamation of the existing regulatory bodies.

The National Rivers Authority has been in existence for a year; Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has not existed for much longer, and recieves considerable new functions in the Bill. There has been a period of dramatic change. However, we were careful to make it clear in the White Paper that, although the Government have concluded that the case is insufficient

"to outweigh the disadvantages of further administrative upheaval at just the time when the new organisations are getting into their stride",

we certainly had it in mind to move towards establishing a regulatory body on the lines of the environmental protection agency at some stage. I hope that that satisfies my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans), who addressed the same issue.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Does the Minister consider that that would require legislation?

Mr. Trippier: I think that it would require legislation. At this stage, it is not clear to anyone—least of all the hon. Gentleman and me—whether the new regulatory body should have, for example, a waste-regulation function. Such matters must be addressed. The commitment that I —along with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment—have given constantly, on the Floor of the House and outside, that HMIP will have the necessary resources to do the job is the most important undertaking that I can repeat in this debate.

Let me say to the hon. Member for Dewsbury that I find, what has happened to the EPA in America very interesting. The hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) constantly refers to the EPA; he did so in Committee as well, and I understand why. The EPA,

[Mr. Trippier]

which is completely separated from the federal system in the United States, has now been brought back into the federal system, and its administrator Bill Reilley has been appointed as a Cabinet Minister—at least, I hope that his position will be confirmed shortly, as I have the highest regard for him.

I wonder how that appointment would be viewed in this country. The hon. Member for Carmarthen—and perhaps even I—might view it as a case of someone being bought off if it had happened in the United Kingdom. My point, however, is that the EPA has now been brought back into the main stream of Government; my hon. Friends who sit on the distinguished Select Comittee know that to be the case. I would not always pray in aid the EPA in the United States; I think that we must look to something rather different.

I can understand why Lords amendments Nos. 3, 13 and 14 were accepted in the other place. The main amendment that we are addressing here sets out a number of principles concerning the Valdez principles, which on the face of it are as unexceptionable as motherhood and apple pie. However, the question is whether it is appropriate to enshrine them in legislation aimed at a system of pollution control.

Lords amendment No. 14 gives effect to nine out of 10 of what have become known as the Valdez principles, which were prepared after the Exxon Valdez oil spill of April 1989. One might think, so far so good; however, putting the principles into legislation goes against the founding aims of those who prepared them. The aim of the group that prepared the principles was

"to create a voluntary mechanism of corporate self-governance with the goals of sustaining our fragile environment for future generations."

In America, it is recognised by the most environmentally responsible individuals, companies and institutions that the Valdez principles en bloc are not feasible—as they stand—for companies. When the principles were discussed in the United Kingdom at a seminar arranged by the Green Alliance, members of environmental and other voluntary groups and the ethical investment community, it was agreed that the implications of the advent of the single market, proposals for eco-labelling, developments in public access to environmental information and the development of environmental auditing in the United Kingdom, all needed to be explored, as they would affect the applicability of the Valdez approach in the United Kingdom. In other words, environmental groups in the United Kingdom would not agree that the Valdez principles should be imported lock, stock and barrel as a United Kingdom policy objective, let alone enshrined in legislation. So much for the overview.

How does the main amendment in this group affect the systems of integrated pollution control and air pollution control? I believe that they are confusing, contradictory and incongruous; in short, the amendment is an almighty spanner in the sophisticated works of the two pollution control systems established in this part of the Bill. Let us examine each of the "sub-headings" of clause 7(4)(a) in turn. There is nothing wrong with paragraph (a), which concerns the minimisation of pollution as a general statement of intent, except that it does not belong here.

We have already provided for something much more specific in the Bill: clause 7(2) states:

"the best available techniques not entailing excessive cost will be used",

not to minimise pollution of the environment, but to prevent releases of specific substances to the environment. Only if releases cannot be prevented will they be minimised. In all cases, BATNEEC—best available technique not entailing extra cost—must be used to render all releases harmless. That is not good enough.

6.45 pm

Let us look at another "sub-heading". The hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) specifically asked me to address what was wrong with the Valdez principles. The principles state that we will

"make sustainable use of renewable natural resources."

The amendment that I have been talking about goes further: it would require an operator of a process to develop the sustainable use of natural resources. I must confess to the hon. Gentleman that I do not know what that means, and I think that most hon. Members would have enormous difficulty in defining it.

I am not being in any way clever, but let us pose some questions. Does it mean that a timber treatment plant operator would have to cultivate his own forest, or that a chemical operator would have to conduct research into wildlife habitats? The amendment is nonsense—and I could go on down the list. Its implementation would become a bureaucratic nightmare.

Rather than go on down the list, I must address a point made by at least two Opposition Members concerning the green audit, including the hon. Members for Angus, East and for Southwark and Bermondsey. It was the point to which the noble Lord McIntosh addressed a number of his remarks in the upper House when introducing the amendment that we are considering.

Environmental auditing as a principle is good. The United Kingdom environmental groups accept and support it, as I do myself. For heaven's sake, we have spent a great deal of time and a number of pages in the White Paper making clear what we believe about environmental auditing. I am delighted to say that this is a movement that is growing rapidly. The hon. Member for Angus, East said as much, and we should all welcome it. However, we stop short of making it mandatory. We do not regard it as helpful for the Government to be prescriptive about when or how techniques should be used.

The development of environmental audits is most assured if individual companies are encouraged to adapt the techniquies best suited to their particular circumstances. The voluntary nature of the techniques, as it has been developed by business, has encouraged a positive, objective and self-critical approach. That technique is still developing, and I do not wish to see it stop at industry; I want to see it developed throughout local authorities, and I think that I would carry the whole House with me on that point.

I am sorry that I cannot accept the strictures of the official Opposition, or indeed, members of the Liberal party. I must end, however, by completely rejecting the remarks made by the hon. Member for Carmarthen. He suggested that the Government's record on environmental protection or enhancement was bad; in fact, it is outstandingly good—and compared to that of the Labour party, it exceeds all expectations. The last time that a Labour Government were in power—and that is difficult to remember—they did not even introduce part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974: what a disgrace.

Now the Labour party is talking about renationalising the water industry, which frankly it cannot afford to do. It cannot possibly afford to replace the £28 billion programme that has been made available only because of privatisation. It sickens me to my back teeth that, when they were last in power, Labour Members constantly cut support to water authorities, even when they were nationalised. No one believes that Labour is the party of the environment. Labour Members would have to look to all my colleagues as those who believe in environmental enhancement and an improvement in the quality of life.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments and Government motions to disagree with Lords amendments, agreed to.

Clause 22

EXCLUSION FROM REGISTERS OF CERTAIN CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Lords amendment: No. 39, in page 23, line 42, at end insert—

("(2A) A determination under subsection (2) above must be made within the period of fourteen days beginning with the date of the application and if the enforcing authority fails to make a determination within that period it shall be treated as having determined that the information is commercially confidential.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendment No. 40.

Mr. Simon Hughes: The key task in this exercise appears to be to keep one's eye on the amendment paper and to make sure that a crucial moment is not missed.

The amendments relate to the consequence for confidentiality of a determination under clause 22. Amendment No. 39 would add an implication that, if no determination had been made about a matter of confidentiality within 14 days, the information would automatically fall to be treated as confidential.

The logic of that is to make local authorities hurry up to determine whether something should be confidential. Does the Minister agree that 14 days is a tight deadline and, as he will appreciate in a local authority's cycle, often too tight a deadline? What will be the consequences if a local authority cannot meet a deadline? The best parallel that I can think of on the hoof is the allowed period in which to determine a planning application. If it is not determined by a deadline, it automatically goes to appeal for non-determination. Local authorities will often not be able to make a determination, or will not do so, and the consequence is that something will be held to be private when it should be public. If local authority staff are either incompetent or do not deal with the matter, or if they try to deal with it inadequately, we may end up with the wrong decision. That makes for bad law.

We should consider giving a longer time to local authorities so that the best principles of open local government are applied and we do not make confidential what should not be confidential. On environmental matters, the principle should be the availability of the maximum information possible. I am troubled that it is an over-restrictive timetable and that it will result either in wrong decisions or in secret conclusions. Has the Minister a comment in response?

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman would be right if we had left the Bill in that way. Amendment No. 40 in particular deals with his concern. A variety of suggested times was trailed in Standing Committee. We discussed who will say whether the time is adequate. From memory, 14 days was just about in the middle. We thought that it was adequate. If we are wrong and the hon. Gentleman turns out to be right, amendment No. 40 enables that time scale to be altered by order. That is fair enough. It enables the hon. Gentleman's point to be met, and his concern can now be abated.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 30

AUTHORITIES FOR PURPOSES OF THIS PART

Lords amendment: No. 42, in page 29, line 1, at end insert

'(", subject to section (*power to create regional authorities for purposes of waste regulation*) below")'

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 43 and 44.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): This issue was debated at length in Committee—in probably one of the best debates that I have ever known in Committee—and it was also debated on Report. On that occasion, the Minister was not prepared to accept our amendment that would have set up regional waste regulation authorities. I told the Minister that I thought that it would not be too long before he came back with a proposal on waste regulation authorities if he was in Government long enough to be able to do so.

This proposal comes from the Environment Select Committee report, which clearly recommended that the poacher and gamekeeper roles should be separated, and that, if we were serious about environmental protection, we should have separate regulation authorities. We recognise that the Government's compromise is a somewhat timid step along the lines that we would wish. We shall not oppose the proposal because it establishes the right of voluntary groupings in the original instance. It reserves the Secretary of State's right ultimately to establish regional waste regulation authorities.

The Labour party and the Environment Select Committee are serious in their proposals for environmental protection and associated problems. The question is whether the Government are as serious as we are. As has been said many times, we believe that waste regulation authorities, together with the National Rivers Authority, which has already been established, would ultimately form the basis of an environmental protection agency. The voluntary groupings can provide a stronger role for waste disposal plans, with proper integration of those plans at regional level. They can also provide a joint approach to licensing and enforcement policies, regional consultation on the regulation of hazardous wastes and better deployment of specialist resources across the authorities.

[Mr. Peter L. Pike]

Those are the reasons why we believe that we should have gone a step further and established the waste regulation authorities now.

Nevertheless, the Government are moving in the right direction. We hope that the voluntary groupings will succeed. I have no doubt that it will not be too long before waste regulation authorities are established to ensure proper and adequate control of private and public waste disposal and the best possible protection of our environment.

7 pm

Sir Hugh Rossi: It has been interesting to hear the remarks of the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike). We have worked together on the Select Committee on the Environment on these concepts. I did not have the pleasure of serving on the Standing Committee that considered those issues. Normally, I hesitate to make party political points on environmental issues because I like to see the Select Committee on the Environment working unanimously and as an all-party Committee—but my understanding was that it was Conservative members of the Committee who tabled amendments for the formation of regional waste authorities, but that they felt unable to proceed because they were not given the assurances, help and support that they required from the hon. Member for Burnley, who was also on that Committee——

Mr. Pike: It is unusual for me not to agree with the Chairman of the Select Committee on the Environment. However, he will find that I was a signatory to those amendments in Committee and that I supported them at every stage. I told the hon. Gentleman's colleagues that if they put their amendments to the vote, the Labour members of the Committee would support both amendments. The first debate convinced my hon. Friends that we were right in our approach. As I said, it was an extremely good debate and it was as a result of that debate that many of my hon. Friends became convinced that the Select Committee report was the correct course to follow.

Sir Hugh Rossi: I am glad to hear that the hon. Gentleman has been consistent throughout and that the position has been somewhat misreported to me. However, I know that my colleagues on the Committee were unhappy at that stage because they could not carry the matter in the way that they had hoped. Nevertheless, that is all water under the bridge.

This has been a difficult issue between the Select Committee and the Government. When we first suggested the proposal, it was rejected by the Government mainly because they did not want to enter into confrontations with the local authorities once again or to embark on another reorganisation of the local authorities having done so very recently. That was one of the matters that hindered the Government when dealing with the issue. Incidentally, I understood that the local authorities had been making strong recommendations to friends of the hon. Member for Burnley and that that was another difficulty in making progress with the matter in Committee.

Be that as it may, I welcome the fact that the Government have now recognised that the Select Committee, which spent a great deal of time and took a great deal of evidence on the way in which the present structures of the waste authorities were failing the country, concluded that such a system could be operated adequately only on a regional basis. We cited the London Waste Regulation Authority as an example of what could and should be done.

It is a pity that the Government are simply taking reserve powers to create regional waste authorities and that they are not going the whole hog. I agree with the hon. Member for Burnley that, as night follows day, sooner or later we shall see the creation of regional waste authorities. We shall then have reached what the Select Committee, on an all-party basis, set out to advise the Government to do.

Mr. Simon Hughes: My hon. Friends and I are not in any way against regional waste authorities. There has been much debate and discussion on that and I recognise the work done by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) and his Committee, and others.

However, I should like to highlight one concern, which is that the amendment gives the Secretary of State the power to create new authorities. I hope that he or his successor will recognise the views of local government. If the Secretary of State is given this additional power, there is a danger that the plans that have been voluntarily agreed between local authorities in a particular area will suddenly be intervened upon by the Secretary of State, who could decide to create a new authority irrespective of the wishes of those local authorities.

I believe that the whole process will be a matter of logic; that logic will dictate economic viability, and that geography and economic viability will dictate the right size for a regulation authority, which may well be regional. However, I hope that that conclusion will be endorsed by a Government decision only if it is the view of the current authorities at a lower level. I warn against any over-hasty intervention from the Government that might disrupt what would otherwise be the preferred approach of the democratically elected local councils.

Mr. Trippier: It kills me to say this, but I agree with every single word that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) has just said. We have already been listening to the local authorities with regard to the regulatory function and waste disposal.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) for reminding Opposition Members that a number of people in some local authorities, not least in some Labour-controlled authorities, hold different views on what should be done in terms of this matter from the parliamentary Labour party —not surprisingly.

I think that what I am hearing, from both the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) and from my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green, are two cheers for what we are doing. I am satisfied with that for the moment because, when I was responding to the debate in Committee, I did not think that I should get even one.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 44

Receptacles for Household Waste

Lords amendment: No. 92, in page 48, line 11, leave out first ("receptacles or")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: Lords amendment No. 93 and amendments (a) and (b) thereto; Nos. 94, 96, 97, 109, 110 and amendment (a) thereto.

Mr. Pike: Although I should have pressed the amendments if the Government had been willing to accept them, we do not intend to divide the House because we are aware of the time. In all seriousness, the Government should be prepared to accept these modest amendments. If they do not, they will restrict the intention to move forward with recycling. I do not believe that the Government would want to admit that they are not in favour of recycling, so they should be prepared to support the two amendments.

The amendments refer to clause 46, which deals with

"Duties of waste collection authorities as respects disposal of waste collected."

The clause also deals with recycling of waste by waste collection authorities. Subsection (6) states:

"A waste collection authority may, . . . provide plant and equipment for the sorting and baling of waste".

It should be noted that by implication that clearly identifies such functions as a function of the collection rather than the disposal authority. However, subsection (7) states:

"Subsection (6) above does not apply to an authority which is also a waste disposal authority; . . . the authority may make arrangements with a waste disposal contractor" to undertake the recycling function.

In Committee and on Report, we discussed on several occasions the varying division between regulation, collection and disposal authorities. No one system is common throughout the country. I certainly do not intend to go through those arguments again, but it is because of the variation in functions that the anomaly in the Bill would create a nonsense. The Government would not wish that to be the case.

The restrictions in subsection (7) will apply to metropolitan and local authorities, which are not part of a statutory waste disposal authority and to the Welsh district authorities. In each of those cases, the authority will be a collection and a disposal authority at the same time. In addition, in London there are four statutory disposal authorities, which may be abolished under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1985.

In January 1989, the Government consulted on the role and functions of waste disposal authorities. When their decision on the results of the consultation were announced, they stated:

"the four statutory disposal authorities in London will be abolished when their assets and liabilities are transferred to local authority waste disposal companies".

Since then the Government said:

"We have therefore agreed to reconsider the case for each of the authorities to remain in being"—[*Official Report, House of Lords,* 23 October 1990, Vol. 522, c. 1274.]

Indeed, they did so, and it was reported in the *Official Report* of the other place of 23 October. Of course, that is not sufficient to guarantee the position. The Government should be prepared to move in the direction that we seek.

7.15 pm

The amendment also has the support of Liberal Democrat Members, who will express their support in a few moments. The problem remains that a waste collection authority which is, or could become, a waste disposal authority as well, will be prevented from undertaking recycling activities. It is no good the Government supporting the principle of recycling during hours of debate in Committee, on Report and in another place if they do not deal with an anomaly in their Bill—which will become an Act in a few days—which in certain instances will physically prevent recycling from taking place. That is why we tabled the amendments. They are an attempt to ameliorate the effects of clause 46(7).

The Government have attempted to clarify which activities would be permissible. Despite the fact that the Bill refers to plant equipment sorting and baling, the Government have suggested that the provision of bottle banks will be allowed. However, it is doubted whether the Government's assertion that a bottle bank is a receptacle and, by implication, not a piece of equipment for sorting waste, is a rational distinction that could survive the test of law. Not only is a wide range of other banks used for collecting different types of waste but often other associated specialist equipment could by no means be defined as a receptacle.

I could give details of various activities in the London boroughs affecting Richmond, Westminster, Sutton and Havering. The same could be instanced for the Welsh districts. However, it would be wrong to take up the time of the House by going through those details. The Bill creates a problem and the Government should accept the modest change made by the amendments.

The Government must also recognise—they still fail to do so—that recycling is not a lucrative exercise. Even schemes that are considered economically successful have resulted from considerable pump-priming by local authorities, and it was necessary to plough back any income to maintain the viability of such schemes. As the Bill is drafted, an authority could engage contractors to do the work. Any proposal would inevitably entail additional costs or variations in the scheme, which would reduce its viability.

There is an important principle here, and if time permitted we should press the amendments. I hope that the Minister is prepared to accept that the Bill creates an anomaly that he would not want. He would not wish to bar any London authority or Welsh district authority, which was both a collection and a disposal authority, from dealing with recycling when other authorities are encouraged to undertake recycling. That would be nonsense. If the Minister is sensible, he will see the logic of the amendments and accept them.

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): According to the rules of the House, I begin by declaring an interest in metal recycling, which enables me to speak with some authority on the industry and, I hope, to point the Government in the right direction under the heading of recycling arrangements. As my hon. Friend the Minister will know, it is with a certain sense of disappointment that, despite being at my most persuasive, I have not managed to persuade him that the right way forward would be to separate scrap metal from the general definition of waste. He continues to insist that that is what it is and that that is how it should be treated. In fairness, I must admit that

[Mr. Paul Marland]

he has left his door open to me by giving me an assurance that, if I can find a metal recycling merchant who is finding it difficult to have his premises licensed, my hon. Friend will discuss the matter with me. If I submit full details to him, he will investigate the matter. As yet, I have not come up with a scrap-metal dealer who is encountering such difficulties, expecially as local authorities have only just started to license scrap-metal yards.

There are some difficulties about the length of time for which local authorities are prepared to issue licenses. Sadly, some are not prepared to issue them beyond five years, but the investment required for the efficient recycling of metal, whether ferrous or non-ferrous, means that more than five years is needed in which to recoup such investment. The industry is, however, living with that problem.

At the moment, George Lyons and Co. of Liverpool is having trouble with an unco-operative Merseyside development corporation. I hope that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Riverside (Mr. Parry) and I will be able to sort that out without resorting to ministerial help. It is important to remember that most local authorities are only now beginning to embark on the licensing of their scrapyards.

On the definition of waste, we must look for assistance where we can. Perhaps the Confederation of British Industry has come to our rescue because, in its documents on the business agenda for Europe in the 1990s, it seeks for a clear distinction to be made between waste and secondary raw material so that recycling is promoted and resources are better utilised.

As I said in many speeches to the Committee on this subject, I understand that the European Community may be issuing a directive on inter-European movement of waste. Exemptions to regulations may result from that directive based on the category of waste to be moved across frontiers. The categories of waste are as follows: white, grey and black. Obviously, the most hazardous material falls into the black category. Such categorisation would benefit the movement of ferrous scrap, which would obviously come in the white group. Eurofer, the European equivalent of the British Scrap Federation, has had assurances from the Commission that it is aware of the problems created by calling scrap metal waste and it has agreed that ferrous scrap could be removed from the category of waste.

If ferrous scrap is removed from the category of waste or is classified differently by the Commission, will my hon. Friend the Minister preserve our Euro-credentials and follow suit in the United Kingdom? In common with many other hon. Members, I dislike the expression "a level playing field", but the United Kingdom reclamation industry needs reassurance that it will be treated the same as the European reclamation industry. It is disconcerting to record that the licensing of scrapyards has not yet begun in Denmark, Belgium, France or Italy—Lord only knows what is happening in Ireland. What is required is fair competition across Europe.

There are some other specific matters on which I seek reassurance from my hon. Friend. Will representatives of the reclamation industry be consulted about any future changes to the licensing procedure? When Lord Hesketh was at the Department of the Environment he gave me and other members of the industry the reassurance that such consultation would take place. Now that Lord Hesketh has moved on, I should be glad if my hon. Friend could reaffirm that commitment. Consultation on the annual costs and criteria for the licensing of scrap yards would also be enormously reassuring. Similarly, it would be reassuring to have discussions with the Department of the Environment on the waste management paper concerning advice to local authorities on the procedures for licensing.

Lest the House should think otherwise, I want to emphasise that the reclamation industry does not in any way want to pollute or to irritate. It wants to set high standards and to ensure that their enforcement is practical and efficient. I am pleased to tell the House that two scrap-metal recyclers have been awarded the British quality standard award BS 5750 for setting a high standard in their own businesses. I believe that we owe a great deal to the scrap-metal industry and to farmers, who are probably the most active promoters of a clean environment.

There is some confusion over recycling credits and who shall get them from the county council in rural areas. Will the skip operator and the reclaimer obtain those credits or the district local authority, which, in many cases, is already charging for bottle banks and the like? Will those authorities be reimbursed for doing so, as well as being paid? Will the waste collection authority receive the credits?

It would be commendable and emotionally appealing if recycling credits were given to the boy scouts for collecting old drink tins or bottle tops or to a local women's institute for collecting waste paper—many of whom make a first-class job of it. If such functions are undertaken by a professional organisation, such as a refuse collector or a scrap-metal dealer, will it collect a recycling credit? After all, those organisations perform a commendable job. We also need clarification of exactly what a recycling credit is. Is it a cash payment? Is a credit note to be offset against some local authority charges or something else? Whatever it may be, it would be helpful to have some clarification.

There are other on-going problems that must be addressed. Firstly, will the reclamation industry be consulted on any enabling legislation as a result of the Bill? It should also be consulted about any changes that the Department of the Environment may want to introduce once the Bill is enacted. Secondly, will my hon. Friend confirm that the inspectors, or whoever, who follow the regulations to ensure that they are adhered to, all work to the same brief, regardless of their location? It is difficult for the industry if the inspectors in Liverpool are working to a different brief from that used in Guildford. I must insist that the cowboy operators do not profit at the expense of the legitimate trader.

Finally, I should like to put on record how much I have appreciated my hon. Friend's willingness to discuss these matters during the passage of the Bill and the ready way in which he has sought to familiarise himself with ferrous metal reclamation.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 110, which has been tabled by my hon. Friends and I, is extremely straightforward: it requires that those who carry out the recycling are paid for the process.

Our amendment relates to the new clause proposed by Lords amendment No. 110. It changes the option that there "may" be payment to the waste collection authority

to a requirement that there "shall" be. I hope that the Minister will be favourably disposed towards that amendment.

I do not dissent greatly from the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland), but he will not be surprised if I speak to another specific concern—one which I am sure the Minister expected that I should want to express. The hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) has already mentioned the problem, which is now the subject of amendments tabled by the Labour party and my party. If a waste collection authority should become a waste disposal authority, it would be prevented from carrying out certain recycling.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and his colleagues have received written representations on this matter and the Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities was questioned about it at a recent conference. Concern about this matter is especially prevalent in authorities such as the London boroughs of Richmond and Sutton, which have taken the lead in recycling initiatives under the administration of my Liberal Democrat colleagues.

Richmond is a collection authority and also one of the constituent members of the west London waste authority —one of the four statutory London waste disposal authorities. I do not think that there is any party political doubt that that borough has been at the forefront of recycling activities. It operates a range of collection activities covering bottles, rags, cans, office waste paper, computer paper and commercial glass. There are many points around the borough for the collection of board, waste oil, plastic and so on. It has storage bays for recycling, which other boroughs also use. It is now investigating micro recycling centres. It has a lot of fairly sophisticated equipment either already commissioned or planned. It clearly has a sophisticated process for servicing the facilities and doing an extremely good job.

To take up the point of the hon. Member for Burnley, it would be invidious for a local authority to have to pay and make a loss on some environmental and recycling activities if, on the rare occasion when it was to make a profit—which it normally uses to encourage voluntary activity—it was to be prohibited from any activity.

7.30 pm

My colleagues in Richmond are worried that the Government's approach will mean that my colleagues will not be allowed to retain in house, organised by the local authority as opposed to contracted out, all the recycling initiatives which it is accepted have been among the best in the country.

The Sutton case is parallel. It is a collection authority and, as the Under-Secretary will know, it is also a disposal authority by virtue of being a member of the voluntary south London waste disposal joint committee. It has purchased vehicles for glass collection, put its in-house direct labour operation out to compulsory, competitive tender and won the contract. As a result, it has begun to programme a range of activities that require investment of money and officer time. It is equally concerned that that project is likely to be thwarted by the current trend of Government activity.

I expect that the Under-Secretary has seen the letter written to the Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities, dated 22 October, by the leader of Sutton borough council, Councillor Graham Tope. Councillor Tope asks a limited number of specific questions, which I shall repeat because, as far as I know, they have not yet been answered and go to the core of the issue. He asks whether it is the Minister's intention that the Bill will allow a waste collection authority that is also a waste disposal authority to provide and operate, either by direct labour or private contractor, a recycling facility and be in receipt of a rebate which will be a transfer from its waste disposal or waste collection account to a recycling account. It seems to the councillor, as it does to my colleagues and me, that that is an encouragement to be a good recycling authority. It is a perfectly proper activity.

What is intended to be the commercial, financial interaction between waste disposal authorities and waste collection authorities? What about commercial contractual commitments entered into, as at present, by local authorities, either with other local authorities to do their recycling for them, or with direct service organisations or private companies? Will they be allowed to go ahead and honour those or will they have penalties imposed on them if they do? Will there be a programme whereby waste collection authorities will have to invite tenders for the receipt of waste that they collect? How will they be able to carry out what they are presently doing without breach of contract?

I confirm the concerns that have also been taken up with Ministers by my colleagues in Richmond upon Thames. The Minister will be aware that my colleague, Lord Ezra, raised those matters in the other place in the debate only a week ago. There has been correspondence, including some from Lady Blatch, as the Under-Secretary of State responsible for such matters in the other place, and from the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory), to officers of the London borough of Richmond, but they do not address the fundamental concern. We have not yet had a reassurance that local authorities will be able, if they are in the constitutional position of being both collection and disposal authorities, to carry out in house the recycling activity that they have clearly done well and wish to carry on. There are all sorts of practical implications in that.

I hope that the Minister can be far more positive and will accept the amendment to Lords amendment No. 110. I hope that he will accept the amendment to Lords amendment No. 93 and say that, where recycling has been pioneered by good local authorities, they will be allowed to go on doing it and will not be forced by what I can only assume is an initial mistake to have recycling out of house, so that it is no longer an operation in which they can lead the local community and volunteer effort, and set an extremely good example that many other local authorities are willing and happy to follow.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Eltham): While we are considering the statutory responsibilities and the question whether the amendment should read "may" or "shall", it is possible to re-emphasise what my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland) talked about—the commercial recycling and reclamation, and the individual and voluntary groups. Obviously, they can mesh together. If we ever forget to emphasise how important it is for each of us to consider what we can do and try to ensure that those with commercial opportunities

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

for selling and reclaiming products receive some response to what they do, whether they do it correctly or not, we shall not achieve the full spectrum of necessary activity.

I pay tribute to the mayoress of Cambridge. When she bought a plastic product packed in a container that stated that it was recyclable she tried to find out how it was recyclable and was told that at some future stage it might be possible to sort out different sorts of plastic and perhaps that form of plastic could be melted down and used. I regard that as offensive. We must start with current products that can be recycled, with voluntary help to overcome the transport and collection costs, with aluminium and paper, and then move to the time when the value of waste paper is taken from £3 a tonne back to £30 a tonne and promote more commercial opportunity in collection and disposal.

My hon. Friend the Minister has done a great deal to provide a focus for all the efforts, but when people consider the results of the legislation, they will remember the role of voluntary organisations and domestic households, as well as commercial premises.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): I am a Member who recognises that world resources are finite and recycling has an important part to play. However, experience in my constituency during the past 18 months makes it clear that recycling has to be carried out within a framework of adequate and ongoing supervision and regulation. I recognise the need for the reclamation of metals. As a Member with a significant part of the British special steels industry in my constituency, I should be foolish not to do so.

I shall restrict my speech on the group of amendments to a local incident with which the Minister for the Environment and Countryside is familiar and to which he has devoted a fair amount of time and energy. About 18 months ago, a consignment of toxic waste, contained in a load of copper scrap, reached my constituency. The material was supposed to be uncontaminated, but after it had lain in the open for some time it was discovered to be contaminated by carcinogenic materials—what I described last year as a poisonous cocktail.

That incident has cost my local authority considerable sums in supervision. It has also had to bear the burden of anxiety felt throughout the local community. The saddest part is that the material was already in Britain and had been here for some weeks before the poison was discovered, which suggests that the regulations should be changed and that the role of the local authority and its capacity to meet the costs that it incurred should be enshrined in new legislation.

The Minister may care to offer his latest comments on the position, but 18 months later the material is still in my constituency. It is now contained in more than 2,700 drums and has been there for 12 months—heaven knows when it will go. While that material remains in my constituency, it is evidence of the inadequacy of regulation and the need for care and supervision to assist local authorities to ensure that their communities are protected. It may be that it was unwitting poisoning, although we cannot be sure until the court case is resolved in the United States. However, that incident provides adequate evidence to sustain continuing concern in the House. We want a commitment from Ministers that, if existing regulations prove inadequate and bring the risk of a repeat performance of that which has blighted my area, they will not hesitate to introduce amending legislation—which I believe will be necessary at an early stage.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): I support the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike). I am delighted that he is now speaking from the Front Bench; his presence there is long overdue.

I am concerned that we are endangering the legislation by making recycling less practical and more difficult, rather than easier. We should be encouraging recycling. There are two approaches to the problem—pre-collection sorting and post-collection sorting. Unfortunately, the legislation tends to put those two approaches in competition, rather than encouraging co-operation. Pre-collection sorting was pioneered in Huddersfield 10 years ago—I think that it was an Oxfam scheme—but, unfortunately, it ran into financial difficulties and ceased operation. More recently, Friends of the Earth, in co-operation with the Sheffield local authority, operated a recycling scheme.

Both schemes involved the householder separating his rubbish into four or five different piles and putting them into separate containers, which were then collected from the households. People in other authorities separate their rubbish, although the refuse collection service does not deal with separated items. The householders have to take them to bottle banks, waste paper collection points, tin can collection points and so on.

There are considerable attractions in the pre-sorting process. For example, it increases public awareness of how much is being thrown away and the value of those items. The scheme is cheap to operate because it relies on the householder to sort the rubbish. However, the scheme has disadvantages. It can be inefficient because some people will not go to the trouble of sorting their rubbish; the elderly and the disabled may find sorting difficult; and in tower blocks and flats there is often the difficulty of only one refuse chute for rubbish, so that it is difficult to sort it effectively.

Another problem is that, however hard one tries, a large proportion of rubbish is not sorted. A certain amount can be extracted, but it is difficult to extract and sort all the rubbish into reusable materials. The process can also be expensive. There are many examples of people who religiously take paper and bottles to collection points, but in fact they use more energy transporting the rubbish than is saved by recycling.

I suspect that the pre-sorting process causes problems for waste disposal authorities that have begun to develop post-sorting of refuse. The temptation is to take from the refuse the one or two valuable materials that will command a high price. That destroys the economics of sorting all the rubbish. That is why I disagree with the Liberal-Democrat amendment to replace the word "may" with "shall". If a collection authority is separating paper, bottles or any other materials in the rubbish that might otherwise go to landfill, it is doing a valuable service and should receive some remuneration to take account of the fact that it is reducing the amount of landfill. If a local authority sorts all the refuse in its depot, the pre-collection method that takes out the most valuable items—for example, aluminium and tin—may destroy the economics of that authority's attempt to recycle all the waste.

One disadvantage of post-collection sorting is that it does not impress upon the public the importance of the resources being used. It is unseen by the public, because it takes place in the waste disposal depot. The process can also be expensive, especially because of the capital costs of installing equipment to separate the rubbish. However, almost 100 per cent. recycling can be achieved. The Greater Manchester waste disposal authority is running an experimental scheme, and I understand that an authority in the west midlands also has a recycling contract.

Paper, tin, aluminium and different sorts of plastic can be extracted and, eventually, there is a residue of humus material that can be turned into an acceptable substitute for peat, which is environmentally attractive. If all that takes place, landfill can be avoided and there is a recycled use of the materials. The danger is that that approach can be destroyed if the pre-collection authority extracts one or two of the more valuable materials. That destroys the economic viability of the large plants that are intended to sort all the refuse.

7.45 pm

There needs to be a co-operative approach in any local authority area. The collection and disposal authorities should discuss whether pre-or post-collection is the most reasonable. They should make financial arrangements to take that into account. The Government also have a key role in that because, whether it is pre- or post-collection, the paramount question is what price can be commanded for the recycled materials. The Government should be doing much more to ensure guaranteed prices for recycled materials. They should increase the specifications, especially in Government purchasing, for the use of recycled materials.

The Government have made some progress in the use of recycled paper, but they could go much further. It is regrettable that, in other areas of Government purchasing, there is no requirement for the use of, for example, recycled glass. I ask the Minister to ensure that this legislation does not produce an artificial conflict between the collection and the disposal authorities. The Government must do as much as possible to ensure guaranteed prices, especially in a period when it appears that there will be a general slump in industrial activity. We must not destroy the impetus of the recycling industry.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): The debate has echoed some of our discussions in Committee, and they were some of our best debates. There was an especially striking speech from the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) who, in an associated debate on packaging, brought to the Committee a shirt box containing a new shirt. He used that to show how the manufacturer could do without a great deal of the packaging, pins, labels and so on. It was an excellent prop.

In other debates, there were contributions from my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland), who impressed upon the Committee the fact that this country has a good record in reclamation and scrap reprocessing. He instigated a visit by me to a large and important scrap merchant in London which showed me what was happening on the ground. It also showed me the importance of doing nothing in the Bill that might impede the recovery of ferrous and other scrap.

I am happy to reassure my hon. Friend that we will continue closely to consult the relevant industry. My officials have already had preliminary discussions with the British Secondary Metals Association, and they will be happy to extend them to the British Scrap Federation. Those discussions will be most usefully held after we have issued a first draft of our licensing regulations and the associated guidance, so that there will be something definite on the table to discuss. Those notes and regulations will meet my hon. Friend's concern that different standards might apply in different parts of the country—and that is something we certainly want to avoid.

My hon. Friend mentioned the boundary transfer of waste. We are determined that regulations on an international or EC basis, although necessary, will not impede or inhibit the legitimate recycling trade. However, I repeat the point that I made in Committee, that we must not assume that all potentially recyclable waste is by definition non-hazardous.

My hon. Friend asked about recycling credits. The Lords amendment sets out in detail how those credits are to be paid, and the philosophy is comparatively simple. When material is reclaimed from the waste stream and recycled, there is a saving on disposal costs. Put simply, each tonne of glass that we recycle is a tonne of which we do not have to dispose. The purpose of the amendments, which I believe have cross-party support, is to capture that sum of money in cash terms and to attribute it to the recycling activity.

Several hon. Members asked who is to receive those credits. Under amendment No. 92, they should, as a requirement, go to the waste collection authority, and also to third parties where appropriate. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) wanted to ensure that that arrangement will not impede the more general recycling undertaken in the voluntary sector. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) that that sector is an essential part of the activity, and we must do nothing to inhibit it.

I ask the House to reject the Opposition amendment, because there may be instances where economies of scale will make it more appropriate for a recycling scheme to be run by a waste collection authority rather than by voluntary bodies. In other cases, a number of voluntary bodies may be operating similar schemes in the same area, and it would not necessarily be appropriate for a waste disposal authority to pay credits to a number of competing schemes—especially if some of them recycle only small amounts of waste.

One can imagine a situation in which the viability of a large door-to-door collection scheme depends on collecting and recycling of all the materials, including more valuable items such as aluminium cans. It would be unfortunate if a small-scale competitor went down the street in advance of the recycling wagon and simply picked up the more valuable aluminium cans, as that might render the competing scheme uneconomic.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Are not boroughs such as Sutton and Richmond concerned that it might operate the other way around? The local collecting authority may have established a viable business and then find that it is taken away and given to another agency, private or public, so that the authority would lose that revenue. Sutton was the first local authority in Britain to introduce the

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

recycling of CFCs, and my own local authority of Gordon was the second. They do not make money from that activity, and it is only reasonable that they should be able to secure some benefit, so that they can cross-subsidise. If revenue is lost to local authorities, a greater burden will fall on poll tax payers.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I intend to address the question of unitary disposal or collection authorities, but I was making the point that some discretion must be allowed as to the type of third party recycling scheme that a local waste disposal authority wants to encourage in its area. Because we believe in such discretion, we reject the idea of making it compulsory that recycling credits should be given automatically to every scheme in any particular area.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned Sutton, and I am happy to acknowledge the work done by that London borough, which is something of a leader in certain aspects of recycling.

That leads me to the disquiet felt by the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike). In Committee, it was agreed that waste disposal authorities should transfer their disposal operations to what were called LAWDCs—local authority waste disposal companies. A local authority will be required to transfer all the relevant plant and equipment for the keeping, treatment or disposal of such waste to such a company, or to make alternative arrangements with the private sector for its provision. Judging from the hon. Gentleman's earlier remarks, I take it that he accepts the LAWDC principle.

It follows that it would not be sensible to allow those that happen to be both collection and disposal authorities to provide and operate as collection authorities equipment that they would be unable to provide and operate as disposal authorities. A line must be drawn somewhere, as to which plant and equipment a collection authority should operate. Our view is that the line should be drawn at the plant and equipment that a collection authority would normally provide as part of its collection duties.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The Minister says that a line must be drawn somewhere, but surely local government should be allowed to make its own decisions as to the most appropriate arrangement for a particular part of the United Kingdom, bearing in mind the tremendous variations that exist in the areas and populations involved. Instead of imposing legislation nationally, would it not be better and more democratic to allow such matters to be decided locally?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The hon. Gentleman was a member of the Committee and must be aware that the establishment of LAWDCs underpins this part of the Bill. I remind the hon. Gentleman that LAWDCs need not be privately owned but can be entirely in the public sector, joint ventures, or companies jointly owned by the private and public sector.

The hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) wrote to me to ensure that, in clause 46(6), the words

"plant and equipment for the sorting and baling of waste"

include bottle banks and other collection facilities. I examined carefully the wording of the Bill, and I draw the hon. Lady's attention to the title of clause 46:

"Duties of waste collection authorities as respects disposal of waste collection."

It implies that we are here considering waste that has already been collected and is at the disposal phase. Only those facilities, and that plant and equipment, will be that from which we are precluding the collection and disposal authorities from owning. Consequently, bottle banks and light plant and equipment of that type should be permitted to be owned and run by the London boroughs that are both collection and disposal authorities. I hope that I have put the hon. Lady's mind at rest, and I invite the House to reject the Opposition amendments.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 66

POWERS OF ENTRY ETC. OF INSPECTORS

Lords amendment: No. 157, in page 71, line 32, after ("treated") insert (", kept")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 158 to 163 and 298.

8 pm

Mr. Adley: Does my hon. Friend the Minister feel that he should say anything about the effect on airports, railway stations and ferry ports, because of the changes made by another place in clause 72 and their references in paragraph (b) of their amendment No. 163 to

"any premises used for the purposes of, or in connection with, the provision to the public of transport services by land, water or air"?

Mr. Trippier: Amendment 163 updates the definition of industrial waste in clause 72 in such a way that it no longer relies upon who owns or operates the industry or on what it does. That is a safer means of delivering the same effect. I remember that my hon. Friend mentioned this subject in Committee, and I am grateful to him. The amended clause would have a wider application, and it would be more stringently enforced. I think that that meets his concerns in every particular.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

New Clause

DOG REGISTRATION

Lords amendment: No. 296, after clause 134, insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) The Secretary of State shall by regulations make provision for the registration, identification and control of dogs.

(2) Regulations under this section shall include, provision for the regulations to be administered by local authorities, and for the charging by them of registration fees of such amounts, and subject to such exemptions, as they may determine or the Secretary of State may prescribe.

(3) Any person who without reasonable excuse—

(a) fails to comply without any requirement imposed on him by regulations under this section to register a dog, or

(b) fails to comply with any requirement so imposed as respects identification of a dog,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

(4) in performing their duties under this section, local authorities may enter into such agreements with any person as may in their opinion facilitate the registration and identification of dogs.

(5) No regulations under this section shall be made unless a draft thereof has been laid before and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament and the Secretary of State shall lay the first draft regulations before the end of the period of two years beginning with the day on which this Act is passed.

(6) In this section "local authority", means in England and Wales a District Council, a London Borough Council or the Common Council of the City of London, and in Scotland means an islands or district council.")

Read a Second time.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I beg to move, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take the following: Government amendments (e) to (g) and (a) to (d) to the new clause; Lords amendment No. 299, and the Government motion to disagree; and Lords amendment No. 436 and the Government motion to disagree.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: In previous debates on the subject of dogs, there has been widespread agreement that measures are necessary to deal with the problems associated with irresponsible dog ownership.

We have now placed before the House a package of measures on dog identification and straying. But we remain opposed to the idea of attempting to register all dogs in the country. That would be an expensive and bureaucratic diversion from the need to act decisively against the actual problems. In short, we want to solve the problem, not register it.

A registration scheme would be expensive—according to the RSPCA's own figures, it would cost some £20 million a year simply to administer the scheme. That sum would have to be spent before providing any dog wardens or kenneling facilities at all.

Mr. John P. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan): Surely the whole point about the dog registration scheme is that it would be self-financing?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: If the hon. Gentleman will bear with me, he will hear me demonstrate that a dog registration scheme is an extremely inefficient way to raise money for providing dog control services. As I have said, if one takes the RSPCA's figures, £20 million a year would be diverted not into providing wardens and kennelling facilities but simply to run the scheme. Therefore, it would be entirely unproductive in dealing with the problems that exist. Registration is not an effective way to raise the necessary revenue to enforce dog control measures.

Mr. Gale: The figure that my hon. Friend has mentioned, which is not in dispute, represents £3 per dog. Does he consider that that is excessive?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The hon. Gentleman is assuming a high level of compliance. In Northern Ireland they have been attempting for the past seven years to enforce a dog licensing system costing only £5 a year. It is estimated that between one third and one half of the dogs in the Province have a licence. Widespread concern has been expressed in this country about the likely level of fees, especially for low-income dog owners.

Last year, the RSPCA commissioned a study from the London School of Economics. I can be forgiven, therefore, for quoting figures and sums that have come not from my Department but from an independent and authoritative study. It calculated that, with a 60 per cent. compliance rate, which I regard as highly optimistic in the light of the Northern Ireland experience, a one-off fee of £121·50 would be necessary. Alternatively, there could be a first-year registration fee of £29 and continuing annual fees. That would be a financial burden for some and a disincentive to register for others. It is the irresponsible dog owner who would be the last to comply and pay up. The law-abiding owner would therefore subsidise the irresponsible owner whose dogs create all the problems.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The Minister refers to the experience in Northern Ireland. Does he agree that the problem of stray dogs worrying sheep has dramatically diminished in Northern Ireland due to the introduction of the scheme? Might it not be that, although some people are reluctant to register their dogs, they now make sure that they do not cause any of the nuisances in Northern Ireland that we are so concerned about?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The number of stray dogs that have to be destroyed has not fallen. Despite the fact that the licensing system has been in operation for seven years, that pile of dead dogs that the RSPCA is so fond of showing us has been either stable or growing in that part of the United Kingdom where dog licensing has been enforced.

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): Does my hon. Friend agree with the chief environmental health officer of Belfast, who is on record as saying that, without dog registration, the problem would be a great deal worse?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My point is that, despite the enforcement measures that have been taken during the last seven years, fewer than half the dogs are licensed. The fee is only £5. If the fee were higher, as the scheme proponents suppose it would be here, I suggest that it might be difficult to reach even those standards of compliance.

Sir Hugh Rossi: I happened to be a Northern Ireland Minister at the time that the scheme was introduced. It was not anticipated that there would be a substantial take-up of the licence, whatever figure was set. Circumstances in Northern Ireland are such that it is very difficult for the Government to recover dues from sections of the population. The rent and rates system has been subject from time to time to rent and rate strikes. The notorious black taxis that run up and down the Falls road are unlicensed and cannot be licensed. The scheme is totally unenforceable.

Nevertheless, the experience in Northern Ireland is that the scheme has had a beneficial effect. Sheep worrying has diminished. As those who are responsible for administering the scheme are the first to state, the situation would be far, far worse without the scheme.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I would not lean too heavily on the experience in Belfast, where doubtless the conditions outlined by my hon. Friend obtain. There is no reason why compliance should not be higher in rural areas of Northern Ireland. Regrettably, in the Province as a whole, the licensing system appears to cover fewer than half the dogs.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: As the Minister who was formerly responsible for agriculture and sheep worrying, I confirm that the number of complaints is low, although it is rising. The fairer way to put it is that, during the first year of the scheme's operation in Northern Ireland, if one added together the number of animals impounded and the number of animals that owners asked to be collected, the figure came to fewer than 11,000. During the last year for which we have figures, the number of animals impounded and the number of animals that owners asked to be collected came to 17,000. Those comparative figures do not self-evidently demonstrate that licensing deals with the impounding of dogs or with the dogs that their owners no longer want to keep.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I respect my hon. Friend's point. The critical factor is how many dog wardens, kennelling facilities and vehicles are used to round up, collect and hold strays. It is exactly in order to do that that we are introducing the present package of amendments.

8.15 pm

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) said that the Northern Ireland scheme resulted in an improvement. May I put it to the Minister that the scheme that he is suggesting would, in Northern Ireland circumstances, produce an even greater improvement? The burden of my hon. Friend's case is that his proposal is better than the Lords amendment.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Any improvement in the situation in Northern Ireland is not attributable to the licensing system. It is due to the wardening facilities that are available in the Province.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): There is an intractable case in my constituency which demonstrates how foolish the present regime is. In a small terraced house, there are six chow dogs and three border collies, as well as two cats. The neighbours nearly go mad. There is no law to prevent that. Such foolishness, widespread in many areas, would be deterred if people had to contribute to a sensible scheme. I have a file about the case, but I can do nothing about it. I know that similar cases occur in many other areas.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The owner of the six chow dogs might resent having to register and pay the full fee when it is not those dogs that create the problem.

Dame Janet Fookes (Plymouth, Drake): To refer to the position in Northern Ireland, I have spoken personally today to the chief dog warden for Belfast city council. He assured me that Belfast welcomes licensing and regards it as absolutely essential if the council is to carry out its job properly. Is the Minister suggesting that that man is an incompetent fool?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My hon. Friend has drawn attention again to Belfast. I had not intended to lean too heavily on the experience of that one city, with its particular problems. The Government's duty, however, is to consult more widely and to talk to others, apart from the people who are employed to do the job in Belfast. We sent over officials to discuss the matter with the USPCA and local authorities and to examine statistics from a number of different sources. We concluded that the level of compliance in Northern Ireland was low and that any improvement in the stray dog problem in the Province could not be attributed to the licensing system.

As for exemptions, I have already mentioned that those who comply and pay the full fee might resent the fact that it is the irresponsible minority who create the problem who may be deterred from registering. The problem could be made worse if there were widespread exemptions. If old-age pensioners or those on income support were exempted from charges, or if there were exemptions for guide dogs or working dogs, all those animals would still have to be registered, but no income would accrue. Still higher costs could fall on the long-suffering, law-abiding owner who registers. In short, a registration scheme would be an expensive and bureaucratic way of not solving the problem.

That remains our view on dog registration, but I have always agreed about the need for action. As I said in April, and as my noble Friend Lord Hesketh said in another place, we intend to introduce measures to deal with stray dogs.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): Is my hon. Friend aware of the growing concern among responsible dog owners that they will have to bear the burden of this increased bureaucracy and the enormous army of dog wardens that will be required because a significant number of irresponsible dog owners will not pay their registration fee? Is he aware that the burden of my constituency mail has changed since the House of Lords voted for a registration scheme? The majority of people who now write to me are against such a scheme, and today a petition of more than 14,000 signatures has been placed in the House of Commons against a dog registration scheme. Public opinion is turning on this issue.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My hon. Friend underlines the point that I was making about the responsible dog owner. I am aware of two large petitions that have been handed in against dog registration.

The Government always intended to deal with the problem of stray dogs, which was why last year we announced a consultation paper, "Action on Dogs". It was returned to the Department with a substantial measure of agreement. Its suggestions could not be incorporated into the original Bill as they were outside its scope, but since then the long title of the Bill has been amended in another place. It brings dog control measures clearly within the scope of the Bill, and we wish to accept that. The package of measures that we propose will, I think, tackle the problem on the ground.

Let me deal with the need for identification. Since 1930, every dog in a public place has been required to wear a collar and identification tag, with certain exemptions. Enforcement, which is split between local authorities and the police, has been extremely patchy. Amendment (g) places this duty squarely on district councils. It provides a simple, visible and immediate way of linking owner with dog and enables dogs to be returned to their owners without the need for the authorities to be involved.

I invite the House to compare that with the complexity of an electronic registration scheme, by which an implanted microchip must be read by a specialist scanner to give a number, which is then fed into a central computer

to give the last recorded address of the last registered owner. We propose, instead, a practical solution to a practical problem, which dog registration does not supply.

Similarly for stray dogs; since 1906, the police have had powers to collect and hold strays and local authorities have had such powers in recent years. But no one has had the duty to collect and hold strays. We propose that this should be settled at district level. District councils will be responsible for collecting and holding stray dogs. To do that, they may employ an agent such as a dog welfare body, but they will remain responsible for carrying out their duties properly.

To encourage the public to continue to help in dealing with the stray dog problem, they will, as at present, be able to continue to take stray dogs to the nearest police station or direct to the local authority. District councils will hold stray dogs for at least seven days. If the owner retrieves the dog, he will have to pay the cost of kennelling and, in addition, a fee to defray the cost of the warden and collection service. If the dog remains uncollected, it will be sold, given away or humanely destroyed.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): My hon. Friend has given slightly the wrong impression. Will he confirm that the Lords amendment does not include anything about placing an implant in a dog and electronically monitoring it? It leaves the decision on the methods of control for further discussion at some other time.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The national registration scheme which has been advocated by its proponents—*[Interruption.]* It is an inescapable part of that scheme that there should be a central computer and a means of linking a dog in any part of the country with that computer. All the descriptions and advice that I have received, certainly from the RSCPA, have been along the lines of an electronic device. I have already described how that is an imprecise and inefficient way of doing what is better done by enforcement of the collar and tag requirement.

I have already said that, in addition to paying the kennelling fee, a person collecting a stray dog will have to pay a fee towards the cost of the warden service. That will raise additional revenue, but I recognise that acting against strays in this manner, and the new obligation on district councils, will mean increased expenditure. Before implementing the package, we would need to discuss its details with local authorities and take the new duties into account in determining revenue support grant. More than 200 local authorities already employ dog wardens within existing resources, and I believe that the city of Bradford employs five.

Authorities can expect additional revenue when stray dogs are collected by their owners, who will pay a fee which will be retained by the district council. According to the LSE report, about a quarter of stray dogs are returned to their owners, so this source of revenue could be significant. It also has the great advantage that the dog owners who create the problem will pay directly for its solution, and again this is an advantage over a national dog registration scheme.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I should be grateful if the Minister would not, unintentionally I am sure, mislead the House on another matter. Not only has he not yet confirmed that the Lords amendment was a general amendment with no specific scheme allowing for regulations, but he has not said that more than 200 of the 250 local authorities which responded to his consultation favoured a dog registration scheme. The reality of his proposal—that people who turn up to collect their stray dog will pay—is that the fine will be paid after the dog has bolted, which is a ludicrous stystem. Is it not better that people pay in advance and become responsible from the moment the dog is theirs?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: If the hon. Gentleman is saying that an electronic tagging system is now deemed impracticable, he will agree that the collar and tag requirement provides a simpler, more immediate and more direct means of linking an owner with his dog.

Mr. Robert Banks (Harrogate): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I must get on. Will my hon. Friend forgive me?

In earlier debates, we promised to offer local authorities improved byelaws aimed directly at curbing dog nuisance. Last week, my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office published details of such byelaws.

There are already byelaws giving local authorities the ability to require owners to clear up after their dogs, the so-called "pooper scoop" byelaw. The Home Office has now greatly extended the discretion of local authorities. They can also require dogs to be kept on a lead or banned from certain areas at certain times of the day. With the other measures against dog fouling in another part of the Bill, local authorities will have these additional clear, specific and well-targeted powers to deal with dog fouling and other nuisances in their areas.

8.30 pm

For the sake of completeness, I should remind the House that dangerous dogs were the subject of another consultation paper which we issued in June this year. Consultation on it ends on 15 November, and again we shall look for a suitable opportunity to legislate if those measures achieve wide support.

Mr. Robert Banks *rose*——

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: There is no one dog problem and no one solution. I notice that the advocates of dog registration have begun to downgrade its powers. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ended a recent open letter with the rather lame statement:

"A national dog registration scheme is not the answer, but it is the key to a package of measures".

I am proposing that package. It enforces identification, it acts directly against stray dogs; and it penalises the irresponsible owner. It does this without the need to get every dog on a computer. This evening, I invite the House to pass the measures which we propose. That will be a big step along the road to creating a more responsible dog-owning country.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: I must oppose the Government's motion and support the amendment that was carried overwhelmingly in the House of Lords a few weeks ago. I hope to be brief—unlike the Minister—because we all want to make progress, and a good number of hon. Members want to speak.

My instant reaction to this debate is to say, here we are again. It is remarkable that, once again, the greatest Government effort on the Bill so far seems to be to defeat dog registration. It is clear that the Minister was not happy with the task allotted to him. It is not very comfortable to

[Mrs. Ann Taylor]

have to argue that people will not pay to register their dogs but will pay to collect them once they have strayed. I understand the Minister's problems.

The reason why Ministers have had to make such heavy weather of this debate is not that they are not convinced of the need for dog registration. The story that Ministers at the Department of the Environment were willing to accept the Lords amendment and the Government's defeat there has not been denied. It seems clear that the reason why we are having this debate is that one person, the Prime Minister, wants to persist in her opposition. Here we are again having this debate, with the Government refusing to do the obvious and introduce dog registration.

Sir Hugh Rossi: I remind the hon. Lady of an amendment tabled on Report to the Control of Pollution Bill in 1974 proposing a scheme for dog registration. It was not taken, but instead a working party was set up and it came forward with proposals for a dog registration scheme. Between 1974 and 1979, the Labour party had the opportunity to introduce a scheme of the kind before us. Why did not it do so?

Mrs. Taylor: I think that opinion generally during those years was moving in favour of dog registration schemes. Without doubt, the problems that have arisen in the past 10 years prove that we need to do something urgently and stop the kind of talk on which the Minister has always embarked.

What we have seen from the Minister today is what we have seen from him on every other occasion. Every time we have this debate, the Whips scurry around and tell Ministers that they are not sure that they can carry the day. They ask Ministers to pull something out of the hat and whether they will have one of their famous incentives and produce yet another package. We have had consultation papers and discussion documents, everything from Ministers except what we need—a commitment to a dog registration scheme.

That happened again last Thursday, when there was a planted question and the Whips were worried about tonight's vote. The package that the Minister outlined this evening is exactly the same as all the other so-called packages: it is all wrapping and no content, not least because Ministers are extremely worried that if they concede anything, the Prime Minister will have her say and they will all be in trouble.

I see that the junior Minister had yet again been left isolated to deal with the problem.

Mr. Robert B. Jones (Hertfordshire, West): The hon. Lady keeps making the point that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is behind this, but she keeps forgetting that many hon. Members are wholly opposed to such a scheme because it would not work and does not address the problem.

Mrs. Taylor: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for pointing that out. Every time we have had a vote, every time we have had a debate on dog registration, it has become clear that the majority of Members—Ministers apart—have always voted for dog registration.

The Minister should step back from his brief and instructions and think about the problems that are involved and that he has mentioned—of dog control, dog fouling and dangerous dogs—and ask himself why so many people are in favour of dog registration. Why are the majority of the public in favour of dog registration? The majority of Back Benchers, members of the House of Lords and dog owners are in favour of dog registration.

Many responsible organisations that have experience or expertise in these matters are committed to a dog registration scheme: the Association of District Councils, which is mainly Conservative controlled; the Battersea dogs' home; the British Veterinary Association; Child Care Concern; the Country Landowners Association; the Institution of Environmental Health Officers; the National Canine Defence League; the National Farmers Union; the National Federation of Women's Institutes; the Police Federation; and the Townswomen's Guild—not organisations that always support the Labour party. They are a cross-section of people who have had different experiences of the problems about which we are talking. I hope that Ministers will not push their concerns to one side and will not simply say that something will be done at some time. Ministers and Conservative Members should realise that it is about time we had action.

We must be absolutely clear about the content of the Lords amendment. It is a straightforward amendment, which states that a dog registration scheme should be established. It is not, as the Minister implied, a prescriptive amendment in terms of the exact scheme that has to be introduced—that is to be left to the Government, presumably after consultation with local authorities. As the hon. Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) pointed out, it is not an amendment that prescribes an electronic or tattooing scheme or any other scheme; it simply establishes the principle of the introduction of a dog registration scheme.

What is more, the amendment that was passed in the House of Lords now allows two years for the process of introducing the scheme. That followed a Government-inspired amendment, which the Opposition did not oppose, in the hope of getting the amendment on to the statute book. Before Conservative Members take note of what the Minister said about electronic schemes, they should remember that the House of Lords decision is a vote in principle for the establishment of a dog registration scheme, not any one variation of that kind. Dog registration is a pro-dog measure. It will promote better and more responsible dog ownership. It will make people think before they obtain a dog.

The Minister argues that a dog registration scheme would be extremely bureaucratic. That is rich coming from a Government who introduced poll tax registration and all the measures that went with it. The Minister also said that dog registration would be expensive.

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): If, as even I acknowledge, a number of people are reluctant to pay the community charge, why should they be so keen to pay for dog registration?

Mrs. Taylor: I hardly think that the dog registration fee will be as high as the poll tax, although I am sure that Ministers could contrive to make it so if they put their minds to it. They could certainly make it as complex and bureaucratic if they so wished.

The Minister referred to the expense of introducing the scheme and, in an earlier debate, my hon. Friend the Member for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam) expressed his

concern about the cost to local authorities of a registration scheme. I think that local authorities will have more reason to worry about coping with the problem of dog control under the amendment suggested by the Minister without the income that a dog registration scheme would provide. All the Minister's proposals will place extra burdens on local authorities and penalise those authorities that take the most action, because they will provide nothing in the way of extra resources to allow the authorities to deal with the problems that the Minister is passing on to them.

We must make a positive decision. Ministers have given us enough promises in the past. The public and the majority of dog owners will not understand if we let the problem drift further. I hope that the House will support the dog registration scheme and the amendment.

Dame Janet Fookes: It gives me no pleasure whatever to be at variance with the Government on the question of dog registration. With regard to the other measures that the Government propose, some are better than others, but I fear that, without dog registration, they will be largely ineffective.

If any measures are to be enforced, it is absolutely essential to establish the ownership of the dog. I do not believe that ownership can be satisfactorily established without registration. As the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) pointed out, the Lords amendment—like my earlier new clause—does not seek to lay down details but rather to establish the principle of compulsory dog registration with the local authorities charged with implementing it. That was done purposely because there are different ways of dealing with the details of the scheme.

Perhaps I may describe how I think the scheme would and should work. If we had a computer system, with each dog given a distinctive identification number or mark, dogs would be registered for all time. Whether that is done by collar and tag or whether by collar and tag plus an implant or tattooing is up for consideration during the two-year period that the Lords envisage. The point is that each dog would have its own distinct identity mark. That would make it very much easier for the authorities—particularly dog wardens, who would, I imagine, be the enforcement authority—to check the records and trace the owner.

In that connection, it is interesting to note the experience of Battersea dogs home, which has decided, as a matter of principle and policy, to use the implant system. It has been doing so for some months and there have been some beneficial results for dog owners who have lost their dogs and have been reunited with them very quickly. Apparently, it has also made a great difference to the way in which those who take over stray dogs and give them new homes have felt about the matter. It has made them much more responsible. They know that if they do not look after the dog and if it goes on the streets again, it can be traced back to its owner. That registration scheme in microcosm is in operation on a voluntary basis. It is an extremely interesting scheme, and I urge any hon. Members who are doubtful about the matter to go to Battersea dogs home.

8.45 pm

We also know that it is perfectly simple to set up a computer system to register all dogs. On a voluntary basis, that is happening now among owners who wish to keep control of their animals through the computer scheme organised by the Wood Green animal shelter——

Mr. Hardy: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Dame Janet Fookes: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman, although I do not think that he is with me on this.

Mr. Hardy: The hon. Lady knows that I share her concern for dogs and that, even if I do not necessarily agree with her approach, I respect her commitment. She was courteous enough to allow me to intervene in her speech last time we debated the matter and I asked her what she estimated the cost of registration would be. I recollect that she informed the House that it would be £2·50. Clearly, we shall have to debate these matters again during the next two years, but does she agree that if a system of identification by transponder is introduced, it will cost a great deal more than she suggested? Does she also agree that it will be resented by pensioners with their poodles and widows with their Pekinese who do not particularly want to have electric gadgets inserted into their dogs' ears or necks?

Dame Janet Fookes: The hon. Gentleman's recollection is correct. I said that it would cost about £2·50 and certainly less than £3 for the registration scheme alone. Much will depend on whether the transponder system is taken up and on whether we wish to load on to the registration fee some or all of the costs of the dog wardens, who will presumably act as the enforcement agency. All that is up for negotiation, but the basic cost of a simple computer registration system will be under £3 per dog per year.

There is plenty of scope for deciding what the fee might be. I should not wish the fee to be huge, for reasons that I am sure hon. Members will understand. We do not wish to discourage dog ownership or to place an onerous burden on those who cannot afford it. It would be possible to use the licence fee to introduce a differential system. For example, we might wish to encourage people to spay or neuter their animals, in which case we could charge a lower fee for those who did so and a higher one for those who wished their dogs to remain entire. That is one possibility. If we wished, it would certainly be possible to grant exemptions or charge very small amounts in the case of worthy groups such as people on income support and those with guide dogs or working dogs. Those are all possibilities. The details are not inherent in the scheme proposed in the amendment; it is merely a scheme in principle. I warmly welcome the Lords decision that we should allow two years to give ample scope for discussions with all the interested parties.

Mr. Sayeed: Does my hon. Friend agree that licensing has to be considered in relation to the cost of keeping a dog and that as one cannot keep even a small dog for less than £4 a week—allowing for vets' bills, grooming and food—a licence fee of even £10 or £15 a year is not a vast amount?

Dame Janet Fookes: I entirely agree. However, by accepting the amendment in principle, we are not tied to some vast figure. It is perfectly possible to arrange the scheme as we wish. As it stands, the Government are asking local authorities to take on a great deal without the technical means to bring the scheme about. I am referring to the need for dog wardens, RSPCA inspectors and others to be able to trace owners and lay the responsibility on them.

[Dame Janet Fookes]

It is extremely interesting that all those people who have to deal with the problem want registration to enable them to carry out their duties. For example, RSPCA inspectors have told me that they have lost cases in court or have not taken cases to court because they could not establish ownership. Dog wardens have the same problem. The inspectors, the dog wardens, the Association of District Councils and everyone who must work the system wants registration.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I agree that the identification of dogs is important. But what advantage does a registration system have over my plan for the enforcement of the wearing of a collar and identification tag? After all, a tag is a visible means by which anyone can link a dog to its owner. To the extent that an owner may refuse to place a collar and tag on his dog, he might be the same kind of person who would refuse to register in the first place, particularly as the privilege of registration will entail the payment of a fee.

Dame Janet Fookes: That sounds an extremely interesting and ingenious argument. I believe that collars and tags are important, but that system should be linked to a central computer scheme so that, in addition to the tag, there are details on record in a central computer where they are easily available. As I understand it, that is not what the Government are suggesting. If they are suggesting that, it is a different matter, but that is not my understanding of the Government's proposal.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): My hon. Friend emphasises the need to establish the ownership of the dog. However, as many people did not pay the old dog licence, as many people do not pay the road fund licence and as many people do not pay the television licence, what guarantee is there that the irresponsible dog owner would pay this tax?

Dame Janet Fookes: Before I answer that, may I invite my hon. Friend to tell me whether he is advocating the abolition of all those licence fees?

Mr. Marshall: The dog licence fee was abolished because the cost of collection was so much greater than the revenue raised. I suspect that my hon. Friend would have similar problems with this cock-eyed scheme.

Dame Janet Fookes: Those who have been in the House for some time and have followed my views on this matter will know that I was one of those who most earnestly urged the Government in those days to increase the dog licence fee. Of course it was not working and I said that it should be reformed. We have now moved on to registration, which is an improvement. However, the scheme did not work when the cost was only 37·5p, simply because it was not worth while for the police or any other authority to press the matter. That would have been ludicrous. However, that is no reason not to have a proper registration scheme now. I am surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) has advocated so weak an argument.

Sir Hugh Rossi: Has my hon. Friend considered that this proposition, taken to its logical conclusion, means that the House should never pass a law if that law is likely to be broken by some members of the general public?

Dame Janet Fookes: My hon. Friend, with his legal training, has put it excellently. Moreover, it is clear that we could divide dog owners into various groups. Some will comply with the proposal immediately because it is the law; I am not as pessimistic as my hon. Friend the Minister in thinking that that group will be very small. I believe that it will be a large group. Another group of dog owners will register if they are pressed and pushed to do so. With the kind of system that I have in mind, with dog wardens to enforce it, a large number of owners would register. That would leave a relatively small group causing the problems. However, the dog wardens would be more able to concentrate on those problems.

I suspect that in practice people who are disturbed by dogs which bark, bite or run around causing a nuisance, and who find it virtually impossible now to bring a court case against a neighbour because people must live with their neighbours—who would want to bring a court case against a neighbour with all the difficulties that that involves?—will find it easier to tell the local authority that a problem exists. That problem will then be handed over to the dog warden who will deal with it. That would be a very good and practical beneficial arrangement.

In short, there is no substitute for dog registration. I admire their Lordships for taking up the issue and I hope that we shall not be so foolish now as to throw out this amendment which their Lordships have invited us to accept.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I will speak briefly in favour of the Lords amendment, which is backed by more than 80 per cent. of dog owners, by the experience in Northern Ireland and by more than four fifths of the local authorities which were consulted.

I want to deal first with the intervention by the hon. Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) and the proposition that a scheme which is incapable of perfect application is better than no scheme at all. There may of course be some people who will not pay a dog registration fee, just as the hon. Gentleman implicitly concede ! that some people do not pay their vehicle excise licence fees. I did not hear him deny that we should have such a vehicle excise licence fee when invited to do so by the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Dame J. Fookes). The alternative is a scheme under which the owner pays only if the dog is rounded up as a stray and then collected by the owner. To have a proper control system for dogs, we need more money than that.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The hon. Gentleman is right to state that the question is how we pay for the warden service. We must also consider how the dog is traced back to the owner. At what charge would half the money go to the dog warden service, and not just to the cost of the registration scheme? If we had some way of tracing a stray, caught dog back to its owner, would we be required to have a last-owner liability clause? If not, someone could deny that the dog was still his.

Mr. Hughes: A last-owner liability clause would probably be necessary. On his first point, as he was a Minister in the Northern Ireland Office, he will know that the fee in Northern Ireland has been £5. That fee was mentioned in his own written answer on 1 March this year, when he described it —in col. *304* of the Official Report —as part of a system that was "working well". I presume that that is consistent with the accurate point made by the

hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake that it may be necessary to charge £2.50 or perhaps £3 for the cost of administering the scheme. Therefore, even a £5 fee would produce almost an equivalent amount to go to the dog warden service—and, therefore, the local authority's costs in dealing with the problems arising from dogs.

There are some obvious issues with which the country must deal. We must deal, for instance, with the pollution that is caused by dogs. The Government always say that they believe in the polluter paying. The nearest we can get to that—as dogs cannot pay—is the owner paying. The logic of the Government's position is that the owner should pay. There is also the question of noise pollution—we are to have a debate on that on Wednesday. One of the obvious examples is the noise from barking dogs. Whether they are personally or corporately owned, it is much more likely that a responsible attitude would be taken if those who purchased dogs had to pay a charge in advance.

In relation to dogs that roam or stray, or are out of control, I do not dissent from the Minister's propositions that responsibility for stray dogs should be transferred from the police to the local authority, and that the control mechanism should be changed. However, the Lords amendment is not an alternative to his stray dog scheme and his change of scheme.

As was pointed out by the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse), for the whole of his lifetime there has been a control-of-dogs provision by way of collar and tag, which derives from the Control of Dogs Order 1930. How many prosecutions have there been in those 60 years? The answer is, very few.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hughes: No; other hon. Members wish to speak.

Mr. Bruce: The number of prosecutions has gone up since we abolished the dog licence.

Mr. Hughes: Yes, but the reality is that they are minimal. That will make only a minimal contribution to linking the dog with the owner, which is the key issue in this debate.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *rose*——

Mr. Hughes: I had better give way to the Minister.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: There were 188 successful prosecutions last year, which I agree is too few, given the scope of the problem. The reason is that no one body has the duty of enforcing the collar-and-tag requirement. The police and the local authorities have the power to do so; what we are proposing is that local authorities should have the duty. That would give real effect to the measure, and real identification. Everyone will know that it will be enforced.

Mr. Hughes: I wish that that were the case. Although there may be one enforcement agency—the local authority—without additional resources it will not be enforcing the measure. Without the money to employ the people, it will not succeed.

The Minister knows the statistics as well as I do. The example of Bradford—which he cited—shows that 95 per cent. of stray dogs are never recovered by their owners. Only one in six stray dogs that arrive at Battersea dogs' home is recovered by its owner. We will not receive the money for the local authorities by collecting stray dogs; that can only be done by means of a principle which requires people to pay when they acquire a dog, and which means a much higher revenue income for the local authorities and a much better chance of enforcement thereafter.

9 pm

We have been offered a set of measures from the Government that are limited, minimal and likely to make only a small improvement to our present system. The principled alternative proposed by the Lords allows the mechanisms to be worked out by popular debate. The Government have been once bitten by the measure at the other end of the Palace not many days ago; I should have thought that they would be twice shy, but they have been foolish enough to come back. All that I can say to Conservative Members who have expressed a strong view on this topic is that I hope they make it clear that this Parliament is no one's poodle. I hope that tonight will be the night when Parliament bites back.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The whole House will admire my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Dame J. Fookes) for the way in which she has supported the welfare of animals over the years, and the consistency with which she has been willing to put forward propositions that at times have been unpopular, to the extent that Governments have not followed them through. When she argued for an increase in the dog licence, successive Governments ducked the issue. That is why the 37·5p fee decayed in terms of value and fund raising, although it was not hypothecated to a dog warden service.

It is quite clear that there are a number of problems, one of which is stray dogs. That can be a major problem, as the hon. Members for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) and for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) could confirm. In our borough, there have been times when the postal service has been suspended because the number of attacks on postal delivery workers has made it unsafe to let them continue with their work. Many other hon. Members can confirm that, especially in some urban areas, there are problems associated with dogs straying and dogs attacking people. There is also the problem of dog mess. Many people should be more explicit in saying that the number of dogs in cities and towns is too high and needs to be reduced.

The problem lies in trying to link the problems together and whether the RSPCA has hit upon the key. I do not say that it argues that it will solve all problems; however, it argues that registration is the key to everything else. I have doubts about that.

My doubts have been confirmed by the fact that, since I gave a parliamentary answer as a Minister in the Northern Ireland Office some months ago, and since I put out a press statement in the early summer, there has not been a bark in my direction—there has not even been a woof or whimper or even a suggestion that we might get together. It strikes me that, if RSPCA officials think that their arguments are sufficient to convince someone like myself, who is obviously well known to be open-minded, they would have made some approach to me.

Let us consider why RSPCA staff were so reluctant to be involved in direct debate. They have not persuaded the other place that a particular scheme will work. The House of Lords and many other supporters of the amendment say that there is a problem and that, as the RSPCA has said

[Mr. Peter Bottomley]

that registration is the answer, therefore registration is the answer to the problems. Links have not been demonstrated.

Sometimes, people build on my parliamentary answer and say that the Northern Ireland licensing system, which is different from registration, is fulfilling its objectives. That takes us back to sheep worrying. No doubt the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) will say that this matter is not just about sheep, because he was one of the Ministers involved in the matter, and that others with Northern Ireland experience can talk also. From the figures for 1984-89, one can demonstrate that very little has changed in terms of the number of dogs that were registered, impounded and destroyed. It is not the answer to most of the problems that concern people in most of the built-up areas of Great Britain.

One should examine the number of prosecutions for animals that have bitten or harmed human beings. I do not think that the RSPCA has put forward its registration scheme as dealing with that issue, except to the extent that it may deal in part with the excessive number of animals. We need to make it unfashionable to own a dog if it is not possible adequately to cope with it and its consequences.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): It is certainly true—I do not think that, with his experience, my hon. Friend would gainsay it—that, since registration, the number of dog attacks in Northern Ireland has been dramatically reduced. My hon. Friend chides those of us who are in favour of dog registration for not making contact with him. Upon reflection, he will appreciate that we read his parliamentary answer in which he said that the scheme was working well in Northern Ireland. Naturally, we assumed that he would be consistent and join us in the Lobby tonight.

Mr. Bottomley: I look forward to my next invitation to speak in my hon. Friend's constituency—I shall talk about dogs instead of politics. The RSPCA has been briefing Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet North (Mr. Gale) and the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) saying that, because I as a Minister gave that answer, it copes with problems associated with dogs. However, it does not deal with the primary question of how to get people voluntarily to reduce the number of dogs that they keep in cities and built-up areas.

People need to answer the question of how they will cope with dog mess for a start. Each person who owns a dog needs to be able to answer to their neighbour, especially if that neighbour has children, where dog mess will be laid and whether it will be left there by the owner. People in Bermondsey, Eltham, Manchester and all urban parts of this country need to ask dog owners, "Can you answer that question?"

Mr. Simon Hughes: I have a simple question. Does the former Northern Ireland Minister think that it will be an incentive or a disincentive to people who contemplate acquiring a dog that they might have to pay something? If it is a disincentive, it is surely likely to reduce the number of dogs in Eltham, Bermondsey and elsewhere.

Mr. Bottomley: If that is the basic issue for reducing the number of dogs, the RSPCA, the hon. Gentleman, myself and others should all be saying so out loud, in the same way that the hon. Gentleman at least has the courage to give the answer which the RSPCA has not, according to my knowledge, given up to now.

For the registration scheme to work and for us to be able to track a dog back to its owner, last-owner liability will be necessary. We have had problems with such an approach to cars, and it has proved controversial. I hope that those who say that registration is the answer to these problems will have the guts to say that in public and more often, because I am not aware that they have done so. It has been one of the cosy little exclusions from the public debate.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Does my hon. Friend agree that the RSPCA has still not learned its lesson in terms of giving half or untrue statistics? One of its advertisements today states:

"There are still 500,000 homeless strays roaming our streets".

That figure of 500,000 is taken from an RSPCA report in which the London School of Economics states that the vast majority of such dogs are not homeless strays, but "latch-key dogs" which are let out by their owners.

Mr. Bottomley: Instead of "latch-key" perhaps my hon. Friend should describe them as "poop" dogs—people are embarrassed by dogs' natural functions.

It is not my aim to get at the RSPCA, because even those of us who do not recognise the merits of the registration scheme admire much of the RSPCA's work. Many of us believe that, if the RSPCA had put half the effort into its "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas" campaign, as it has into this, it could have achieved a great deal more in the past few years than it has by managing to persuade some people that the answer to this problem is for the House to pass, in principle, a requirement for registration without going into the necessary details. That would be an undesirable precedent.

May I work towards a conclusion by referring——

Mr. Simon Hughes: What is the hon. Gentleman's view?

Mr. Bottomley: I had been trying to put forward my view before the hon. Gentleman intervened from a sedentary position.

There are problems that need dealing with. I have dealt with the question of numbers. Many people who keep dogs cannot cope with them adequately. Others can cope, but are not prepared to do so. People may laugh at the pooper scoop idea, but unless people are willing to cope with the consequences of owning a dog in an urban area, they are not facing the consequences of owning a dog. The Kennel Club, dogs clubs and the RSPCA should be saying that clearly, as should pet shop owners.

In various positions of responsibility, I have had to face the issue whether an extra law would be the best way of making a difference. The greatest parallel with this issue is that of drink-driving. I do not want to go into that in depth, but in 1986 it was calculated that there were 2 million occasions per week when men would drive when above the legal limit. Many people said that that was a problem.

In politics, the conventional thing is to go from saying, "There is a problem," to saying, "They should not do it," to saying, "I should not do it", then, " I intend not to do it," to saying, "I do not do it."

The conventional way of approaching that series is to offer legislation, money transfers or exhortation. In practice, we need to get the people who are part of the problem to become part of the solution.

Between 1986 and 1988, without any change in the law, enforcement or sentencing, the number of occasions when people drove above the legal limit was reduced from 2 million to 600,000. That happened as a result of giving information and letting people realise that there were things that they could be doing. What was happening——

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): Rubbish.

Mr. Bottomley: It is no good the hon. Gentleman shouting "Rubbish," because it is a fact.

Instead of people believing that the problem could be solved by some wishy-washy system of registration, it is better to approach the dog owners themselves and to ask them whether they are willing to do now what the law and the RSPCA are asking—without even half the cost of a registration scheme.

I hope that the House will support the Government, and that the various stages that were announced last week and those which are set out in the Government amendment will be supported. I also hope that the Lords' approach will be rejected, because it does not give the House the necessary details for a scheme that could cope with 7 million dog owners. The problem needs a better solution than that suggested by the Lords.

9.15 pm

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): Much has rightly been said in the House and in another place about the Northern Ireland scheme and, of course, we have heard something of it again tonight. That is right. When I was junior Minister in the late 1970s I was engaged in the long consultative process that eventually resulted in the order which, it must not be forgotten, was introduced by the Government in 1983.

The Northern Ireland experience is central to the debate. We must examine it closely if we are to convince some of the waverers on the Conservative Benches to accept amendment No. 296. The director of the environmental health service in Belfast city council has already been referred to. He believes that the scheme works well. We also heard from the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) on 1 March this year that the scheme was working well.

We should consider some of the Government's arguments on the matter. First, they argue that the Northern Ireland scheme has failed to meet the problem of strays because the number of stray dogs put down in the Province has not decreased. Yet the Government seem not to listen to the evidence provided by the Ulster Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which reported a dramatic reduction in roaming packs of dogs and strays on the streets. Indeed, Robert Wilson, the director of USPCA, has pointed out that although absolute numbers —this is where Conservative Members are confused—of impounded dogs have shown little sign of falling, wardens are collecting from a reduced pool of strays on the streets. In any case, to concentrate solely on strays can be misleading.

The main thrust for change in Northern Ireland came from the Ulster Farmers Union lobby, and rightly so. A great number of sheep were being killed by dogs and it was a worrying factor.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Pendry: I shall not give way because of the time factor. I know that many hon. Members wish to speak.

Many instances of sheep worrying involved dogs owned by hitherto so-called responsible owners. Identifying the owners was a large part of the problem. Since the introduction of licensing, the Ulster Farmers Union has reported a reduction in livestock worrying. My right hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) will be aware of that. That was despite a growth in the sheep flock from 1 million in 1983 when the order was introduced to 2·3 million sheep and livestock in 1989.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): A 100 per cent. increase.

Mr. Pendry: As my right hon. Friend says, a 100 per cent. increase.

If the Government have not listened to the environmental health officers who administer the scheme, the USPCA—which deals with some of the problems caused by dogs—or the Royal Ulster Constabulary, of which the traffic division has noted a 25 per cent. reduction in road accidents involving dogs since the introduction of licensing, who have they been talking to and listening to?

The Government's main failure is in recognising the central ethos of the Northern Ireland scheme, which is a positive approach to dog ownership. The scheme seeks to support and sustain a package of comprehensive measures with the general aim of encouraging responsible dog ownership. It has at its roots a dog licensing scheme. That welcome approach is encapsulated in the amendment. The Government propose to introduce nothing further than a handful of provisions for dealing with stray dogs after an offence has been committed. In other words, they seek to deal with the problem once it exists. The approach of the amendment is to suggest a scheme that would facilitate a host of realistic measures to encourage widespread responsible dog ownership before an offence takes place.

The RSPCA sees registration as an essential element in introducing health and welfare programmes, neutering advice and effective enforcement. Furthermore, the knowledge that their dog is registered should have a beneficial effect on owners' treatment and care of their dogs. They will know that the dog could be traced back to them and that they could be held responsible. That would therefore reduce the risk of dogs being allowed to stray or to cause a nuisance in the first place. We should adopt the course tonight.

The Government have manifestly failed to listen to those with first-hand experience of the problem in Northern Ireland, but have they sought the opinion of the 200-odd authorities up and down the country that already run dog warden schemes? If my local authority, Tameside, is anything to go by, however, the Government have failed in that respect as well. If they had sought such opinion, the Government would have learned that the lack of resources available to Tameside and other authorities to finance

[Mr. Pendry]

their dog wardens is severely hampering their efforts. That is why my local authority and most others will support our efforts tonight.

The Government argue that the proposed registration scheme is an inefficient means of raising revenue for dog control services. Their amendments, however, provide no means of financing their proposals other than leaving it to local councils to find the funds in their already overstretched budgets.

In truth, the Government do not see the problem in the same way as the rest of society. The amendment is supported by those at the sharp end who must deal with the problem caused by the absence of responsible dog ownership. The only similar scheme operating in the United Kingdom is a success.

The Government should not be dragged along by the collar when it comes to introducing a dog registration scheme. They should appreciate the force of the argument put forward by those who know the extent of the problem at the sharp end. They should withdraw their amendment and promote a dog registration scheme in the interests of all responsible owners, local authorities and the public.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Mr. John Butterfill. If the hon. Gentleman should like to speak from a sitting position I will understand.

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): I am most grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak from a sedentary position. I should explain that my present indisposition arises from a minor operation to my left ankle and not from being savaged by a particular breed of dog.

I address the House as a member of the general council of management of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals. I must stress, however, that I am speaking in a purely personal capacity and not on behalf of the PDSA. As a matter of principle, the PDSA does not take a political stance on any issue, unlike some other societies, although it often works in close co-operation with the RSPCA and other animal organisations.

The PDSA confines its activities to providing veterinary care to those people whose financial circumstances would otherwise prevent them from obtaining such care for their animals. As such, it does a great deal of work particularly with small animals, but the bulk of its work is concerned with the care of dogs.

It is interesting to consider why dogs come into the care of the PDSA in order to assess its relevance to our discussion. Dogs are often brought for medical attention to the PDSA because of ignorance about how to care for a dog. Another reason may well be the poverty of the owner. Poverty often dissuades people from having their dogs neutered—a desirable method of keeping the dog population down. I believe that neutering would be a far more effective means of controlling the dog population than the deterrent posed by the cost of the fee. The only way in which to reduce the dog population is to prevent dogs breeding.

Dogs also receive care from the PDSA because of problems arising from lack of inoculation—another desirable treatment that prevents disease in the inoculated dog and the spread of disease to other dogs. Dogs also receive treatment because of simple neglect, injury or other infections caused as a result of being strays.

It is important to consider the problems that arise, to see whether the registration scheme might have the effect of remedying some of them. Certainly, there is rarely a suggestion that there is a problem in identifying the owners of fierce dogs. If the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary that it should be mandatory for a dog to carry a tag were taken up, and if that were enforceable by a responsible agency, that problem would be overcome.

I do not see how registration will prevent the problem of dogs straying. Dogs stray for all sorts of reasons, often simply because their owners do not take sufficient care of them. I do not see how that would be remedied by registration. In addition, I do not see how registration would prevent the fouling of public places, which will surely be prevented only by owners being more responsible for their dogs' care.

The cost of the scheme such as that proposed by the RSPCA is far greater than has been recognised tonight. I have studied the report by the London School of Economics, published in 1989 for the RSPCA, which states that the total annual cost of such a scheme would be about £40 million if the cost of wardens were included.

If we accept that the dog population is about 7 million and allow perhaps two years' inflation on that figure, it works out at about £7 a dog, but that would be only if all dogs were registered and all owners paid. I am sure that Opposition Members would wish to exempt the elderly, the blind and those in receipt of state benefits, which might reduce the number paying by half.

Mr. Sayeed *rose*——

Mr Butterfill: I should get on.

If such exemptions were to be made, it would halve the number of people paying for the scheme and double the cost to £14 or £15. In Northern Ireland about 60 per cent. of owners fail to register, which could double the cost again and we could be talking about an effective cost of £30 a dog.

Mr. Sayeed: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I want to be quite clear on this—I believe that the figures that my hon. Friend just quoted from the LSE report were based on a 60 per cent. compliance rate, not a 100 per cent. rate, as he seemed to intimate.

Mr. Butterfill: The report assumed a compliance rate that was considerably worse than that experienced in Northern Ireland. That was one reason why I questioned the figure.

I am worried that we would need an army of bureaucrats to enforce such a scheme. We would need clerks, wardens and inspectors—the latter would presumably need powers to enforce their activities. Would hon. Members be prepared to grant inspectors the right of entry into people's homes if those inspectors suspected that an unregistered dog was being kept there? I do not think that that would be particularly attractive to those concerned about civil rights.

I believe that the Government have the right answer. Their proposals for the seizure of strays and their delivery to the authorities, for the proper enforcement by responsible authorities of collar and tag, for the right of disposal of stray dogs to the finder or elsewhere if they are

unclaimed and to give local authorities powers to enforce byelaws on fouling are right. My own local authority, Bournemouth borough council, has made vigorous representations about its need to have the right to produce new byelaws to deal with the fouling problem, which is particularly prevalent in Bournemouth. The other proposals that the Government have suggested that they may bring forward, such as muzzling to deal with fierce dogs, are to be welcomed. I await, as I am sure do other hon. Members, the results of the Government's consultations, which are to finish on 15 November.

There is another remedy that would perhaps do more than anything else to solve the problems that we experience with dogs—a voluntary neutering scheme for dogs. The heart of the problem is that we have too many dogs and many of them behave badly. Neutering makes fierce dogs less aggressive, male dogs much less likely to stray in search of female company and reduces the unwanted dog population. Therefore, if my hon. Friend the Minister were inclined to consider that as a possibility, I am sure that the PDSA would welcome it.

9.30 pm

Miss Kate Hoey (Vauxhall): I wholeheartedly support the Lords amendment and I hope that there will now be an end to the long discussions on this issue. I pay tribute to the work not only of the RSPCA, but of an organisation that has been campaigning on this issue for a great deal longer—the League for the Introduction of Canine Control. When the issue was not as popular as it is now, many people put their heads over the parapet, but they were laughed down. The change in public opinion over many years owes much to the work and the campaigns of many organisations, not least the League for the Introduction of Canine Control. The licence fee should never have been abolished; it should have been increased. It was not, and we are paying for that.

I want to make a brief point about Northern Ireland. People will be interested to know that many hon. Members have suddenly taken an interest in Northern Ireland's handling of the issue. There is not usually so much discussion about Northern Ireland matters. In fact, the scheme has been successful, as all responsible opinion will confirm. If the Minister believes that it has been unpopular and unproductive, why does not he propose abolishing the scheme in Northern Ireland? He will not do that because he knows that the people of Northern Ireland want the scheme and that it has been successful.

I direct most of my remarks at a group of people who have been greatly affected by dogs—the 110,000 postmen and women who have been attacked many times while doing their jobs. Together with newspaper delivery boys, meter readers and so on, they visit every address in the country. The figures clearly show an increase in dog attacks during the past two years. It is astonishing that in 1989 dog attacks on postmen and women increased by 9·5 per cent. over the previous year—7,717 were attacked in the course of their duties. Those are only the recorded attacks, and they are in addition to an 18 per cent. increase in 1987.

Not only do such dog attacks cause trauma, misery and distress, but they result in many lost working days. Indeed, the number of lost working days between 1987 and 1988 increased by 45 per cent. Dog attacks were directly responsible for 4,711 lost working days—*[Interruption.]* I know that some hon. Members may not want to hear the figures, but they are important statistics that show the number of dog attacks on working people. Those lost working days represented 15 per cent. of all days lost through sickness and injury in the Post Office service—and they are only the reported attacks. Hon. Members should appreciate that many people do not report them.

The Union of Communication Workers has been campaigning to highlight the incidence of dog attacks. Many jokes are made about them, but in one incident a postwoman in Gloucester had her ear bitten off, and in another, a postman was so badly injured that he was compelled to seek early retirement and will need medical attention for the rest of his life.

I bet that most of the letters received on the subject by right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House come from women. They have campaigned for many years, complaining that whenever they allow their children to use parks, they return with the mess left by dog faeces all over them—and I am sure that it is usually women who have to clear it up, not men.

Mothers on housing estates in inner city areas are terrified to let their children play outside because of the danger posed by roaming dogs. Unless a link can be made between a dog and its owner, such problems cannot be controlled. All the measures in the world will not work unless there is a registration scheme. If we want to enforce such a scheme, we can—in the same way as we enforce television licensing and vehicle registration, which the Government take very seriously.

The Government—if not the majority of Conservative Members in this case—take a laissez-faire, do-nothing approach. I ask all right hon. and hon. Members who will vote tonight to examine their consciences and ask themselves how many more children must be bitten, how many more postmen and postwomen attacked, and how many other members of the public must suffer before they realise that their vote can make the difference and will really matter tonight? It is not just a question of voting with one's party but of voting in the way that one knows one's constituents want.

I hope that the Government realise that they are isolated on this issue. Dog ownership is not a right but a privilege, and with that privilege goes responsibility to the dog and to the rest of society. Just as one cannot walk into a garage, buy a car and drive it away without proof that one can drive, so one should not be able to walk into a shop and buy a dog without proving that one can look after it and without registering it. None of the Government's measures will work unless there is at the top a simple administrative measure for a national registration scheme. I urge all right hon. and hon. Members to end the debate and vote to introduce a dog registration scheme, to make people's lives safer and dog owners a lot happier.

Mr. Gale: The Government had the wisdom to introduce a dog registration scheme in Northern Ireland and, contrary to some of the information that the House has been offered this evening, that scheme has worked. The chief warden for Belfast, who has been in the House all day, has informed many right hon. and hon. Members that, since the introduction of a registration scheme in Northern Ireland, the incidence of sheep worrying has fallen dramatically, as have the number of traffic accidents caused by dogs and the number of attacks by dogs on people, particularly children.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Do all these good things that have happened in Northern Ireland have anything to do with the fact that there is a charge for a licence—there is no identification on the dog—or is it because they introduced a dog warden scheme at the same time?

Mr. Gale: I was going to come to that. This afternoon an hon. Friend challenged me with that argument saying, "Ah, yes, but that is because of the warden scheme: it has nothing to do with dog registration." Again, I am assured by the chief dog warden, who I suspect knows a little about this subject, that dog registration needed to be on the statute book. Non-registration had to be an offence to give the powers that exist in Northern Ireland some teeth. Without registration those powers are ineffective.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Minister is in the unhappy position of having to salute a flag nailed to the mast some years ago by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), which has been fluttering there in tatters ever since.

I have supported the cause of dog registration consistently since we began to discuss it shortly after I entered the House. I shall support it again in the Lobby tonight.

I have listened with great care to the Minister's arguments and read with great care the amendments tabled by the Government. All amendments depend upon identification of the dog if they are to work, and identification must be dependent on some form of registration scheme. I do not accept the Minister's argument that a tag round the neck is sufficient identification. There is a proper and sensible way to do it.

The Minister said that registration would lead to awful bureaucracy. I am a fervent supporter of the community charge. I find no problem whatever with a registration system that requires more than 20 million charge payers to be registered, so I find even less problem with a system that would require about 7·5 million dogs to be registered.

This morning, an interviewer asked me whether my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was right to say that the introduction of what will inevitably become known as the dog tax is unpopular. I had to say yes; it will be unpopular. Once people are asked to pay for something as opposed to voting for it or talking about it they will not like it, but that does not mean that it is not right or worth while. For those reasons, I know of no reason for going back on my commitment to a dog registration scheme.

Mr. John D. Taylor: The Northern Ireland experience is that registration did not prove unpopular. About 20,000 dogs were registered before the new dogs order was passed. Once it was introduced and the fee went up to £5, the number of dogs registered went up to 80,000, which is four times the previous figure.

Mr. Gale: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that intervention. We have heard much about the fee this evening. Hon. Members who believe in dog registration are talking about a funded system, on the "user pays" principle—something in which I thought the Government believed. The Minister is putting forward an unfunded system, which will ultimately have to be funded by local authorities. The Minister will say that the scheme will be funded through rate support grant and he may go on to say that it will be fully funded. I doubt that very much.

I fear that if the Government amendments are passed and the Lords amendment is defeated, it will be open season for every local authority to increase its community charge because it will be required to provide a dog warden system which no one else is paying for. I shudder to think what increase in community charge the socialist republic of Lambeth is likely to levy to provide wardens under the scheme which, as it stands before us tonight, is unfunded.

I believe that the system devised by the Lords and the two-year consultation period is a workable answer and I offer my hon. Friend the Minister my services to seek ways through the maze to a solution.

I hope and believe that many of my hon. Friends, on reflection, will join other hon. Members to support the Lords amendment and see this scheme through once and for all.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): There have been two main objections tonight to a dog registration scheme: first, that it is unworkable in practical terms and unenforceable; and secondly, that it cannot be made to work because irresponsible dog owners will refuse to register and thereby render the scheme ineffective. I have never found that argument convincing. I find it even less convincing after listening carefully to the Minister's alternative to registration.

9.45 pm

Let me take, for example, the Minister's proposal that new powers should be given to local authorities to levy fees on owners who are irresponsible enough to abandon their dogs in public places. Earlier, the Minister told us that these are the same irresponsible owners who would refuse to pay a licence fee and register their dogs. They are owners who have failed properly to look after their dogs and abandoned them. We do not know the extent of their irresponsibility. These owners may abuse and undernourish their dogs. However, the Minister expects us to believe that they would trot down to the kennels, own up to their negligence and accept the imposition of a heavy fee by the council. The Minister expects us to believe that they would co-operate in poop-scoop schemes, obey leash laws and ensure that there were identification tags on their dogs' collars. That scenario is utterly incredible. I am surprised that the Minister had the effrontery to put it before the House.

The Government cannot have it both ways. Irresponsible owners cannot be prayed in aid if one rubbishes a dog registration scheme and then conveniently be ignored when a case is made for one's own package of measures. That is being two-faced and hypocritical. The irresponsible will always seek to flout the law. However, that can never be an argument for refusing to pass laws in the first place. If we ever accepted that principle, hon. Members might as well pack their bags and go home.

The other objection to registration is that it would be costly and bureaucratic. What, however, is the Government's alternative to registration? A new range of duties would be imposed on local authorities. Dog warden schemes would give effect to the new duties. There would be what the consultation paper called a new local government finance system to fund the scheme. With breathtaking effrontery, the consultation paper referred to the new financing system as "simple" and "effective". I remind the House that it was referring to the poll tax. In Scotland, England and Wales the poll tax has been proved to be enormously bureaucratic, horrendously costly and spectacularly ineffective. How can the Government, who

gave us the poll tax and promised that dog control measures would be funded by means of the poll tax, dare to object to a registration scheme on the ground that it would be costly and bureaucratic? It makes no sense.

The case for action is unanswerable. The question that divides the House is, what kind of action? The Government are seeking to slide out of their clear responsibilities on dog control measures. They want to place that duty on local authorities, to place the burden of financing it on local taxpayers and to allow breeders and owners to sidestep their responsibilities. They want also to abandon their own newly adopted principle of making the polluter pay. That is entirely unacceptable.

This is not a joking matter, as some Conservative Members make it appear. It is not just a question of the tonnes of faeces and gallons of urine that are deposited in our streets, parks and playgrounds every year. It is not just the cost of coping with stray dogs, in both financial terms and in terms of the suffering that has to be endured by those animals. It is also for me the far more frightening prospect of the growing threat to human safety that is posed by the increasing number of dangerous breeds of dogs that are now kept as domestic pets.

The House knows that American pit bull terriers have killed, and killed again, in the United States and that those animals are coming into this country in increasing numbers. The House will know, too, that one of my constituents, 11-year-old Kelly Lynch, was savaged to death by two rottweiler dogs just over a year ago and that there is no control whatever over the ownership of dangerous breeds of dogs. The House must understand that unless effective action is taken by us, there will be more attacks and, tragically, more deaths.

No one wants the tragedy that befell my constituent to happen to anyone else, least of all Kelly's parents, Veronica and John Lynch, who have campaigned ceaselessly for stricter control of dogs. Central to their campaign has been the demand for a national dog registration scheme. That aim is endorsed by the majority of agencies concerned with the welfare of animals, by almost all local authorities and overwhelmingly by public opinion. We heard earlier that it is about to be endorsed by the European Community, and in the form of the Lords amendment it has already been endorsed by the other place.

Will the House persist in alone setting its face against the tide running irreversibly in favour of dog registration? It is no longer a question of whether we should have a registration scheme but when we shall have one. All reasonable argument and informed opinion tells us that the House must act now to introduce dog registration. I beg hon. Members who seriously have the welfare of their constituents at heart to vote for the Lords amendment and to ensure that this is the moment when the House faces up to its responsibilities.

Sir William Shelton (Streatham): I must refer to the speech of the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey), for whom I have high respect. She is my neighbour in Lambeth, but she did not make the link between the wretched attacks on postmen, of which I am quite aware, and whether a dog is registered. She would agree that a registered or unregistered dog is just as likely to attack a postman or anyone else. The hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) referred to urine and faeces, but a registered or unregistered dog behaves in the same way.

I have two golden retrievers, which presented us with eight puppies a month or two ago. Our family has had dogs since it started being a dog family. *[Laughter.]* I have had dogs all my life, and my family has too. I was deeply attracted by the registration scheme proposed by the RSPCA. It seemed a good solution until I started looking at it and discussing it with dog owners. Let me tell the House why I have changed my mind and propose to support the Government.

We have heard vast differences in the suggested cost of dog registration. Whatever it is, it would certainly cost quite a lot, especially for those who are less well off and who must bear the cost of a dog. Hon. Members have suggested that registration would be low. I suspect that it would be, and more dogs would be put down and abandoned in the first six months or a year following its introduction. People would say, "I cannot afford this dog," and push it out of the door on to the motorway. That would be a danger.

The main question is, what is the purpose of a national or local register of some 7 million dogs and their owners? The answer if therest, to provide a living for those who run it. Secondly, of their is an implant in the dog or a tattoo on its ear, yet all that is read from it is a number, a national register is essential to link the dog with its owner and the owner's name and address. If a dog carries an implant or a tattoo, there must inevitably be a national dog registration scheme.

I should add a third answer. My hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Dame J. Fookes) said that she believed in a register because—I hope that I am not quoting her incorrectly—every dog should have its own identity. She caught my attention with those words. I put it to her that the identity of a dog can come just as well from a collar and tag as from a number in some computer in some part of the country. The true identity of a dog comes from the loving home where it lives.

If all dogs wear collars and tags in public places, instead of an implant or tattoo, and there are council-appointed dog wardens—as the Government recommend—to enforce the wearing of collars and tags, we do not need a national register to link a dog's number with its owner. It is essential only if dogs have a tattoo or implant.

There are many advantages of a dog wearing a collar and tag rather than having a tattoo or implant. First, all dogs in public places should, by law, have a collar and tag, and many do. Secondly, it is much quicker and easier to identify a dog that breaks into one's garden or bites one's leg or a dog that bites a postman if it has a tag on its collar, because one can easily see who owns it. If it has a tattoo or implant, I imagine that one would need a machine to read the information. If a dog wearing a tag fouls a pavement, one can see who owns it—one need not go to some computer bank. That means that it costs the owner less and we do not have a bureaucracy.

What are the disadvantages of not having a register? There is one major disadvantage. A collar can be removed or transferred to another dog—I accept that—while an implant or tattoo cannot be removed without some difficulty by the owner. However, I can see few occasions when that is important. If a dog has been abandoned deliberately, the sort of owner who would do that would probably not have registered it anyway. If he registered it and wanted to abandon it, he would probably kill it. A latch-key dog would have a collar and tag. The problem

[Sir William Shelton]

about being able to remove a collar and tag seems, therefore, to be relatively unimportant. That is why I shall support the Government.

Mr. Elliot Morley (Glanford and Scunthorpe): Many arguments for and against have been put in the debate, but I think that I should bring the House back to what we are discussing—the Lords amendments and the principle of a dog registration scheme. Many hon. Members have put forward sincere and valid points about how a scheme would operate and its various costs. But we should come back to the point made by the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Dame J. Fookes)—we need a framework for dealing with what we all recognise is a growing problem.

The difference between the proposal in the Lords amendments and the Government's amendments is that, although the Government's amendments are welcome in what they set out to do, they do not tackle the main problem of increasing difficulties and problems that come from irresponsible dog owners. It is worth emphasising the point made by hon. Members such as my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion). The kind of problems associated with a registration scheme are exactly the problems that the Government's proposals would have —there is no real difference in terms of the practicalities.

Dog registration provides a framework that would allow dog wardens to intervene when dogs cause a problem. That is why organisations such as the Police Federation strongly support a system that involves a framework for enforcement.

Although the Government's proposals will place far more responsibility on local councils, they do not entail the provision of any extra funding to allow councils to carry out their duties. Registration would provide some income —the amount depending, as I said, on the kind of scheme that is agreed after due debate. For example, where local authorities provide dog wardens, that little extra income could be used to increase the amount of education about dog ownership and could be of benefit in such ways.

Mr. Colvin: It has been suggested by those who support the dog registration scheme that there should be a system of exemptions for old-age pensioners. If that happens, every granny and granddad in the country will become the family's dog owner and income from the dog registration scheme will fall to nothing.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Lords Amendments to the Environmental Protection Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Question again propoposed, That the Lords amendments be now considered.

Mr. Morley: The Lords amendment proposes a two-year period during which valid points such as that made by the hon. Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) can be worked out. I argue that the fees charged under the dog registration scheme could be used to encourage positive elements in terms of dog ownership. I do not doubt that there will be evasion of a dog registration scheme, just as there is evasion of any law that is passed. As the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) said, it is not a valid argument against a scheme that is of benefit to the community to say that some may evade it.

The concept of registration is becoming increasingly widespread. This Bill introduces the concept of registration for all food outlets. It is not valid for the Government to argue that registration is bureaucratic when, for acceptable and understandable reasons, they are introducing registration schemes elsewhere in this and other Bills.

Northern Ireland and just about every European country have registration and licence schemes, and those who travel abroad regularly will know that European countries have far less of a dog problem than we have. I know that many hon. Members here represent rural areas. Organisations such as the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association are strongly in favour of the scheme, given the experience in Northern Ireland, which was outlined by my hon. Friends the Members for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) and for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey), who referred to the fall-off in sheep and stock worrying since the licensing scheme was introduced in Northern Ireland. Organisations responsible for the countryside endorse that view and argue strongly for a scheme.

Many members of the public are puzzled as to why the Government continue to oppose dog registration when so many other people are firmly in favour of it. This is not really a political issue. My hon. Friend the Member for Dewsbury (Mrs. Taylor) gave the House a list of the supporters of a dog registration scheme, ranging from the women's institutes to the British Police and Services Canine Association.

The Lords carried the amendment by an overwhelming majority and hon. Members will know from their mailbags of the tremendous popular support that the scheme has. In national independent opinion polls, it has been found that 94 per cent. of the public are in favour of a scheme and only 3 per cent. against, while 80 per cent. of dog owners are in favour. I have received hundreds of letters—mainly from dog owners—in favour of a dog registration scheme and only two against. This is a popular proposal and it will be well received by the public if we agree tonight on the principle of such a scheme.

The councils are in favour of a scheme, including the Conservative-controlled Association of District Councils. One of my councils, Conservative-controlled Glanford borough council, wrote to me asking for my support for a registration scheme, which I was pleased to give.

We know that all the animal welfare and veterinary organisations are in favour of such a scheme and we know that action must be taken. We can have an honest debate about the details of the scheme. There is a debate about tattooing versus implants and collars and tags. All those issues have positive and negative sides and we can work them out in the interim period laid down by the amendment.

I held meetings in my constituency with dog breeders and at one point had 10 alsatians in the front room with them. Dog breeders have a successful registration scheme which operates well and, I suspect, makes a great deal of money for those who administer it. Why cannot we extend that successful dog registration scheme to all dogs? If it can work for pedigrees, there is no reason why the concept cannot work on a wider scale.

The Lords amendment also has positive advantages for responsible owners. Under a national scheme, those who lose their dogs will have a far greater chance of finding

them again. As I said, inoculations and neutering can be encouraged through a registration scheme by offering discounts to those who carry those things out for the benefit of their dogs and of the community at large.

The clinching argument in favour of a registration scheme is that it will go a long way towards deterring casual dog ownership. It will deter people who do not think carefully about the responsibilities of dog ownership in terms of the animals's welfare and their responsibility to the wider community. Dog ownership is for life. A registration scheme would benefit the community and responsible owners and it would act as a framework to crack down on the irresponsible owners who have caused so many problems. Above all, the scheme is a step forward and would deal with the problem which is not addressed by the Government's amendment.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: With the leave of the House, I rise briefly to reply to the debate because I sense that the House wants to bring the matter to a conclusion.

The debate has shown that we are unanimous in the belief that there are too many irresponsible dog owners and too many stray dogs. Supporters of dog registration have told us that such a scheme is essential. It has become something of a totem because very few reasons have been advanced in the debate for making such a scheme an essential component of any solution to the problem.

If the identification of dogs is necessary, how can that be better achieved by registration than by our proposals for enforcing the collar and tag requirement? We propose a simple, visible and direct way of linking a dog to its owner and we shall enforce it. There is already a maximum £2,000 fine for those failing to comply. We shall place a reauirement on district councils to enforce the collar and tag provision.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Has my hon. Friend read the report produced by the London School of Economics, which was commissioned by the RSPCA? Has he received letters, as I have, from constituents who would like a registration scheme and would pay between £5 and £10? On a 60 per cent. compliance rate with no money off for the old or disabled, such a scheme would cost £29 for simple tattoo or £40 for a transponder to register a dog in the first year and a fee of £11 afterwards. Is my hon. Friend aware that only £3·50 would go towards the warden service?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I referred to fees earlier. Nothing has altered my view that the higher the fee, the greater will be the disincentive for irresponsible owners to comply with the scheme. Although doubtless some owners would still fail to place a collar and tag on their dogs, exactly the same people would fail to register in the first place, especially as registration would entail the payment of a considerable annual fee.

We have also been told in the debate that electronic implants may not be necessary, although such an approach underlay the study by the London School of Economics —published last year—which assumed that dogs would have electronic implants, which would then have to be linked up to a central computer. We certainly have not been told how such a scheme would be run without electronic implants. Presumably a central computer would still be required. It is still a clumsy way of identifying a dog if it has to be linked up with a central computer, which will then give the name and address of the last registered owner. If identification is a requirement—and I agree that it is—I insist that it would be better and more simply done by means of the enforcement of the existing collar and tag provisions.

The costs of national registration are not simply the costs of the electronic equipment. The real costs lie in tracing the owners who have moved, itinerant owners and dogs that have been given away, traded or sold; deregistering dogs that have died; and attempting to find owners who have moved or gone abroad. All that is entirely unproductive. I want the money and resources to be spent on the ground, dealing with the real problems.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce) mentioned a 60 per cent. compliance figure. That would mean accepting nearly 3 million unregistered dogs. Almost by definition, those dogs would belong to the irresponsible owners who create the problem in the first place. That is the very reverse of the "polluter pays" principle that underlies the rest of the Bill. I want the effort directed towards solving the problems of strays.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend acknowledge that the money that the RSPCA spent on its advertising campaign would have been far better spent on animal welfare and education? My hon. Friend has referred to stray dogs. In my opinion, dog registration would lead to more strays, and would increase the heap of dead dogs on the RSPCA poster rather than diminish it.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I take my hon. Friend's point. It has been pointed out to me that each full-page advertisement taken in today's press costs about the equivalent of employing a dog warden for a year. I sympathise with my hon. Friend's view that some of that money might have been better spent, if not on employing dog wardens, at least on joining us in helping to educate dogs' owners and to give them a sense of responsibility.

Dame Janet Fookes: Will the Minister give way?

Hon. Members: Give way.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I want to direct our efforts towards solving the problems that exist on the ground. That is why we are laying down specific duties to require district councils to collect and hold stray dogs and to keep them for at least seven days. Owners collecting dogs will pay a fee, not just to cover the cost of kennelling but as a contribution towards the warden costs. That is the embodiment of the "polluter pays" principle, and that is why I ask the House to disagree with the Lords on dog registration.

10.15 pm

Let us dispose of the irrelevance, complexity and expense of trying to enforce a national registration scheme. I ask the House to vote for a positive, specific and well-targeted package of measures to deal with the problems caused by dogs and a minority of irresponsible owners.

Question put, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment:—

The House divided: Ayes 274, Noes 271.

Division No. 344] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert	Amess, David
Aitken, Jonathan	Arbuthnot, James
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Amery, Rt Hon Julian	Arnold, Sir Thomas

Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Freeman, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Sir Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir George Young and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alexander, Richard
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Aspinwall, Jack
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bellotti, David
Bendall, Vivian
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Bidwell, Sydney
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Body, Sir Richard
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.

Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dover, Den
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Fry, Peter
Fyfe, Maria
Gale, Roger
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holt, Richard
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Irving, Sir Charles
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Knox, David
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mudd, David
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Hara, Edward
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Raffan, Keith
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Ruddock, Joan
Sayeed, Jonathan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Speller, Tony
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Vaz, Keith
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wolfson, Mark
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ken Eastham and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Government amendments in lieu of the Lords amendment agreed to.

Government motions to disagree with Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 76

STATUTORY NUISANCES AND INSPECTIONS THEREFOR

Lords amendment: No. 174, in page 80, line 45, leave out "and (3)" and insert "to (5)".

Mr. Trippier: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

The group of amendments headed by amendment No. 174, which we are about to consider, contains amendment (a), which will be moved by the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). Perhaps we can hear from the hon. Gentleman later about his amendment.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 175, in page 81, line 18, at end insert

"and, where a complaint of a statutory nuisance is made to it by a person living within its area, to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to investigate the complaint."

Motion made and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): I beg to move amendment (a) to the Lords amendment in line 4, at end insert

'and where the complaint is against the local authority to ensure that the investigation is independent of the department of the authority complained of and that a person independent of the local authority is authorised to take further proceedings if the investigation reveals grounds for further action.'.

Hon. Members may not have noticed, but page 204 of the Bill, schedule 14, part III, repeals sections 91 to 99 of the Public Health Act 1936. Section 99 of that Act is a piece of legislation that I use more often at my advice bureaux than any other public health legislation. It enables a person to take proceedings in a magistrates court when the state and condition of a house makes it unfit and prejudicial to the health of its occupants.

Generally, section 99 is used by a health authority, a local authority, to take proceedings against a private landlord or, more rarely, against a housing association. But in a case decided in Cardiff Crown court some years ago—Crown *v.* Cardiff city council—it was decided that a local authority which was a health authority could not take proceedings against itself.

I shall illustrate the injustice of this to tenants of local authority accommodation which is leaky, full of condensation or in other ways a threat to their health—perhaps because it is full of cockroaches—by describing the state of housing in London some years ago. A large part of accommodation in London was owned, controlled and managed by the Greater London council. I am sorry to say that much of that accommodation, whether under Labour or Conservative administration, was in poor condition. My local authority, Lambeth borough council, like many in London, would regularly issue summonses under section 99 against the Greater London council as the housing authority. In those circumstances, the court could make an order against the housing authority stating that it must carry out the necessary repairs, impose a fine on it and, most important of all to the person suffering poor housing conditions, award compensation of up to £2,000.

When the GLC estates were forced over to the London metropolitan authorities by the Government, those people in poor accommodation—which had a leaky roof or had been under-repaired so that it affected their health—had no recourse in law.

For some years it has been legally impossible to get the housing authority to issue a summons against itself. Therefore, we have to send people to the magistrates court to issue their own summons against the housing authority under section 99. They are helped in that by law centres, but as a result of Government restraints on local government expenditure, some law centres—notably three of them in Wandworth where there are plenty of housing problems—are being closed. Other law centres such as those in Bradford have been under threat or closed. People have to issue the summons against the Housing authority themselves and there is no legal aid because it is a prosecution, not a defence.

The Bill places a duty upon a local authority to investigate a complaint about a statutory nuisance. It is true that under clause 79, an individual who is aggrieved by a statutory nuisance can issue a summons. That is the current position, and that is what I am trying to change. There should be equal justice for all tenants. It should not matter whether a person is a tenant of a local authority, a housing association or a private landlord. If water is coming through the roof, if there is what is called a cold bridge, and if the health of the parents and children is likely to suffer because of poor housing conditions, there should be no difference in the quality of representation and justice simply because of the identity of the landlord.

The effect of the amendment would be that a local authority would have a duty not only to investigate a statutory nuisance but, if proceedings were then justified, to appoint a third party to prosecute that local authority because, as a result of the Cardiff case, it cannot prosecute itself. It is even more important that the amendment be accepted because, as a result of the changes in the Bill, the ability of a magistrates court to award compensation for failure to repair is lessened.

It is an important amendment that puts the council tenant back into the same position as private and housing association tenants. It restores the rights held by many former GLC tenants before the transfer of the GLC estates. It is a sensible amendment that would ensure the even-handed treatment of all tenants. I hope that the Government will accept it.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I wish briefly to support amendment (a). I do so in what I believe to be the accurate belief that I represent a greater proportion of council tenants than any other hon. Member who represents an English seat. This is an enormously significant amendment for the great proportion of my constituents who live in council properties. I endorse everything said by the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). I think that we have approached the amendment from the same position.

I was a practising lawyer before I came to the House, and the Public Health Act, especially section 99, provided an easily available and quick remedy to deal with repairs to domestic property. I was the recipient of representations from local law centres, to which many people go for advice and which use that remedy. For the regular stream of people who come to my surgery, as they do to the surgery of the hon. Member for Norwood and, no doubt, the surgeries of many other hon. Members, including Conservative Members, the only way to get the local authority to do anything is to prosecute. Unless it is taken to court, nothing happens. The windows remain broken, the ceilings leak, the pipes are unsafe and the home is a danger to health—it is a public health issue.

I have not had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Minister, and I did not serve on the Committee. I hope that he will welcome the amendment. It may need a drafting change, but fundamentally it would have two effects. First, it would give all local authority tenants the right to take action in a simple and effective way and to get a quick remedy by way of compensation. Secondly, and more importantly, it would give equity to people who, possibly coincidentally, happen to be council tenants. They may have become local authority tenants only because there was no other landlord in their area to whom they could go. Why should they be adversely affected compared with private or housing association tenants when the damage to their health may be exactly the same? I hope that the Minister will make a positive response.

10.45 pm

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I agree with the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), but I also want to draw the Minister's attention to amendment No. 176.

Most members of the Committtee were pleased when the Government announced that they intended to remove Crown immunity, but particularly disappointed that, when the Bill returned from another place, it was discovered that the Government had decided to restore Crown immunity in respect of smoke emissions or noise from Ministry of Defence premises.

It seems odd that the Government did not tell us in Committee in this House that they intended to reserve that immunity in respect of the Ministry of Defence, and that is occurred to them only when the Bill was returned by the Lords.

The undertaking given by the Government in the other place was also very odd. There might be an argument for retaining Crown immunity in respect of military operations, although I am not happy about the safeguards for people living close to MOD establishments. Even so, I do not understand why the Ministry should enjoy immunity in respect of activities that are the subject of legislation to which others must conform.

It seems crazy that a Ministry of Defence hospital operating an incinerator for disposing of medical waste will not need to comply with the Bill's provisions whereas a national health service hospital will—and ridiculous that, whereas a building that is the source of noise created by a late-night party, for example, will also be subject to the Bill, whereas premises occupied by the MOD will not.

It might have been reasonable if the Government had sought an exemption in respect of military operations, but it is not acceptable to demand blanket exemption. I hope that the Minister will offfer a better explanation of why that is necessary than was given in another place. Otherwise, we shall conclude that, as in so many other areas, Ministers from the Department of the Environment get turned over by Cabinet colleagues, and that every proposal that they make ends up being severely modified as a result of the activities of other cabinet members.

Mr. Trippier: Even though the statement by my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces in another place, Lord Arran, may not have satisfied the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), it certainly satisfied their Lordships. I shall endeavour to explain why it should also satisfy the hon. Gentleman and other right hon. and hon. Members.

As the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) might have expected, I claim that amendment No. 79 covers the situation that he described. I have a great deal of sympathy with his comments in respect of those of his constituents who want recourse to law and for the legal process to be dealt with speedily, just as I do with the remarks of the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). I am sorry that those points were not raised in Committee, when we could have discussed them fully.

In preparing for today's debate, I wanted to be convinced that adequate compensation will be available for those people who are aggrieved and take their case to a magistrates court—and I am satisfied that there will, provided that the case is well founded.

Amendment No. 178, which we have yet to consider, will enable a court to award backdated compensation, as is the present position under the Public Health Act 1936 in respect of action taken by private individuals. The House will forgive me if I am not familiar with the Cardiff Crown court case, but I was concerned that assistance should be available to any individual who felt aggrieved that they had received unsatisfactory service from their local authority.

The hon. Gentleman has prayed in aid the fact that, on occasion, law centres can assist his constituents, as indeed they can assist all our constituents if they have such a law centre. However there are other fairly sophisticated, informed bodies which will assist a constituent in such a dilemma for no charge whatsoever. I am thinking especially of Shelter or, in London, SHAC. We cannot interfere with the discretion of the magistrates in such cases.

The hon. Member for Norwood seems to be suggesting —it unnerves me slightly—that he does not have faith in the magistracy to determine whether the aggrieved constituent—the plaintiff—is right to bring the action in the first place.

Mr. Fraser: The Minister is missing the point completely. The local authority will be the prosecuting authority, unless it is also the defendant. The amendment provides that the local authority cannot be both prosecutor and defendant. Therefore, a third party is appointed to prosecute the local authority. There is no criticism of the magistracy, as they are first class. There is some criticism about funding for advice centres, but the main point is that at the moment the local authority cannot be both prosecutor and defendant. I want to correct that imbalance.

Mr. Trippier: There is no problem if the case can be brought by an organisation such as Shelter or SHAC. It is clear from the wording of the amendment—the hon. Gentleman has already said that the wording may not be perfect—that it gives an impression that an aggrieved individual could take the matter to the magistrates court. That is the whole point of clause 79. When someone else could be invited by the tenant to take the local authority to court, the remedy is open to them to do that. We have allowed that in clause 79.

We are not merely talking about law centres, Shelter and SHAC; there are citizens' advice bureaux and other organisations, which are quite used to taking cases of this kind and to supporting aggrieved individuals.

[Mr. Trippier]

There is no lack of sympathy on the Conservative Benches or in the Government's mind about what is being said, but I assure the hon. Gentleman that the whole point of clause 79 is to deal with that particular aggravation.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I am sure that the Minister is beginning to understand, but there is still a problem: if Parliament charges local authorities with being the statutory body responsible for upholding environmental health, it is natural that people will go regularly to the authority to seek enforcement of their rights as regards public health. This is the one occasion, as the hon. Member for Norwood said, when the local authority is forbidden to act because it would be the defendant. We are seeking to provide a route whereby the complaint can go from there to somewhere else. The amendment provides an easy but automatic mechanism. Otherwise, we shall have to rely on non-statutory provisions, which may not always work.

Mr. Trippier: There is not merely a disagreement between the hon. Members for Norwood and for Southwark and Bermondsey and myself—there is a yawning chasm. The precise point that the hon. Gentleman has raised is met by clause 79.

I understand the point that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey is making. It is true that, given the statutory responsibility of the environmental health officer, under normal circumstances an individual would go to that officer to ask for support in the case that he was seeking to advance. Therefore, it would clearly be ludicrous for the environmental health officer, who is paid by the local authority, to take the case to court against the authority which is his paymaster. The hon. Gentleman made that point well, as did the hon. Member for Norwood.

That is not at issue. Clause 79 allows an aggrieved individual to take a case directly to court—just as, in part IV of the Bill, which deals with litter provisions, we have written it large that any individual can take a local authority to court if he is not satisfied with the standard of cleanliness.

Mr. Fraser: There is no symmetry. If the local authority prosecutes, it uses its own solicitors department. The prosecutor does not incur any expense. The local authority can also instruct counsel. If a constituent has to go to a citizens advice bureau, or someone else, he or she has to pay the solicitor or barrister to appear in court. There is no symmetry between a person appearing on his or her own behalf to prosecute an authority that will instruct a barrister to defend the proceedings, and a local authority using a solicitor or barrister to prosecute any other landlord.

Mr. Trippier: I do not agree. The hon. Gentleman and I will have to agree to disagree. There is a clear symmetry between that and what has been on the statute book for a considerable period. Any individual can take a local authority to court if he is aggrieved over a housing defect or a public nuisance of most kinds. If a constituent of the hon. Member for Norwood takes his case to the magistrates court—I am pleased to hear that he has the utmost faith in the magistracy to decide such cases—and has it upheld there, an order will be made against the local authority that makes it clear that it has to comply quickly with the order. Moreover, costs will be awarded in favour of the plaintiff. It cannot be any clearer than that.

The hon. Gentleman asks the Government to accept the amendment. However, it would introduce another form of bureaucracy—another independent body that would give advice on whether the plaintiff was right. By any standard, that is second-guessing the individual who is taking the case to court. The hon. Gentleman would have me if the Bill did not contain a provision for an individual to take his case to the lower court. However, it contains such a provision. It meets precisely the point made by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey. I want to keep it that way. I am sure that he too, as a lawyer, has faith in the magistrates courts to deal with the point. It is already covered.

As for the point raised by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), Lord Arran made a statement in the other place in which he concluded that, in certain circumstances, the application of the clause to which he referred would impose unreasonable constraints on Ministry of Defence activities as they affect the defence of the realm. Clause 76 places a duty on every local authority to inspect its area from time to time to detect and, under subsequent clauses, to take action on specified types of nuisance. The two types of activity that it was agreed should not apply to defence activities are smoke and noise. That will interest the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish in particular.

The Ministry of Defence is currently exempt from all statutory nuisance legislation. Even as amended, therefore, part III will increase the degree of legislative control to which the Ministry is subject. It is evident that our armed forces cannot be properly trained and equipped without the generation of smoke and noise, which sometimes constitute a nuisance. For instance, soldiers will not be effective in wartime if they have not had realistic training, which includes the use of smoke screens, tank manoeuvres and the firing of weapons. Similarly, the equipment that they use needs to be tested in the open. It will generate smoke and, I admit noise. If statutory nuisance legislation were to be applied to such activities, they might become impossible, with serious consequences.

In the light of that information, which only echoes what was said by Lord Arran in the other place, I must ask the hon. Gentleman to accept the amendment, as their Lordships did.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The Minister does not say that only military manouevres will be exempt. He says that all the Ministry of Defence's activities will be exempt. An example that was given in the other place was fire-fighting exercises. The argument was that the Ministry of Defence needs to practise fire fighting and that fires would have to be started for that purpose. Ordinary fire-fighting services will not be granted such an exemption, on similar grounds. They will have to comply with the law. Why will the Ministry of Defence not have to comply with the law? The exemption just outlined by the Minister seems to be reasonable. What is not reasonable is to give exemption for incinerators, smoke from military hospitals and noise from barracks.

Mr. Trippier: Perhaps I can reassure the hon. Gentleman by saying that we have no intention of letting the armed services hide behind the exemption to which we

are both referring and to generate smoke or noise nuisances where they can be avoided. It would be of little value to specify in the amendment premises which give rise to smoke and noise nuisance for operational reasons. That is potentially the case for much of the defence estate, where nuisances that we would wish to avoid could occur too.

The Ministry of Defence has instead issued a policy statement to all their formations, and to those of the United States armed forces in the United Kingdom, stating the extent to which smoke and noise nuisance is constrained. Copies of the statement have been placed in the Library in response to questions from my hon. Friends the Members for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) and for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick).

11 pm

That policy statement makes it clear that domestic activities—non-operational activities such as building work, hospital incinerators and industrial type processes —should not cause smoke and nuisance. The statement does not stop there: it sets very strict limits on what constitutes operationally necessary smoke and noise, where that is operationally necessary. The Government undertake to ensure that the letter and spirit of that policy statement are followed at all times.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 79

SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS BY PERSONS AGGRIEVED BY STATUTORY NUISANCES

Lords amendment: No. 178, in page 85, line 41, at end insert

"and may also impose on the defendant a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale."

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this, it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 179 to 182 and 187.

Mr. Marland: It is disappointing that neither under part III of the Bill nor in the Lords amendments is there any specific reference to the containment of chlorofluorocarbon gas. CFCs are greenhouse gases and are up to 10,000 times more potent than carbon dioxide. They do enormous damage to the ozone layer, with the subsequent damage to the earth's surface that will flow from that.

CFCs are mainly used as a propellant or blowing agent and have been found a great deal in aerosols, although alternatives to CFCs as a blowing agent in aerosols are being produced. They are used in air conditioning units, in insulating cavity walls and in refrigerators. They are used for putting the insulating foam into the walls of refrigerators and in the coolant in the back of the refrigerator.

An enormous amount of CFC gases is in use. Some local authorities, and I am pleased that Gloucestershire is one of them, are making an effort to milk the refrigerant from the back of old refrigerators. However, they are only scratching the surface of the problem. It is estimated that 33 million domestic refrigerators are in use in the United Kingdom, and 3 million more refrigerators are being used every year. It is estimated that it will be five years before CFCs are designed out of refrigerator foam. Over the next five years, 48 million refrigerators will vent into the atmosphere, producing almost 32,000 tonnes of CFC gas.

The major problem is that the overall percentage of CFCs in refrigerators comes not from the coolant but from the foam round the outside of it. The German Government have recognised the problem and have passed laws outlawing the venting into the atmosphere of CFC gas from refrigerators. German Länders, the local authority areas, are stockpiling refrigerators until they can be treated.

It is important to point out that the joint working party of the Institution of Environmental Health Officers and the Institute of Wastes Management recommended recently the enactment of legislation in the United Kingdom requiring the recovery of CFCs from refrigerants in the short term and the phasing in of the requirement to recover all CFCs from insulating foam as soon as that is feasible.

The technology to recover CFCs from both coolant and insulating foam in domestic refrigerators is now at hand. Encouragement is required to ensure that the new technology is used efficiently and effectively. This can probably come about only through legislation and by steering local authorities on what they should do in destroying refrigerators.

Can my hon. Friend the Minister reassure me that suitable legislation for the safe processing of domestic refrigerators and insulating foam can be produced under this part of the Bill?

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Much good work has been done, particularly by ICI at Runcorn. It serves no purpose to suggest that industry is not trying. Many of us have the impression that industry is trying hard to overcome this fundamental problem.

If we are to be realistic about recovering CFCs from refrigerators, and there are to be regulations, let alone legislation, is not it important that the measures should relate to the design stage of the refrigerators? Recovery is very much easier if a refrigerator is designed for its eventual death. This is not an easy problem, but I should like to hear the Government's comments on any plans that they have in mind.

Mr. Cryer: It would be helpful to know the Government's attitude in general towards this problem. It is important to introduce regulations controlling the recovery of CFCs from domestic and industrial refrigerators when their time expires. They should not be vented into the atmosphere. There is already legislation dealing with the disposal of refrigerators because of the danger of CFCs and because children become trapped in them.

The Government permit the export of between 35,000 and 40,000 tonnes a year of CFCs. There is little point in pursuing controls over the recovery of CFCs in refrigerators in the United Kingdom when the Government are exporting CFCs to countries where there is a minimal possibility that they will scrutinise use and disposal in the way we do. I hope that the Minister can assure us that the export of CFCs will be rapidly curtailed. Although I am sure that it is not a responsibility of his Department, it would be absurd for the Department of the Environment to introduce controls on the disposal of existing CFCs in refrigerators while the Department of

[Mr. Cryer]

Trade permits the export of thousands of tonnes of CFCs to other countries. Whether the CFCs are in domestic refrigerators or in exported goods, they still affect the ozone layer. It is important to tackle both.

I hope that the Minister can assure me that he will refer this matter to the Department of Trade, which was extremely elusive about providing me with information when I asked questions about the export of CFCs. The first Minister told me that the statistics were not collected. Fortunately, it was discovered shortly after that the statistics were collected. They were provided in a parliamentary answer in *Hansard* at the beginning of the final part of the Session. As this information is circulating and the Department of the Environment is now sweeping all these environmental pollutants away with its new broom, I hope that the Department will send that new broom to other Departments of State.

Mr. Trippier: Let me begin by responding to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire, West (Mr. Marland), who asked whether I could give him an assurance that, at some future stage and without having recourse to primary legislation, the matter that he brought to our attention could be addressed by regulation, by order or whatever. My answer to his question is, not under clause 79, which we are now considering. But—I hope that I shall be able to get this confirmed in the Department tomorrow—my clear reading of the financial and explanatory memorandum is that such secondary legislation might be introduced under clause 82. I quote:

"Clause 82 amends the Clean Air Acts to allow regulations to be made under affirmative resolution procedure to extend the controls over smoke, grit, dust and fume emissions to any specified gaseous emissions."

I think that that covers the matter and that, had my hon. Friend asked me the same question in respect of clause 82, I could have said yes. I shall confirm that to him by letter tomorrow. I had better make it clear that I am no lawyer, but I think that I will be right on that.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) made it perfectly clear that great advances had been made in CFC substitution. That is a source of great pride to British people who believe that ICI played no small part in the development of such substitutes—more commonly known as HCFCs. No one is kidding himself—least of all me—that those substitutes are the complete answer. As I think the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) said, even they can be harmful, but to an infinitesimal degree compared with the chlorofluorocarbons with which we are all familiar. The perfect answer has not yet been found and, to my knowledge, we have not yet found a substitute for CFCs in refrigeration. Great progress has been made on substitute CFCs in aerosols, however, and I do not think that it will be very long before technology is so advanced that an effective substitute for the use of CFCs in refrigeration is found. In that regard, research is being conducted with a consortium that includes DuPont as well as ICI.

My concern for what happens in the developing and third world countries, especially with regard to the use of CFCs, is shared by other hon. Members—particularly the hon. Member for Bradford, South. Let me refer to the ozone layer conference held in London in June this year. It was perfectly clear to me that we could persuade the Indians and the Chinese to sign the amended Montreal protocol only if we offered them assistance not only through the recognised overseas aid routes but through the transfer of technology. I see no future in those countries—or in any other countries for that matter—continuing to use CFCs when the developed countries have already undertaken, under the Montreal protocol, to reduce their use. This country is 10 years ahead of its international obligations in that regard.

The third world and developing countries look to the industrialised and developed countries to put all these matters right because they genuinely believe that it is entirely our fault that the problem has arisen and that the hole in the ozone layer has been created. I think that they are right, by the way, but in a speech on this subject in Cairo in December last year, I made it clear that even if all the industrialised countries or all the OECD countries reduced their use of CFCs, we should never repair the hole in the ozone layer if the developing and third world countries continued to use them. That is a statement of fact; it is not hypothesis.

I agree with the hon. Member for Bradford, South. We should not be encouraging the use of CFCs without the substitutes in those countries. We have now managed to persuade companies like ICI to make available the technology transfer which will use substitutes instead of CFCs. The meeting to that end took place during the same week as the ozone layer conference was held in London, and I was party to that meeting with Chris Hampson, ICI's main board director.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South can take comfort from the fact that we are all singing from the same song sheet. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. If we had not had the undertaking, India and China would not have signed the protocol at the end of that week.

Mr. Dalyell: May I have an undertaking that I will receive a letter about the alterations that can be made at the design stage of refrigerators and other CFC-using equipment?

Mr. Trippier: I cannot give the hon. Gentleman any specific details about that, as I am not qualified to do so. However, I will write to him about it.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 183, in page 85, line 45, at end insert—

("(3D) An appeal against any decision of a magistrates' court on a complaint for an order under subsection (2) above shall lie to the Crown Court at the instance of any party to the proceedings.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory.]*

11.15 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes: I believe that the Government took the contrary view in the other place and supported the right of appeal to the Crown court. I was persuaded that that was a proper and right course and I am intrigued to know what revelation has caused the Government to take a different view now that the matter has come back to this place. It seems proper to allow an appeal on these important matters to the Crown court, and I should be interested to learn what has changed.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The hon. Gentleman is quite right. Amendment No. 183 was tabled by Lord Nathan on

Report in another place and it was accepted by the Government. At that stage, clause 79 was drafted in terms which meant that proceedings for a nuisance under subsections (1) and (2) were civil in character. Hence it was necessary to make specific provision for a right of appeal to the Crown court.

On Third Reading in the other place, Lord Byron tabled amendment No. 178, which was designed to restore the current position under the Public Health Act 1936, under which a magistrates court is empowered to impose a fine at the same time as it makes a nuisance order. As the matter will be heard in a magistrates court, the right of appeal is implicit. Amendment No. 183, as it was originally tabled, is unnecessary and otiose. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will agree that it is right and proper to overturn it.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Although the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) and I do not agree necessarily with all new provisions with regard to proceedings for statutory nuisance in the magistrates court, the amendment seems persuasive, as the matter is now a criminal offence and the right of appeal follows automatically to the Crown court.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [One with Special Entry.]

New clause

TRANSITIONAL PROVISION RELATING TO SECTION 86

Lords amendment: No. 209, to insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) The Secretary of State may, for the purposes of the transition to the duties imposed by section 86 above on local authorities and educational bodies, by regulations, make provision—

(a) modifying that section, or

(b) modifying Part I of the Local Government Act 1988 (competition rules for functional work or works contracts).

(2) Regulations under this section may make different provision for different descriptions of authorities, different areas or other different circumstances or cases.

(3) In this section—

"educational bodies" means the governing bodies and education authorities mentioned in section 88(1)(f) above; and

"local authorities" means the local authorities mentioned in section 88(1)(a) and (c) and (2)(a) above.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this we may also discuss amendments (a) and (b) to the Lords amendment, and Lords amendment No. 305.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): Opposition Members are very concerned about the continuing problem relating to the code of practice applying to litter. It was raised early in our consideration of the Bill; it was also raised with me, at a conference that I attended on 24 September—a joint conference involving both the Association of Direct Labour Organisations and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

The problem appears to have resulted from the Local Government Act 1988, which provides for compulsory competitive tendering. That Act cuts right across this Bill. It seems clear to local authorities that now have the responsibility of introducing CCT that it will be almost impossible for them to build it on to the code of practice —which, I understand, has not yet been finally agreed, although it has already been through at least seven drafts.

If the Government are talking about the importance of environmental protection, and about the need for it to cut across all local authority services, they should recognise the problem that they have created for themselves. The Secretary of State has powers to make changes to clause 86, which applies the code of practice to local authorities. What worries us is what will happen when a council has already tendered, under CCT, and a contract—whether in-house or outside—has already been properly agreed within the terms of the 1988 Act.

More important, what about the transitional arrangements between the existing tender and the new code? It is fair to say that the Government have recognised the problem, and, in the other place, have gone some way towards taking it on board. Nevertheless, there could well be a difference in the Government's interpretation of the Act: contracts already won in-house could be treated differently from those won by outside contractors.

It matters to us that local authorities should be able to enforce the code of practice on litter, when it is finally agreed, in a uniform way throughout the country, and that we should not have different standards of litter as a result of the lack of timetabling in respect of the implementation of CCT. It is likely that the litter duties, which were based on the code of practice that was introduced by the Tidy Britain Group, have been dreamt up without any serious consideration of how they cut across the rolling programme of CCT for street cleansing.

We welcome the changed deadlines that have already been introduced, which mean that CCT will be delayed, in one case, until 1 August and in other cases, until 1 January 1992. We accept that some progress has been made, but we want an assurance from the Minister that authorities will not be required again to undertake tendering processes that they have already gone through in the current round. We want to know also that the two kinds of contract—in-house and outside—are being dealt with in the same way. How do the Government intend to resolve the enormous problems to which they have already admitted in their deliberations?

We want certain assurances: first, that the introduction of the code will not lead to waste and dislocation caused by a further round of tendering for any authority; secondly, that authorities' problems with in-house and outside services will be considered as a whole; thirdly, that there will be no different treatment between the two types of services; fourthly, that, as a result, the Government will review their interpretation of section 7(8) of the 1988 Act; and, fifthly, that discussions with local authority associations will proceed as soon as possible. Local authority associations in particular have expressed concern about the situation in which they now find themselves.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This new clause gives the Secretary of State power to make transitional provisions to protect the position of authorities that already assigned contracts for the provision of the relevant services under

[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory]

the competitive tendering legislation before the new litter code was published. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) has acknowledged that we have already moved a number of deadlines to accommodate the position of those authorities which might otherwise have had insufficient time to take account of the new litter standards.

We recognise that contracts are likely to have to be modified to take account of the standards of litter clearance that will be required by the code. The dates that we have moved are the rounds of competition which were due to be completed by 1 January and 1 August next year. They have been moved back to 1 August 1991 and 1 January respectively. It will be possible for authorities to take full account of the code when they draw up their specifications.

Where contracts had already been let before the code was promulgated, the new clause will give the Secretary of State power to make the necessary transitional arrangements. They will provide for any additional work which may be necessary to be taken on board. They will also protect the position of authorities until such time as that can be done. They will cover cases in which contracts have been let to the private sector and also those in which work has been assigned to an authority's own direct service organisation.

I can promise the hon. Lady that we will consult local authority associations on the details of how to reconcile the needs of competitive tendering with the parallel need to implement the new litter standards as soon as possible. I recognise that that is an issue. I know also that compulsory competitive tendering has brought significant benefits not just to local community charge payers but to authorities. It has required them to define duties and has ensured that the work is tested in the market place to ensure value for money. We do not wish to relinquish those gains.

11.30 pm

I am sure that the hon. Lady will also recognise the need to implement the new litter code as widely and consistently as possible. I am sure that she would not like the standards to be pepper-potted about the country any more than is absolutely necessary, and that she will therefore join me in hoping that we can work out the details of implementing the new litter duties as soon as possible. These have not yet been finalised, but I undertake to consult the local authority associations on the proposals when they are available.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Further consideration adjourned.—*[Mr. Kirkhope.]*

To be further considered tomorrow.

Inter-country Adoption

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kirkhope.]*

11.31 pm

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): I am grateful for this opportunity to raise the important subject of inter-country adoption on the Adjournment. I am especially grateful that my hon. Friend the Minister for Health is giving her time to reply to the debate. More than one Department is involved, but I am especially grateful that she is here this evening, and should like to record my appreciation of her long experience with these matters, and her awareness of the sensitivity of issues that concern both the needs of the children who require adoption and the parents who are interested in adopting.

My hon. Friend will be aware of my personal interest in the matters, as an adoptive parent, and of my support for her during the passage of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, which should do so much to help childless couples. My interest in inter-country adoption is not quite so close although Stephen, our child, comes from Wales and I suppose that one could call that inter-country adoption.

My first real experience of the subject came when I visited Hong Kong three years ago. I do not know whether my hon. Friend will have this opportunity, but if she is in Hong Kong, I recommend her to go to the Home for Loving Faithfulness because it is the most extraordinary establishment, which takes in severely handicapped Chinese orphans and cares for them. It has been most successful in finding adoptive homes all over the world for those Chinese children. If my hon. Friend ever has the opportunity, I recommend that she sees that establishment, which is a particularly fine example of inter-country adoption finding the right homes for the right children. It would be a great mistake and naive to imagine that the right homes for those Chinese children could be found in Hong Kong because the Chinese culture does not accept adoption, let alone the adoption of severely handicapped children. The needs of those children in Hong Kong will no doubt become even greater when Hong Kong becomes part of the Chinese mainland.

My other interest in this subject comes through one of my constituents who is a Colombian lady who, for medical reasons, found it difficult to have a second child herself. She was interested in adopting a Colombian child, but found the procedural difficulties so great that she felt that she might be better to try to have a child herself although her doctor advised against it. I quote that as an example of where the procedural difficulties of inter-country adoption should not be used as an obstruction when it leads to a lady trying to have a child when her doctor has advised against it.

The history of inter-country adoption includes the great interest in it at the time of the crisis in Columbia in the early 1980s when orphans were tipped on to the streets at an age of seven or eight. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister will remember the considerable amount of work done by Lady Glover, Baroness Faithful and many others in an attempt to set up an agency to help with inter-country adoptions. The British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering attempted to find out more of the difficulties at the time. I have looked at some of the old files on meetings with Ministers and many of the people

involved with setting up such an agency at that time. Everyone agreed that an agency was needed. I am sorry that it did not come about a few years ago. Obviously, it was close to happening. It was probably fears of baby-trafficking and so on that led to the idea being dropped. But I am sure that the need was fully recognised by all involved. I am sorry that the difficulties prevented an agency from being set up.

At Christmas last year we all suddenly became aware of the dreadful crisis in Romania when the horrors of the Ceausescu regime were made apparent after the revolution. The situation was appalling. Mothers were forced to have five children. No contraceptives were available. No abortion was allowed. The result was the most appalling orphanages, with in excess of 100,000 orphans. Some people have estimated that there could be 200,000 children in orphanages in the most disgraceful and awful conditions. There are no trained nurses. The nurses training schools have been closed down. The children's health is exposed to terrible hazards. AIDS and hepatitis are rampant.

The common humanitarian instinct to help led so many people to offer to adopt or foster at that time. I understand that there were 4,000 'phone calls in the first week of the new year to the Flanders and Scottish Alliance, and 50 'phone calls a day to the National Association for the Childless from couples who were offering to adopt.

Obviously, one would want to help the Romanian authorities in every way possible. I was disappointed to hear in a debate just last week on aid from the European Community to eastern Europe that there is to be no aid to the Romanian Government from the EC because of dissatisfaction with the new Government and the poor state of the democracy in that country. The level of official aid from the United Kingdom to Romania was quoted in the debate as only £900,000 so far. That is no more than £5 or £10 for each orphan. So much more needs to be done. However, the children do not need only aid. They need love and care. As Claire Rayner said in the very good TV-AM series, the children need TLC—tender loving care. That is what I should like to impress on my hon. Friend the Minister most of all.

British couples who have been over to Romania say that couples from other countries such as France, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, the United States of America and Canada receive much more help than British couples. Those countries have waived restrictions because of the humanitarian problems, which have reached such crisis proportions in Romania.

In Britain it seems that we have been perhaps a little over-obsessed with the difficulties of which we were aware in the past such as scares about trafficking and illegal immigration and the breakdown of adoptions. Perhaps we have allowed those fears to stand in the way of helping would-be adoptive couples who want to do all that they can to help in the crisis. We seem to have too many bureaucratic barriers. Local authorities seem to be among the worst at creating such barriers. As a result of that, I took a petition to the Prime Minister last July from 14 couples who wanted help to overcome the obstacles.

One accepts fully the United Nations declaration that, of course, the child must come first and should be helped to stay in the country of its birth if at all possible. But where it is clear that at least for some orphans adoption is the best solution, any delays are not to the advantage of the child.

I should like to quote to my hon. Friend some of the problems that would-be parents are now experiencing. My hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce) has passed on to me two letters that he has received in the past few days. One letter dated 14 October said that current delays on the part of local authorities were running at three months. Those delays concerned an 18-month-old girl who had been discovered in Romania abandoned without even a name. The other letter dated 23 September said that people feel

"under pressure to break the law in order to safeguard their babies"

The Minister will be aware of the work undertaken by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), who has also drawn attention to certain cases with which he is concerned. A couple in his constituency have written to me to say that the Romanian lawyer with whom they dealt said that he would not deal with any other English couple because

"you are treated as though you are criminals for wanting to give a home to these babies."

It is clear that people are experiencing severe bureaucratic delays and that there is an urgent need for a helpline service and an inter-country adoption agency to help such couples. At the very least a helpline should be established —it could either be a free-standing agency or the service could be provided by one of the existing voluntary agencies. Parents feel that their patience has been exhausted and that they should not be left alone to battle against large monopolistic bureaucracies. Those parents' needs were recognised many years ago and, if we do not do something to regularise the procedures, we shall continue to risk the danger of children coming into the country through the back door. The authorities would then be presented with those babies as a fait accompli.

The helpline and the inter-country adoption agency could supply information to couples and counsel them. To adopt a child from abroad is not simple and all couples considering such an adoption should be counselled in the best possible manner. Those who go ahead with such an adoption should be assisted with the paperwork and the other forms of bureaucracy that they will encounter. Local authorities should be pressed to act promptly when there is a danger of delay. Those authorities should not hesitate to use outside social workers if that would help to speed up the process.

The agency could also help and support parents once they have gone through the process of adoption. It is not easy to bring up one's own children and obviously parents would require further help to bring up a child adopted from abroad. I have no evidence, however, that such adoptions have led to an excessive number of breakdowns and we should not reject inter-country adoption of those grounds.

I hope that the Government will encourage an existing agency to take on an inter-country adoption service. Ideally that should be undertaken by an organisation such as the BAAF, but there are others that could consider that task. If that does not happen, the parents are resolved to set up their own agency under the suggested name, the British Overseas Adoption Agency, which would be supported by groups such as Stork—the parent support operation already operating—the National Association for the Childless, the Inter-Country Adoption Social Workers Group, and family groups in different parts of the

[Mr. Peter Thurnham]

country. For the sake of the children and their prospective families, we should act. It is not good enough to leave things as they are.

The most recent and comprehensive published statement of local authority opinion on the matter appeared in the information complied by the children's legal centre at the end of 1988. Of the 59 authorities that replied to the questionnaire, 36 had no specific policy, four said that they were discussing one and some authorities, for example, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Lewisham, stated unequivocally that they would not be prepared to undertake any assessments at the request of applicants or agencies from abroad. Somerset authority stated:

"This authority does not assist in making arrangements for inter-country adoption, but would meet its responsibilities under the 1986 Adoption Act sections 1 and 2 by giving advice to inquirers on the legal processes to be followed and try to ensure that they have properly addressed and thought through the issues involved."

If departments are obstructive and couples are a a loss to know where else to seek information, they may be desperate enough to bring overseas children into this country without entry clearance, as has occurred.

Unless we establish a co-ordinated service in which proper regulation can be assured, future participation and co-operation on an international level might be restricted. Britain is one of the few countries not to have a specialised overseas adoption agency and we must avoid any danger of isolation from continuing international initiatives. The Hague convention is in the process of drafting new directives on inter-country adoption and will be meeting at the international convention on private law in 1993, where receiving and sending countries will agree on criteria, and establish standards, to protect children.

Clearly there is a will to adopt, and clearly there are many Romanian children for whom adoption, far from depriving them of a secure future in the country of their origin, would be saving them from years of institutionalised misery at best and death at worst.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): A parliamentary answer on 22 October showed that only one mentally handicapped child has been adopted from Romania. She is Emese Gabor, who was adopted by Bev and Ruth Smith of Killamarsh in Derbyshire. Bev Smith had to visit Romania four times, and there were considerable difficulties with the authorities there, including, initially, the British embassy. There was a host of dedicated activity because Bev and Ruth Smith were committed to adopting a mentally handicapped child. It was the third such child whom they had adopted, in addition to having a mentally handicapped child of their own. That experience illustrates that something special is needed if mentally handicapped children are to be adopted from Romania.

Mr. Thurnham: That is a commendable example of how inter-country adoption can be especially helpful in finding the right home for mentally handicapped children.

I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister took on board the strong message from parents that something must be done. I hope that the Government will encourage the establishment of a suitable service either through the aegis of an existing voluntary organisation or by setting up a new organisation with official recognition.

11.47 pm

The Minister for Health (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): I appreciate the contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton,. North-East (Mr. Thurnham) in once again bringing before the House a subject of great concern and interest to many hon. Members. He referred to my hon. Friends the Members for Dorset, South (Mr. Bruce) and for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale). The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) contributed to the debate and I note that my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North (Mr. Burt) is in the Chamber. He has also raised this issue on behalf of a number of his constituents.

The whole issue of inter-county adoption must be viewed not only in terms of the poignant and troublesome circumstances in Romania, but against the position in this country, where the number of babies available for adoption has declined sharply in recent years. Often there is the poignant combination of parents who cannot have children alongside pictures in the newspapers and on television of children who are neglected and deprived of even the basic necessities of life.

Some parents have to wait an inordinate length of time before documentation is cleared. They become frustrated and exasperated and, on too many occasions, take the law into their own hands and go out to find a child. I say clearly and strongly that the decision to adopt a child is an enormously serious one. It is essential that the necessary safeguards are taken. There can be no question of having a lower standard of proof or satisfaction as to the suitability of parents for children from overseas than there would be for children at home. We have made great efforts to work with local authorities and have issued guidance to make it quite clear what the procedure should be in an attempt to ensure that needless delays can be circumvented. An example is that traditionally it has been the case that adoptive parents would have to be approved for a particular named child, so it would be impossible to do the home study until after the child had been identified. In the most recent guidance from Bill Utting of the social services inspectorate, we make it clear to local authorities that those are circumstances in which it is appropriate to make a home study report in advance.

We appreciate that many local authorities believe that they have more pressing needs for their skills and demands on their services and wish to find homes for the children who are already their statutory responsibility. There is the development of adoption of handicapped children who, in times gone by, could not have hoped to have a normal upbringing with a family. To accommodate the understandable concerns of local authorities we have made it clear that it is quite appropriate for a charge to be made for parents seeking a home study report for an inter-country adoption.

I hope that I have made it clear to the House that the safeguards are an essential part of protecting children. Children's needs should be paramount in these considerations. Children need families, but no parent has a right to a child. I hope that the House would agree that this must be the way in which we approach inter-country adoption.

My hon. Friend mentioned the United Nations convention on foster placement and adoption, nationally and internationally. It provides that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a family for a child who cannot be cared for in

a suitable manner in his or her own country. In all matters relating to the placement of a child outside the care of a child's own parents, the child's best interests should be the paramount consideration.

Safeguards and standards equivalent to those which apply to national adoption are to be applied to inter-country adoption to protect the welfare of the child involved. The more recent 1989 United Nations declaration on the rights of the child, to which the Government are already signatories and which we hope to ratify soon, will contain strict safeguards on inter-country adoption.

I join my hon. Friend and others in congratulating those who have responded to the tragic situation in Romania by the provision of international aid in a number of ways. There is no embargo on humanitarian aid. The aid in Romania has come from both governmental and voluntary sources. The United Kingdom has already contributed £6·6 million of humanitarian aid, including medical supplies that are so greatly needed. The EC Commission recently set up a programme of aid specifically for children in Romania, to which we are contributing generously. Some £3·8 million has already been promised for supplies and heating in orphanages, and more is promised. There have also been the numerous voluntary efforts which we all applaud. The Romanian Orphanage Trust is a notable example. It intends to ensure that the children of Romania are able to stay in their own country.

The theme of my hon. Friend's debate was inter-country adoption, and he said that there was no inter-country adoption agency in this country. We have a long tradition of adoption and can rightly take pride in the effectiveness and thoroughness with which it is undertaken. In some countries there is adoption only from overseas, so clearly the inter-country adoption agency is the route that has been chosen. Adoption provision is undertaken either by the country's 108 local authorities or by approved voluntary adoption agencies. Within that context, we must seek to develop better services and advice for parents—some of whom encounter a great deal of cumbersome negotiations in endeavouring to establish the facts and what requirements they must meet to undertake an inter-country adoption.

It is neither right nor proper if those to whom those people turn for advice are those who buck the system, and whose action is not something that any right hon. or hon. Member would endorse or support. The Government would welcome, with my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East, the involvement of one of the adoption agencies if it were prepared to take on a particular role in respect of inter-country adoption. That would provide a safe, reliable and sympathetic source of preliminary advice for parents wanting to embark on that course.

It is important that prospective parents should arrive at the moment when they remove the rose-tinted spectacles and discard the surge of emotion that may prompt them first to consider inter-country adoption, and should consider in the cold light of day the long-term implications of adopting a child from a different country and culture who may not be healthy. They must be sure that they have the commitment identified by the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, in describing his constituents. Prospective parents must also be confident of being able to offer the skills that the House recognises in my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East. No one could speak with greater authority and from more experience of inter-country adoption than him.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): My wife and I volunteered to be short-term foster parents when my wife was pregnant with our first child. We were amazed at the bureaucracy involved and the time that it took, and even more amazed at being told how careful the authorities were, because between the time that they undertook their investigations and decided that we would make suitable parents, I had lost my job and all our circumstances had changed—and the authorities know nothing of that. I am very concerned, from experience of two cases in my constituency, that the bureaucracy is not working. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will stress to all social services departments not that their investigations need be anything less than thorough, but that they should be completed quickly.

Mrs. Bottomley: My hon. Friend identifies precisely the dilemma. When a couple known to him or to others of us, who are laudable, responsible, public-spirited and free from criminal convictions, apply to be foster or adoptive parents and it takes an inordinate length of time, that is described as bureaucracy. But if a child is placed with far from satisfactory adoptive or foster parents, that is described as negligence on the part of the local authority in fulfulling its duties. Difficult judgments must be made, together with checks on criminal and health records, but they are essential in safeguarding a child's welfare. A child from overseas is all the more entitled to a home that we can be satisfied meets the local authority's safeguards.

A local authority or approved adoption society must undertake that work because if, in unforeseen circumstances, anything goes wrong with a placement, that agency must take responsibility for the child. That is why it is not possible for some well-meaning, international agency with no long-term responsibility to step in. It would be unable to provide the long-term support, guidance and advice that may be required.

It is important that we have more up-to-date information about what the precise situation in Romania is. In some cases, it seems that prospective parents are quarrelling over the same child, and entry certificates are claimed on the same child. Stories about the circumstances in orphanages make parents reluctant to leave the child there while they satisfy all the necessary steps and safeguards.

For those reasons I have asked officials from the Department of Health, and the Home Office to visit Romania in the near future to satisfy themselves of the position there and to ensure that the Romanians understand the procedures which we need to satisfy ourselves that the child's welfare will be properly safeguarded.

The aim of the visit will be to learn more at first hand about the situation there and about the children who are in need of adoptive families, so that we shall be better placed to advise agencies and adopters, and to discuss and explore with the Romanian authorities how co-operation between that country and the United Kingdom can be developed and improved to ensure that the safeguards and the essential legal requirements of both countries are strictly observed in inter-country adoption.

[Mrs. Bottomley]

Frankly, the House is agreed that the circumstances in Romania have brought the whole question of inter-country adoption to the fore. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East mentioned Colombia. The problem goes back several years.

At the same time we are reviewing adoption law here and will be addressing the problem of inter-country adoption in a working paper to be produced in the new year.

The lessons that my hon. Friend has identified, the improved guidelines produced by the Department of Health, and the experience of the visit to Romania, together with any plans for establishing an agency in the way that my hon. Friend identified—which might be able to advise, encourage or offer a word of caution to parents where appropriate—will all ensure that our response to these tragic circumstances safeguards the welfare of the children, and enables public-spirited parents, who are properly equipped, to offer a long-term home to children who would otherwise have a distinctly bleak future.

The Motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at one minute past Twelve midnight.

House of Commons

Tuesday 30 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

REDBRIDGE LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL

(By Order)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [24 October].

That this House doth agree with Lords in their Amendment, to leave out Clause 6.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 8 November.

KILLINGHOLME GENERATING STATIONS (ANCILLARY POWERS) BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Killingholme Generating Stations (Ancillary Powers) Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have the effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Thursday 8 November.

CLYDE PORT AUTHORITY BILL

LONDON UNDERGROUND (VICTORIA) BILL

TEES AND HARTLEPOOL PORT AUTHORITY BILL

SHARD BRIDGE BILL

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Messages [17th October, 24th October and 25th October] as relate to the Clyde Port Authority Bill, the London Underground (Victoria) Bill, the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill and the Shard Bridge Bill be now considered.

That the Promoters of the Clyde Port Authority Bill, the London Underground (Victoria) Bill, the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill and the Shard Bridge Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bills in the next Session of Parliament, provided that in the case of each Bill the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bills shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with each Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That each Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first, second and third time and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Thursday 8 November.

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

Local Government Finance

1. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the involvement of armed forces officers in enforcing collection of the poll tax from armed services personnel refusing to pay.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton): None, Sir.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister aware that, recently, some squaddies were bullied into paying their poll tax by having their arm twisted by officers, who were acting on advice from the Government? Is not it squalid and nasty that American forces do not have to pay the poll tax when these young lads can be sent out to the Gulf to fight for Queen and country and that self-same Queen does not pay a penny piece in poll tax?

Mr. Hamilton: Officers in the armed forces advise service men to abide within the law when it comes to paying the community charge. I sincerely hope that the hon. Gentleman does the same for his constituents.

Mr. John Browne: Will my hon. Friend assure the House that those members of the armed forces who have been assigned a duty in the Gulf will not suffer under the community charge because of their posting?

Mr. Hamilton: After a single man has been abroad for about 60 days, he no longer has to pay the community charge. For married men, the period is up to six months. That will cover a large number of service men who are serving in the Gulf.

Mr. O'Neill: Is the Minister aware of the sense of injustice felt by poll tax payers in the armed services, not least when the figures that he gave me in July of this year show that in the past 10 years, a private's pay has fallen by 4 per cent. while that of a general has increased by 45 cent., and that of a field marshal has increased by 86 per cent? Is not that an injustice to the lower ranks? Should not they be given some assistance?

Mr. Hamilton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, the pay of service men is decided by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body, and that of generals is decided by the Top Salaries Review Body. We have merely accepted the recommendations made to us.

Mr. Viggers: Does my hon. Friend agree that there is a problem, but that it is the reverse of that put forward by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)? Is he aware that service men on full-time courses of education can be deemed to be students, which means that they pay only 20 per cent. of the poll tax? Does my hon. Friend further agree that that is not fair on a constituency such as Gosport, which has lost £270,000 as a result of that concession? Will he look at the situation with a view to changing it?

Mr. Hamilton: My right hon. and hon. Friends in the Department of the Environment are aware that people who are judged to be in full-time education need pay only 20 per cent. of the community charge. It is obviously up to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, if he wishes to, to change the legislation to deal with that.

Greenham Common

2. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been removed from Greenham Common since the byelaws were declared invalid.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Although the House of Lords ruled on 12 July that the Greenham Common byelaws were invalid, there can be no general right of access to any operational RAF station and any persons entering without authority will be removed as trespassers and for their own safety. Between 12 July and 23 October, 532 such cases were recorded at Greenham Common, but the number of individuals involved is much smaller.

Ms. Short: We all understand that in this country no one can be arrested or detained except under the law. Now that the byelaws in Greenham Common have been declared illegal, that means that thousands have been wrongly arrested, detained and charged. More seriously, since the byelaws were declared illegal people are still being detained and removed from the base in vans. The Minister has said that that is allowed, but under what law is it allowed? His declaration does not make it right or lawful.

Mr. Hamilton: The hon. Lady does not seem aware of the laws of trespass, which are such that if someone trespasses, he can be asked to remove himself. If he fails to do so, such force as is necessary can be used to make sure that he is removed from the premises. That is the law under which people are acting at Greenham Common at the moment.

The women at Greenham Common put themselves there as a so-called peace camp because they wanted to see the departure of cruise missiles from the base. I remind the hon. Lady—perhaps she would like to tell the women there, who do not seem to have realised this—that all the cruise missiles will be gone by April next year, so I cannot quite see what they are doing wasting everybody's time and money camping outside Greenham Common.

Mr. Tredinnick: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Greenham Common women contributed nothing to the end of the cold war, and the decision to deploy cruise and Pershing missiles was a much more fundamental reason for the ending of the cold war?

Mr. Hamilton: That is absolutely right. We should pay great tribute to the diplomacy and negotiations that took place between the United States and the Soviet Union which led to the intermediate nuclear forces agreement and to the removal of those missiles from Greenham Common next year.

NATO

3. **Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next intends to meet the Secretary-General of NATO to discuss the organisation's future role.

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Tom King): I next expect to meet Dr. Woerner at the nuclear planning group and defence planning committee meetings in December. I would expect to discuss with him a wide range of defence issues.

Mr. Cartwright: When the Secretary of State next meets the Secretary-General, will he make it abundantly clear that closer European defence collaboration is practical common sense but that it must be kept firmly within the NATO framework? Will he particularly reject the current day-dreaming about some European Community defence force, which can only undermine the transatlantic relationship which has been so successful over the past 40 years?

Mr. King: I very much agree with the hon. Gentleman. He will know that at the very successful NATO summit in London, it was specifically agreed that a key pillar of NATO for the future would be the continuing transatlantic connection. United States forces based in Europe are a very important element of that.

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: Given NATO's magnificent record in maintaining peace in Europe since the second world war, would my right hon. Friend consider using NATO as a framework in a non-military sense as well as a military sense in ensuring continuing United States involvement in the future of a changing Europe?

Mr. King: Certainly, the NATO summit envisaged continuing discussions in the North Atlantic Council about a political dimension as well, but four of the key pillars of the alliance for the future shape of NATO are an integrated military structure, an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, United States forces—including nuclear—based in Europe and a united Germany in NATO.

Mr. Beggs: Now that there is movement towards political union in Europe, will the Government encourage the Government of the Irish Republic to join NATO?

Mr. King: I am not sure that that arises on this question.

Mr. Soames: Will my right hon. Friend elaborate on what discussions he has had about the further out-of-area role for NATO when he next meets the Secretary-General?

Mr. King: At present the NATO countries are separately involved in an out-of-area role in the Gulf. Hon. Members interested in defence matters are watching with great interest to see how well the various structures perform. We are co-operating in the Western European Union—that is one aspect of our activities in the Gulf. Our working relationship with the United States clearly benefits from our previous experiences working together within NATO.

The Gulf

4. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated cost of British forces in the Gulf to the end of the financial year.

Mr. Tom King: The full operating costs of the operation in the Gulf to the end of the financial year are, in current circumstances, expected to exceed £600 million.

Mr. Hughes: Whatever the cost, will the Secretary of State ensure that it is not paid for in human lives? Will he stress to all concerned the need for patience, to give sanctions a full opportunity to work? Will he also seek to ensure, bearing in mind public opinion, that no pre-emptive strike is made by forces under United States command?

Mr. King: We are seeking to end Iraq's aggression by peaceful means, which is why we, together with many other countries, are throwing our efforts fully behind the United Nations embargo. In that way, we hope that the aggression can be ended without conflict. But, as was said by the leader of the hon. Gentleman's party, the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock), in our debate on the Gulf crisis, it would be extremely unwise to discard the military option. It is important that the message is borne in every day on Saddam Hussein that, one way or another, he will lose. His understanding of that reality offers the best hope of the matter being settled peacefully.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend: In view of the fact that the Treasury funded the Falklands conflict separately from the defence budget, what success is my right hon. Friend having in persuading the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make a similar arrangement in meeting the cost of our troops in the Gulf?

Mr. King: I am very grateful to my right hon. Friends the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury for their help. I made it clear that we do not know at this stage precisely what will be the additional cost over our continuing defence budget, but I outlined the gross cost in answering the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes). I have made it clear to my right hon. Friends that we shall seek to cover what we can in the defence budget, but they have assured me of their sympathetic consideration of the extra costs involved in our essential defence of freedom and our stand with other allies against aggression.

Mr. Denzil Davies: We are pleased that the Secretary of State can meet the extra cost from within his existing budget.

Mr. King *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Davies: Or if not, that the right hon. Gentleman will bring a supplementary budget before the House. Has the Secretary of State held discussions with any countries that have an equivalent interest to ours, both within the Gulf area and outside it, as to what contribution they will make?

Mr. King: To avoid any misunderstanding, I must make it clear that I shall cover what costs I can from within the defence budget, but I certainly anticipate that it will be necessary to bring a supplementary budget before the House, as the right hon. Gentleman suggested.

I confirm that discussions are continuing with other countries about their contribution. We have already received certain help, such as assistance with training from the German Government, and food, fuel and water from host Governments in Saudi Arabia and in the Gulf. We are looking for contributions from other countries towards meeting some of our costs.

Mr. Marlow: I share my right hon. Friend's desire for the crisis to be resolved diplomatically, but obviously it could turn into a conflict. What contingency plans has my right hon. Friend made for what he anticipates will be the likely level of casualties in the event of a conflict?

Mr. King: I shall not answer the second part of my hon. Friend's question, but we are making appropriate arrangements for medical facilities. Some are already established because we have a substantial number of

troops in the Gulf, and they never travel without having appropriate medical facilities. We are seeking to ensure that adequate facilities exist to meet any situation that may arise.

Trident

5. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current development position and cost of the Trident nuclear missile programme.

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Alan Clark): The Trident programme continues to time and to budget towards its in-service date of the mid-1990s.

Mr. Cryer: Will the Minister confirm that there has been a delay in purchasing the missiles? Since that appears to be the case, would it be better to cancel Trident and save £9·5 billion, to ensure that the strategic arms reduction talks are successful, by concluding those negotiations, and to strengthen the United Nations nuclear non-proliferation treaty, which, as the Minister knows, has been signed by 139 non-nuclear nations, which have agreed not to deploy or manufacture nuclear weapons? If the Minister repeats the arid nonsense that nuclear weapons keep the peace, will he distribute them to the middle eastern countries so that he can apply the theory there?

Mr. Clark: The hon. Gentleman has been in the House for 16 years—[HON. MEMBERS: "Off and on."]—except for a brief gap when he was looking for a more amenable electorate. During that period he has asked almost the same question throughout, and he should not be surprised if he gets almost the same answer. The delay in purchasing the missiles will not affect the in-service date.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be extremely foolish for us to give up our nuclear capability, in view of the fact that many countries have a chemical capability and a potential nuclear capability?

Mr. Clark: Of course, it would be entirely wrong to give up the capability, to which the present decrease of confrontational tension is largely attributable, at the very moment when proliferation among more widely diffused and less responsible regimes looks imminent.

Mr. Hood: Following on from the question put by the hon. Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith), are the Government considering putting forward the argument that nuclear weapons deter chemical weapons? If that is the case, are they saying that they are prepared to use nuclear weapons if the Iraqis use chemical weapons?

Mr. Clark: We are saying that the nuclear weapon is an essential part of deterrent capability, and its use is a matter of judgment for the Government, on the advice of the operational commanders on the spot.

Defence Review

7. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reassessment has been made of the options outlined in his recent defence review, in the light of developments in the Gulf.

Mr. Tom King: I have not reassessed my proposals in my statement on "Options for Change", since those proposals specifically addressed the need to retain sufficient defences to be able still to respond flexibly and effectively to new and unexpected threats.

Mr. Cran: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the international milieu is dangerous, that it has been in the past, and that it will be again in the future? Does he further agree that those who advocate making maximum use of the so-called peace dividend should sit back and consider what the ramifications may be in the future? It may well be that we would not be able to react in the same way as we have to the gangsterism in Kuwait. Therefore, will my right hon. Friend give a commitment to the House that he will fully consult service chiefs on any cuts that may be considered in the future?

Mr. King: I can certainly give that assurance to my hon. Friend. On 25 July I said:

"We shall therefore continue to need a robust defence capability as our insurance against the unexpected."

I also said that the abilities and professionalism of our armed forces

"are not something that can be lightly discarded and then easily recalled when they may suddenly be needed."—[*Official Report*, 25 July 1990; Vol. 177, c. 470-72.]

Anyone who has watched the skill and professionalism of the deployment to the Gulf of the seventh armoured brigade, of the Tornado and Jaguar squadrons and of the Royal Navy understands exactly what that means, and that is why this party and this Government will stand for the defence of this country, and make adequate provision to ensure that if those forces are needed they will go there properly trained and properly equipped.

Dr. Reid: When does the Secretary of State expect to be able to give us more information than hitherto on the implications of "Options for Change" for NATO strategy? What changes will there be to forward defence as a result of "Options for Change"?

Mr. King: As was made clear at the NATO summit, there will clearly be scope for change in forward defence, with greater mobility and greater flexibility likely to feature as the emerging strategy, which is under discussion at the moment within NATO, following the London summit. I shall not repeat it all to the House, but I set out the pillars on which the NATO summit agreed that the review should continue. Certainly there will be scope for change. Discussions are taking place now to see how we can adapt most effectively to the new situation while ensuring that we maintain strong and credible defence in Europe.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the lessons of the Gulf that comes through clearly is the need for Royal Air Force pilots to fly low and fast and to be able to do so in operational conditions at short notice? Is not that one lesson that we should never forget?

Mr. King: My hon. Friend is accurately aware of the needs of the Royal Air Force. What he says is true. Part of the capability of the Tornado GR1 fleet very much depends on its ability to fly low and to survive. It is essential, therefore, that if the fleet is asked to do that, it should have had adequate opportunity to train for it.

Mr. O'Neill: When will the Secretary of State produce the detailed figures that were so evidently missing from his

25 July statement? Does he agree that it is not good enough just to sit back after making that statement—that he has to anticipate what is likely to happen now that the conventional forces in Europe agreement is almost signed? Will there be a second statement before too long, which will include the figures and state what further defence cuts the Government think should be made further into the 1990s?

Mr. King: That is a bit rich. I remember that the hon. Gentleman told me at the time that he was surprised by how detailed my 25 July statement was. The work is going ahead. I shall give the hon. Gentleman a copy of what I said at the time. It spells out precisely what we regard as the Royal Navy's requirements in terms of numbers of frigates, the Trident submarine fleet, minehunters and hunter-killer submarines. I went right through the list. I shall not weary the House with in now; it is all in *Hansard*. That work is goind ahead without, I am pleased to say, amendment, even in the light of the new developments that we face. We put forward those proposals to ensure that the Royal Navy's requirements are met. That has to be compared with the Opposition's stance. Twice at their party conferences they have approved expenditure plans that would make quite impossible the present support that we are giving to the allied effort in the Gulf.

The Gulf

8. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the pay and conditions of United Kingdom service men and women in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has already announced measures that will ensure that no service men or women will suffer a net reduction in pay and allowances as a result of service in the Gulf. Many of our service personnel in the Gulf are living in difficult conditions, but I am satisfied that the services are doing their very best to ensure that the general welfare and morale of our troops is maintained.

Mr. Watson: It is noticeable that the goalposts have shifted since 18 October. On that date the Minister said in a written reply that no one serving with the forces in the Gulf would lose out financially as a result of that service. We hear now that that relates only to pay and conditions. Are not service personnel in the Gulf obliged to pay an additional loading on life assurance premiums, most of which they are obliged to meet out of their own resources? Should not it be the case that no person serving with the forces in the Gulf is out of pocket financially? Should not the Minister deal urgently with the matter?

Mr. Hamilton: Service men are faced with additional life assurance premiums, but the vast bulk of the money is now being found by the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend confirm the high morale among both service men and British civilians employed on defence contracts in the Gulf? Will he further confirm, as he will have understood from his visit to the Gulf, that military personnel there say that, if it came to a war, they would rather be attacked by chemical weapons than by conventional weapons because of the highly efficient state of our nuclear, biological and chemical equipment that provides protection against chemical warfare? I have learnt that that equipment is the envy of our American allies.

Mr. Hamilton: I must confess that I did not find any service men who made a comparison between wanting to be attacked by chemical weapons or by conventional weapons. I suspect that if it came to a war, they would be in danger of being attacked by both sorts of weapons. The morale of the service men whom I met was very high. I found that they had great confidence in the NBC clothing and equipment that we provided. They regard it as being some of the best equipment available in the world to any soldiers. As for civilian employees, I was told by the Saudis that they were encouraged by the support that they were getting, particularly from the employees of British Aerospace.

Mr. Douglas: Does the Minister accept that I shall try to put this issue very gently to him? I accept that no service men will be worse off, in net terms, but yesterday I had a telephone call from the wife of a naval service man. She said that her husband and others are severely stretched financially, to the extent that some of the naval personnel are giving blood for money in order to be able to telephone home from the Gulf. That is disturbing and I trust that the Minister will investigate all the circumstances that are imposing onerous burdens on our service men in the Gulf.

Mr. Hamilton: Our initial concern was that people would be worse off as a result of moving from Germany to the Gulf and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has ensured that that will not happen. On general rates of pay in the Navy, on the whole the Armed Forces Pay Review Body addresses that problem and ensures that rates in all three services are comparable with civilian rates of pay. That is a much bigger issue and is addressed every year by the AFPRB.

Mr. Conway: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the field conditions applying to the service men in the Gulf would apply in any case if they remained in Germany and were out on exercise? That being so, will my hon. Friend assure the House that their families will not suffer the loss of the local overseas allowance, which may otherwise be the case?

Mr. Hamilton: The local overseas allowance payable in Germany reflects the higher cost of living that people have to bear as a result of being in Germany. That higher cost of living does not apply in Saudi Arabia. It is, therefore, sensible to phase out the local overseas allowance only when people move to an area where the costs are not so high. Having said that, many of those who have moved were previously paying accommodation and food charges which, under field conditions, they do not have to pay. That is why we have taken the overall question to assess whether, in terms of net take-home pay, they are worse off than they were before and we are ensuring that they will not be.

Strategic Arms Reductions

9. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the implications for his Department's forward planning of the forthcoming completion of the START process.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We welcome the prospect of a START treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, reductions in United States and Soviet strategic arsenals would have to go much further before we could consider how best to contribute to the strategic arms control process. Ministers have made clear in the context of the "Options for Change" review that we shall require a four-boat Trident force.

Mr. Grant: Does the Minister agree that in view of the economic recession, which was confirmed today by the Confederation of British Industry's report, we cannot afford to spend the £600 million plus that we are spending in the Gulf or the billions that we shall be spending on nuclear weapons, particularly at a time when the United States and the Soviet Union are reducing theirs? Why have the Government not offered to include Trident and Polaris in START? Why are we the only country that is not prepared to make any concessions in that way?

Mr. Hamilton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, we regard the Trident missile system as the minimum deterrent that we can have if we wish to remain in the nuclear deterrent business. We have made it clear as a Government that we feel that nuclear deterrence is an essential part of the defence of the islands of this country. Muddle and confusion exist among the Opposition. Labour is currently committed to negotiating away our independent nuclear deterrent at a time when, regrettably, in other parts of the world such as Iraq nuclear capability is being produced. Labour will therefore have to face the accusation in this country that Labour is negotiating away our nuclear deterrent while Saddam Hussein is developing his.

Mr. Latham: With regard to START, will my hon. Friend confirm that it will be possible for the United States and the Soviet Union to destroy literally thousands of their missiles without making any difference to the nuclear balance?

Mr. Hamilton: That is right. That is basically the understanding of the START agreement as far as it has got. There will be a radical reduction in arsenals on both sides. If the Labour party insists on negotiating away our deterrent in return for some balancing reductions by the Soviet Union, it will still leave the Soviet Union with a vast arsenal of nuclear weapons. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask hon. Members to desist from holding private conversations. It is difficult to hear.

Nuclear Radiation

10. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reassessment he has made of the effect of nuclear radiation on service men and women, ex-service men and women and others employed or fulfilling a contract with his Department.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Kenneth Carlisle): The Ministry of Defence, along with the rest of the United Kingdom nuclear industry, relies on the estimates of radiation risk derived by the International Commission for Radiological Protection, which is in the process of completing a re-evaluation of levels of risk.

Mr. Clay: In February, I drew the Ministry's attention to the fifth report of the United States Research Council on the biological effects of ionising radiation. I do not know whether the Ministry has bothered to study it, but, as a result of that report, the United States is compensating its nuclear test veterans for two more forms of cancer, in addition to the 11 types for which it has been compensating veterans for some time. When will British nuclear test veterans receive the same justice as their American counterparts, or does the Minister intend to keep his head buried in the sand until all those concerned are dead?

Mr. Carlisle: No, we take these matters very seriously and are happy to consider any new evidence that comes to the fore. We have great confidence in the safety of our working practices.

Mr. Rowe: Does my hon. Friend accept that I and my colleagues from the Medway towns are most grateful for the sympathetic way in which he has dealt so far with our request for an inquiry into the circumstances of people who worked on nuclear submarines at the dockyard in Chatham and have died of cancer? May I take it from his first answer that when the report is to hand he may be able to tell us whether there is to be an inquiry, as we should like?

Mr. Carlisle: Obviously, we have much sympathy for the people affected in my hon. Friend's area, and we hope that Mr. Molinari will make a speedy recovery. We shall consider all the evidence. We believe that our working practices are safe. It may be of interest to my hon. Friend to know that we shall be considering a no-fault compensation scheme.

Mr. Boyes: We welcome the new Minister to his post, but I warn him that during his short period of office this matter will not go away. He is clearly not accepting or facing his responsibilities to nuclear test veterans who have suffered over the years without compensation. As my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) said, many loyal and brave soldiers who were present during nuclear tests have already died. Why can the Australians and the United States pay compensation while the British Government spend their cash on surveys deliberately and continually to delay matters? It is a disgrace and an absolute outrage, but above all it is a betrayal of a special group of British citizens.

Mr. Carlisle: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his initial kind words, but he has his facts wrong. Where people can show reasonable doubt, we pay; so far, six people have received war pensions.

Conventional Forces

11. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the defence implications for the United Kingdom of the forthcoming completion of the CFE talks.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The consequent improvements to European security and stability will be of substantial benefit to the United Kingdom.

Ms. Ruddock: May I press the Minister to be more specific about Britain's contribution to the CFE treaty? Further to the various answers given today, will he make it clear whether the cuts that he proposes will be greater or

less than those outlined in "Options for Change"? Specifically, will stage 2 include dual-capable aircraft, which the Government resisted at stage 1 but some of which will be cut in "Options for Change"?

Mr. Hamilton: We obviously took into account the agreements in CFE when we worked out "Options for Change". As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made clear, many of the reductions that we anticipate have to be tied in with reductions under the CFE agreement. That agreement has not yet been signed, although we hope that it will be before the end of the year.

Mr. Wilkinson: Will my hon. Friend bear in mind that in any agreement that may be signed it is important to ensure that if the numbers in the front line of key equipments are reduced their capability must be enhanced? Above all, will my hon. Friend ensure that the United Kingdom modernises its helicopter force, as the helicopter is a versatile instrument which can be rapidly deployed to the Gulf or elsewhere and is important for the future?

Mr. Hamilton: I very much take my hon. Friend's point on that. There is, of course, no evidence that the Soviet Union is reducing its technological capability in this area, and so long as it continues to bring in improvements to its defence equipment, it is essential that we do the same.

The Gulf

12. **Mr. Benn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated cost of British forces in the Gulf to the end of the financial year.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes).

Mr. Benn: Has the attention of the Secretary of State been drawn to the estimates emerging from Washington of 30,000 service casualties within the first 12 days of conflict? Has his attention also been drawn to the statement by Jean-Pierre Chevènement, his French opposite number, that in event of war 100,000 people might be killed? Is the Secretary of State also aware that if the American and British Governments reject the rising world demand for a peaceful settlement—which was echoed by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath)—and decide to launch a pre-emptive strike, the responsibility for those deaths will rest on the American and British Governments who launched the attack?

Mr. King: The right hon. Gentleman was sitting here when I answered the previous question. He knows perfectly well what I said then, which was that we want to see this matter settled by peaceful means. No sane person wishes to see conflict and casualties if they can be avoided, but the responsibility that has been recognised by an overwhelming majority in this House—and which was recognised by the right hon. Gentleman's right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition—was that it was right to send forces to the Gulf and that it is right to give the clearest possible warning to Saddam Hussein that, one way or another, he will lose. That message, clearly delivered, without prevarication and without uncertainty, is the best possible hope for a peaceful resolution of this matter.

Sir Jim Spicer: In reply to an earlier question, my right hon. Friend said that he expected and hoped that if it came to an overrun on defence costs, the Treasury would give sympathetic consideration to such an overrun. Can he assure us that our service chiefs will not be inhibited in spending whatever is necessary to ensure that our troops in the Gulf have the best equipment available to them?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me the opportunity to reply in this respect on behalf of the Government. The Government are clear that we shall make whatever contribution is appropriate to freedom and justice in the Gulf, and that we shall make our contribution to the ending of the aggression. We see that as the overwhelming priority. We shall also ensure that our armed forces who go there have the equipment that they need to do the job that we ask of them.

Cambodia

13. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any assistance, including training, has been provided to Cambodians engaged in resistance to the Phnom Penh regime; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As the hon. Gentleman will know better than I, there was a long debate in the House on Friday on Cambodia, during which these matters were fully aired. There is nothing that I can add to what the Government said then, other than to repeat that persistent claims from the hon. Gentleman and from other Opposition Members that we have supported the Khmer Rouge are completely unfounded. We never have provided, and will never provide, any form of assistance, military or otherwise, to that organisation.

Mr. Mullin: Why not tell the truth——

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is okay.

Mr. Mullin: —that between July 1985 and October 1989 British service men based in Thailand were training Khmer terrorists?

Mr. Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman well knows that we do not comment on matters of that kind.

Mr. Bowis: Will my hon. Friend give every assistance, including training, to those in Cambodia who are seeking to remove the mines which were laid by all sides in that terrible conflict and which are causing such devastation to the people of that sad country?

Mr. Hamilton: As I have said already, we do not comment on training given to Governments. However, we have already made it clear that we have given no assistance whatever to the Khmer Rouge and that that organisation has had no support whatever from us.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and

others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Maclennan: Will the Prime Minister clarify the Government's policy on Europe? The deputy Prime Minister has said that it offers recombination of sovereignty for more effective partnership. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that the ecu could develop into a single currency. Was the Prime Minister surprised that in Rome, by 11 votes to one, her European colleagues preferred her Cabinet colleagues' expression of belief to that which she expressed?

The Prime Minister: We shall co-operate fully, as a nation state with its own Parliament, with the other 11 countries in the European Community. It is not our policy to have a single currency imposed upon us and I believe that that meets the views of Parliament and people. We have made different proposals for a further stage which would involve a hard ecu, and the hon. Gentleman is very much aware of those proposals.

Mr. Leigh: I wonder whether our European partners would profit from a reading of British history. If they read G.M. Trevelyan's work "England under the Stuarts", would not they see that Britain's principal contribution to European civilisation has been parliamentary democracy, just as France's was the revolution and Germany's the reformation——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us come to the question.

Mr. Leigh: Will my right hon. Friend rest assured that she has the full support of Conservative Members in fighting for Britain's traditional sovereignty in the control of our economy?

The Prime Minister: I believe that the traditions and example of this House have gone the world over with admiration. I believe that they have not only served this country well, but they have served Europe well as this House kept sitting when the lights of Europe went out.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister take this opportunity strongly to condemn those Conservatives who have publicly insulted her deputy Prime Minister by calling him "irresponsible and unconstitutional" simply for expressing his views on the future of the European Community?

The Prime Minister: Conservative Members do not need a licence from me to express their views—unlike a previous Labour Prime Minister who said that Labour Back Benchers and Front Benchers did need a licence from him.

Mr. Kinnock: That certainly does not answer the question. On an issue as vital as this, does not the Prime Minister owe it to her deputy Prime Minister to state unequivocally that those who have personally and viciously attacked him do not have her support? Does she not owe it to her deputy to say that he enjoys her full confidence in all matters?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. and learned Friend the deputy Prime Minister is too big a man to need a little man like the right hon. Gentleman to stand up for him.

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that other European countries hold equally strong views about the protection of their particular national identities but are more inhibited than my right hon. Friend in expressing them?

The Prime Minister: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I think that most people feel rather strongly about their national identities. When it comes to getting down to detailed discussion, we shall see those differences emerge. They do not emerge when we are talking about generalities.

Q2. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Grant: Does the Prime Minister agree that there is unacceptable discrimination in the prison system? How is it that, just a few weeks after being sentenced for his part in the Guinness affair, Mr. Gerald Ronson was allowed out of prison in a chauffeur-driven car to consult his private doctor and to have a meal with his family and business associates? Does not that fly in the face of the sentiments expressed by her right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, who said at the Tory party conference that there would be stiffer sentencing and that

"12 months means 12 months."?

Can the Prime Minister explain the contradiction between her Government's theories and their practice?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Gentleman has any specific complaints to make about a specific case he should make them to the proper authorities.

Sir William Clark: Has my right hon. Friend read the article in today's *Daily Mail* about the Nissan car plant in Sunderland which is not only increasing its car exports to Germany but expects to export cars to Japan next year? Is that not proof positive that when there is close co-operation between workers and management Britain can compete with anyone in the world?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The record of that car plant is quite outstanding. It is a combination of British workmanship and Japanese management which is producing excellent cars and also exporting them to increase our exports to other countries.

Mr. Home Robertson: In view of the Prime Minister's frequent pronouncements about national sovereignty, will she reflect that Britain is not a nation but a union of nations, just as the European Community is a community of nations? Is she aware that most of us want to see both the union and the Community flourish, and cannot understand why the cuckoo in Downing street is doing so much to destroy both that Community and that union?

The Prime Minister: Of course we wish to see both the United Kingdom and the European Community flourish, and the Government and the country have done a great deal to ensure that the Community does flourish. For example, in spite of having achieved a very good financial deal from the Community—much better than the one that Labour left us with—we still pay £2·2 billion to the Community, which is rather more than the £1·7 billion that we have left to pay to the third world. That is an excellent record of gift to the European Community.

Q3. **Dr. Blackburn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Dr. Blackburn: Does my right hon. Friend agree with the economic and industrial equation that an order equals production equals employment equals profits equals further investment? Will she emphasise to the nation from the Dispatch Box the importance of negotiations with management and trade unions so that they do not price themselves out of the initial ingredient which is the order in sterling?

The Prime Minister: I agree that it is absolutely vital that manufacturers keep their costs down and do not price themselves out of their market. Productivity is the key, and that is not only a question of wages but of keeping up investment and very good management and very few restrictive practices. I think that we are reaching that position in British industry now, and that augurs well for the future.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Why does not the United Nations consider sending into Kuwait an unarmed contingent of people to set up collection points for the evacuation of those people in hiding? Is it not time that the western world and those who support this initiative ensured that we rather than Saddam Hussein were seen to be taking the initiative?

The Prime Minister: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has read the extensive resolution passed in the United Nations yesterday which deals not only with compensation for damage in Kuwait but with the question of embassies and hostages there. It utterly condemns the hostage taking in Kuwait and calls upon Saddam Hussein to release those people immediately.. It also requests that the Secretary General use his good offices to that end.

Q4. **Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Hayes: Is my right hon. Friend at all surprised that the Italians are pressing for speedy monetary union when they have a deficit of £80 billion, when their national debt is almost equal to their gross domestic product and they want to be bailed out by the Bundesbank? Will my right hon. Friend therefore express the view of the majority of hon. Members in this House and the majority of people in this country—that she should back the market but for heaven's sake stick with the pound?

The Prime Minister: It is important that we all fulfil our present commitments before taking on new ones. Clearly, some countries in the Common Market would like to hand over some of their financial affairs to a European central bank and divest their Parliaments of much of their powers. That is not our view. We do not wish to hand over further powers from this Parliament to other bodies. As my hon. Friend has said, it is also important that we complete the single market. In that respect, this country has an excellent record. There are only 15 directives that we have not implemented. Italy has not yet implemented 62 of the directives.

Q5. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Clelland: In the course of her busy day, will the Prime Minister give some consideration to the by-elections pending in Bradford, Bootle and Paisley? Can she confirm that her electoral strategy will be to blame her candidates?

The Prime Minister: Our electoral strategy will be to point out that after 11 years of Conservative government this country has the highest standard of living ever known, that since we were returned at the last election, taxation has been reduced to 25p in the pound at the standard rate and 40p in the pound at the top rate, that the earnings rule for pensioners has been abolished, that we have the most prosperous social services and health service that this country has ever known, and that it is worth sending back Conservative Members of Parliament from those by-elections.

Q6. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Jessel: As next month Her Majesty the Queen is to visit Kneller Hall at Twickenham to mark the completion of the restoration of the Royal Military school of music, which trains the finest Army bands which are the envy of the entire world, is my right hon. Friend aware that my constituents are proud of the Queen, of Kneller Hall and of the Prime Minister and hope that the Prime Minister will make certain that the head of the Queen remains permanently on the coinage of the realm?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate my hon. Friend on the success of his fight to keep Kneller Hall in his constituency. With regard to that and the rest of his question, which was phrased so ingeniously—and so say all of us on this side of the House.

European Council (Rome)

3.30 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall make a statement on the European Council held in Rome on 27 and 28 October, which I attended with my right hon. Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary. The conclusions of the Council have been placed in the Library of the House.

The Council had to deal in the first place with some urgent items of current business: namely, the Community's failure to agree a negotiating position on agriculture for the Uruguay round of trade negotiations; the situation in the Gulf, and the position of the foreign nationals held hostage in Iraq and Kuwait; and the problems which have arisen in Hungary.

Looking further ahead, the Council also dealt with the preparations for the two intergovernmental conferences, on economic and monetary union and also on institutional reform, which are due to begin in December. I shall report on the Council's business in that order.

The Uruguay round of trade negotiations is due to be completed before the end of this year. The outcome will decide whether world trade becomes steadily more open, or we repeat the mistakes of the past and relapse into protectionism.

The most difficult item is agriculture. All the major participants in the Uruguay round committed themselves to table negotiating offers by 15 October. All except the European Community have done so.

The Community has been discussing this problem since the round began in the autumn of 1986. It gave an unequivocal commitment in April last year to make substantial and progressive reductions in agricultural support. That commitment was repeated at the Houston economic summit in July this year.

The Commission has put forward a proposal for 30 per cent. reductions, backdated to 1986. So what has already been done by way of reduction of support since then will be set against that 30 per cent.

There have been six sessions of European Community Ministers to discuss the proposal. The most recent, lasting some 16 hours, was on Friday last week. But no agreement has been reached. The main opposition has come from France and Germany.

The Community's failure has harmed its reputation. Negotiations between the leading groups of countries cannot start until the Community's proposals have been tabled.

The European Council requested Ministers to meet again and put the Commission in a position to table a negotiating offer. The Netherlands Prime Minister suggested that the basis for this should be the position reached when Agriculture Ministers suspended their work early on 27 October. But President Mitterrand made it clear that France would continue to vote against those proposals.

It remains for Agriculture and Trade Ministers to try yet again to reach a conclusion. If we fail, it will give a signal to the world that the Community is protectionist.

Next, with regard to the Gulf and the position of the hostages, the European Council agreed a firm statement calling for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and confirming Europe's absolute commitment to full implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions. The statement makes it clear that we shall consider further steps if Iraq does not comply. The message is that Saddam Hussein must not gain anything from his aggression.

The Council also strongly condemned Iraq for holding foreign nationals as hostages and for using them in an unscrupulous way. This is totally unacceptable. Moreover, Iraq is negotiating over the hostages with the purpose of trying to divide the international community. After considerable discussion, the Council affirmed our determination not to send representatives of our Governments in any capacity to negotiate with Iraq for the release of hostages, and to discourage others from doing so. I believe that the unity of the Twelve, and our determination not to allow Saddam Hussein to divide us on the question of hostages, will send a very powerful signal to Iraq.

The third point is assistance to Hungary. In the course of the Council, member states received appeals from the Government of Hungary for help in dealing with the serious problems that have arisen as a result of the reduction in the supply of oil from the Soviet Union. The consequent price rises have given rise to unrest. The Council issued a strong statement of support for Hungary in pursuing its path towards democratic and economic reforms and the rule of law. The Council also agreed, at the United Kingdom's suggestion, to bring forward and disburse rapidly the second instalment of the $1 billion Community loan for Hungary which we agreed last year. This will be of direct practical assistance.

Those were the urgent matters on which the Council had to act. Looking further to the future, we also discussed the preparations for the two intergovernmental conferences, or IGCs, which will start their work on 14 December.

For the conference on political union, the Council had before it a report by Foreign Ministers listing a wide range of possible institutional changes which the intergovernmental conference might consider. Heads of Government called for further work to be done on these proposals between now and December.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I argued that it would be wrong to prejudge the conclusions of the intergovernmental conference. We were on strong ground, since the Community's original decision to call the conference specified that it should set its own agenda. Nevertheless, others wished to give specific directions to the IGC. We therefore reserved the United Kingdom's position on, for example, extension of the Community's powers into new areas, greater powers for the European Parliament in the legislative sphere, defining European citizenship, and a common foreign and security policy. All these are issues for discussion at the intergovernmental conference itself rather than to be settled in advance.

On economic and monetary union, I stressed that we would be ready to move beyond the present position to the creation of a European monetary fund and a common Community currency which we have called a hard ecu. But we would not be prepared to agree to set a date for starting the next stage of economic and monetary union before there is any agreement on what that stage should comprise. And I again emphasised that we would not be prepared to have a single currency imposed upon us, nor to surrender the use of the pound sterling as our currency.

The hard ecu would be a parallel currency, not a single currency. If, as time went by, people and Governments chose to use it widely, it could evolve towards a single

currency. But our national currency would remain unless a decision to abolish it were freely taken by future generations of Parliament and people. A single currency is not the policy of this Government.

I should like to offer four comments in conclusion.

First, the Community finds it more difficult to take the urgent, detailed decisions than to discuss longer-term concepts. Moreover, no one should underestimate the extent to which national interests prevail among those who most proclaim their Community credentials.

Secondly, Britain intends to be part of the further political, economic and monetary development of the European Community. That is what the great majority of member states want, too. When we come to negotiate on particular points, rather than concepts or generalities, I believe that solutions will be found which will enable the Community to go forward as Twelve. That will be our objective.

Thirdly, we are fighting in Europe for British farmers, for British consumers, for a new world trade agreement, for help to the newly democratic countries of eastern Europe, and for the interests and concerns of our people.

Fourthly, while we fully accept our commitments under the treaties and wish to co-operate more closely with other countries in the European Community, we are determined to retain our fundamental ability to govern ourselves through Parliament. I believe that that is the wish of this House, and we on this side will do our best to see that it is fulfilled.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I thank the right hon. Lady for that statement and welcome the summit statements on, first, the complete solidarity of the Governments of the Community countries against Saddam Hussein and, secondly, economic support for the Soviet Union, Hungary and other central and east European countries.

On the central matter discussed in Rome, is it not clear that last weekend the Prime Minister managed to unite the rest of the European Community against her, to divide her own party and, more importantly, further to weaken the influence that Britain needs in order properly to uphold our national interests in the European Community? Can the Prime Minister tell us why she was apparently taken by surprise by the proposals put by others in Rome? Does she not recall that in 1985 she whipped and guillotined the Single European Act through the House, in June 1989 at Madrid she formally agreed with other heads of Government to be determined to achieve the progressive realisation of economic and monetary union, and at the Dublin summit this year she agreed to intensify the process of European union in economic, monetary and political terms? Those were all steps which raised comment at the time. Did she not know what she was doing on those occasions, or was she living in cloud cuckoo land?

The Prime Minister says that the Government would not surrender the use of the pound sterling as our currency. Perhaps she will therefore tell us how she regards the advice of her fellow Conservative, Commissioner Brittan, when he said:

"You don't have to lose the pound sterling under the single currency plan. You can perfectly well have a note or a coin which states its value in pounds . . . and its fixed equivalent in ecu . . . It's been agreed that that would be possible."

On the connection between currency and sovereignty, can the Prime Minister, who abandoned her own Madrid conditions before she put sterling into the exchange rate mechanism, tell the House what will be her conditions now for putting sterling into the narrow banding of the ERM? The Prime Minister could come to a debate and explain all these things from the Dispatch Box if she was willing to do so.

When the Prime Minister conducts herself as she did in Rome this weekend, is it any wonder that she cannot even get agreement for the necessary reduction in farm subsidies? *[Interruption.]* She has no influence at all. When she conducts herself as she does, is it any wonder that some members of her own party believe that she has undermined the Chancellor's efforts to build support for the so-called hard ecu? Does she not realise that such an attitude makes the Heads of other Governments even less susceptible to listening to the sensible arguments that can be deployed in favour of sovereignty in the Community? Does she accept that it is reasonable to put the view that the determinants of the pace and direction of economic and monetary union should be the realities of economic performance and the degree of economic convergence, not arbitrary diary dates?

Does the Prime Minister not understand that, with her method of conducting affairs, she is throwing away that sound argument and losing both potential allies and necessary influence? Does she not appreciate that, even now, her tantrum tactics will not stop the process of change or change anything in the process of change? All they do is strand Britain in a European second division without the influence over change that we need, the financial and industrial opportunities that we need and the sovereignty that we need.

The Prime Minister: It is our purpose to retain the power and influence of this House, rather than denude it of many of its powers. I wonder what the right hon. Gentleman's policy is, in view of some of the things that he said. Would he have agreed to a commitment to extend the Community's powers to other supplementary sectors of economic integration without having any definition of what they are? One would have thought, from what he said, that he would. The Commission wants to extend its powers and competence into health matters, but we said no, we would not agree to that.

From what the right hon. Gentleman said, it sounded as though he would agree, for the sake of agreeing, and for being Little Sir Echo, and saying, "Me, too." Would the right hon. Gentleman have agreed to extending qualified majority voting within the Council, to delegating implementing powers to the Commission, to a common security policy, all without any attempt to define or limit them? The answer is yes. He does not have a clue about the definition of some of the things that he is saying, let alone securing a definition of others.

We have agreed to wait to give support to the Soviet Union until the IMF report is received. That is coming at the next summit.

It was not we who stopped unity on agriculture—it was France and Germany. Had the right hon. Gentleman even read the statement, which he had before I came in, he would have noticed—and had he even listened to the statement when I made it, he would have known—that it was Francois Mitterand who said that he would not agree to the Commission's proposal. We are not to blame in any way for not reaching agreement on agriculture. But for the insistence of my right hon. Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and me, the chair would not even have had the matter discussed, so urgent was it that

[The Prime Minister]

it should be. I told the chair over a week ago that, if the farm Ministers did not reach agreement, we must discuss the matter, and I wrote to him. He did everything that he could to see that a matter so urgent was not discussed, but we succeeded in getting it discussed.

As to the right hon. Gentleman's strictures about economic and monetary union, that phrase was agreed by the European Community before we went in. It is one of those things that we inherited. It was agreed in 1972. When it came to defining it—*[Interruption.]* We went into the Community in 1973, and I had understood that most Labour Members were in favour of that. I wonder today if they are changing their stance for the sake of debating points.

Leon Brittan is a loyal member of the Commission. Yes, the Commission wants to increase its powers. Yes, it is a non-elected body and I do not want the Commission to increase its powers at the expense of the House, so of course we differ. The President of the Commission, Mr. Delors, said at a press conference the other day that he wanted the European Parliament to be the democratic body of the Community, he wanted the Commission to be the Executive and he wanted the Council of Ministers to be the Senate. No. No. No.

Perhaps the Labour party would give all those things up easily. Perhaps it would agree to a single currency and abolition of the pound sterling. Perhaps, being totally incompetent in monetary matters, it would be only too delighted to hand over full responsibility to a central bank, as it did to the IMF. The fact is that the Labour party has no competence on money and no competence on the economy—so, yes, the right hon. Gentleman would be glad to hand it all over. What is the point of trying to get elected to Parliament only to hand over sterling and the powers of this House to Europe? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will understand his brief a little better next time.

Mr. Nicholas Ridley (Cirencester and Tewkesbury) *rose——*

Hon. Members: Speak for Germany.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Ridley.

Mr. Ridley: May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on standing up for the interests of the people of this country and ask her whether she thinks that the eleven are not now both isolated and intransigent in relation to agricultural policy and the GATT round? Does she think that they are deliberately working for the failure of the GATT round in order to achieve their objectives of a fortress Europe? If they are, does she agree that that is not a destination for which we want to board the train?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend is right. The European community is the only group of nations which, after years of studying the problem, has not tabled an initial negotiating position on agriculture in the GATT round. The United States, Japan, the Cairns group, Canada and Switzerland have tabled theirs, but from the Community—nothing. It really is a disgrace that we have not even been able to agree on a negotiating position, let alone start to negotiate with all the other groups by between now and the end of the year.

Yes, I agree with my right hon. Friend that several countries in the Community are highly protectionist. The common agricultural policy is a protectionist policy, but we will try to reduce the protectionism, first because it would help the third world, secondly because it would mean that we would not have export subsidies—and thereby take business away from other countries—and thirdly because in this country we believe in open trade. This was the most serious matter to be discussed at the European Council, and I most earnestly hope that this time Agriculture Ministers—there will be no difficulty with us, but I mean the French and German Agriculture Ministers—will accept the proposals of the Commission for the negotiating position in the Uruguay round.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): Does the Prime Minister realise how welcome it was to hear in her statement that she has at last been forced to admit that the hard ecu proposal can be a transitional mechanism to a single currency? Will she congratulate the Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary on levering her forward towards reality on that matter? Does she realise that that is good news for Britain?

Does the right hon. Lady realise how much of her performance at Rome was bad news for Britain? Does she realise that in a single meeting she has isolated this country in Europe, weakened our voice in Europe, divided the Government and betrayed this country's long-term best interests? Does she realise that if she faced a Labour party that was not equally divided, muddled and confused on this matter, she would today face a motion of no confidence in her failure at this historic moment? Does she realise—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ashdown: Does the Prime Minister realise that for as long as she hangs on to power, so long will Britain be held back from its future, and that she no longer speaks for Britain—she speaks for the past?

The Prime Minister: Oh dear, it seems that there must be quite a lot of late parrots in cloud cuckoo land, judging by the right hon. Gentleman coming out with that stuff. Of course, if there is a parallel currency and people choose to make more and more use of it, it could evolve into a single currency, but that could not be done without a decision coming back to this House and, I believe, to the people of this country. I take it that the right hon. Gentleman's policy is to abolish the pound sterling, the greatest expression of sovereignty. In any event, it would be totally and utterly wrong to agree to that now. That matter is one to be decided by future generations and future Parliaments. Parliament is supreme, not the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Liberal Democrats.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): In the light of last weekend's discussions, will my right hon. Friend reconsider in the near future the proposal to separate the Bank of England and make it independent so that it may serve as a buttress in this country's battle against inflation?

The Prime Minister: Independent banks are mostly either answerable to a parliament—as in the United States, where Mr. Greenspan is answerable to Congress—or have a number of politicians on their boards. I do not believe that the structure that this country currently has would be

served well by the proposal that my hon. Friend mentions. It is far better to increase democracy than to reduce it, which I believe would be wrong at this time.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): What is the point of the Prime Minister trying to wrap herself in the union jack for electoral purposes—[HON. MEMBERS: "Better that than the red flag."]—and then coming to the Dispatch Box to tell the House that she is prepared to sell the working people of this country down the river by opening Britain up completely to free trade without any protectionism whatsoever, destroy the multi-fibre arrangement, and give the emerging democracies in Europe £1,000 million in loans to produce goods on wages of £80 a month, so that textiles in particular will flood into this country, which would destroy hundreds of thousands of British jobs? Is that what the right hon. Lady was elected to do? Is she really protecting this country, or is she only pretending to do so?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman probably heard the comment made by some of my right hon. and hon. Friends, "Better to wrap yourself in the union jack than the red flag." The hon. Gentleman's remarks amount to a totally protectionist policy, which would lead to retaliation against us, reduce the capability of our export industries and therefore our standard of living, and make our industries inefficient and therefore cost the housewife a great deal more.

I note also that the hon. Gentleman complains about goods entering Britain from Third world countries where wages are far lower. I have heard the hon. Gentleman say several times in the House that Third world countries need help. They need trade as much as they need aid.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the mark of a single currency is not only that all other currencies must be extinguished but that the capacity of other institutions to issue currencies must also be extinguished? In the case of the United Kingdom, that would involve Parliament binding its successors in a way that it has hitherto regarded as unconstitutional.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. This Government have no intention of abolishing the pound sterling. If the hard ecu were to evolve and much greater use were to be made of it, that would be a decision for future Parliaments and generations. That decision could be taken only once.

It should not be taken in the current atmosphere, but only after the greatest possible consideration. I believe that both Parliament and sterling have served this country and the rest of the world very well. We are more stable and influential with sterling, and it is an expression of our sovereignty. This Government believe in the pound sterling.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Does the Prime Minister recall that Britain was in a minority of one in the Europe of 1940? Does she further agree that, 50 years on, the basic issue is still the same—undiluted parliamentary democracy and not imposed diktat?

The Prime Minister: I totally agree with the right hon. Gentleman. There are some things for which there was majority voting within the Community when we went in, and we accepted that, and for the specific objective of achieving the Single European Act only, there have been more matters. Now there is an attempt to get far more things passed by majority voting. That means that we would have more laws imposed upon us, even if the House was flatly against them. We expect our people to obey the law, mainly because it has gone through all the legislative processes in this House, and we should be very slow to add to any majority competence on the part of the Community.

Mr. Steve Norris (Epping Forest): Does my right hon. Friend accept that there is wide support in my constituency for the stance that she took at the intergovernmental conference on economic and monetary union? Does she further accept that that support is based not on the niceties of international economics but on the clear and firm belief that those who dictate fiscal policy to the United Kingdom should be fully and directly answerable to its electors?

The Prime Minister: I totally agree with my hon. Friend. The Delors report is proposing that those people should be answerable to no one. It is very ironic indeed that, at a time when eastern Europe is striving for greater democracy, the Commission should be striving to extinguish democracy and to put more and more power into its own hands, or into the hands of non-elected bodies.

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): Is it not true that the British Government are far more reluctant than Germany, France or Italy to give economic assistance to the Soviet Union? Is the Prime Minister not aware of the political risks within the Soviet Union if we do not respond generously at this time, and of the long-term risks for British industry if other countries step in and establish aid and trading relationships with the Soviet Union before we do?

The Prime Minister: The German banks—the Deutsche bank—made a considerable loan to the Soviet Union of some DM6 billion. That had all gone within a matter of weeks. It was guaranteed by the Government of the Federal Republic, and it was all gone in a matter of weeks —used to repay debts which the Soviet Union owed to German manufacturers. That has done nothing to help the economic situation in the Soviet Union.

When we got the request for help, we suggested that we should not consider general loans which would not help a country that was already in difficulties, but should see if we could give specific help in certain spheres—for example food processing, transport and oil exploration. We are studying that, and the International Monetary Fund is judging what it is necessary for the Soviet economy to do to get it out of its present difficulties.

Fortunately, between the Houston economic summit and now, the Soviet Union has had a windfall in the sense that the increasing price of oil has given it a much better balance of payments position on a much greater scale than here, so that has improved its position. We shall make up our minds when the IMF has reported.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): If these partners of ours —France and Germany—persist in blocking the reform of the common agricultural policy in December, what useful purpose does my right hon. Friend think that the intergovernmental conference is likely to achieve?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend puts his finger on it absolutely. Agriculture and trade are two

[The Prime Minister]

subjects in which, as national countries, we have no competence at all as it is all negotiated through the Community. They can therefore do that—they can even do it in the Agriculture Council—by majority voting. If France and Germany stick together and refuse to have reductions in their subsidies, many of the other countries where farmers are far poorer than those in France and Germany will say, "How in the world can we agree to lower subsidies when the Community's two sets of richest farmers will not do so?"

I hope that the compromise solution that the Commission hammered out with Agriculture Ministers will nevertheless go through, but that is only the start, not the end, of the negotiating position with other countries; otherwise, we shall be responsible for reducing world trade.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Is it not perfectly clear that what was being attempted at Rome was a bounce which led only one way—to a single federal united states of Europe? Is it not vital that, in this House and across party lines, it should be possible for a Prime Minister to make it clear, if necessary, that Britain is prepared to stand alone? We should not relish it, but if we were faced with the imposition by treaty of a single currency and with a situation that prevented the enlargement of the Community to include Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, would not Britain be entitled and right to use the veto?

The Prime Minister: I totally agree with the right hon. Gentleman. That is precisely the stance that we took. It is the stance that we have taken on many previous occasions. The European monetary system to which we belong is designed for 12 sovereign states, in co-operation with one another, to come to an exchange rate mechanism. What is being proposed now—economic and monetary union—is the back door to a federal Europe, which we totally and utterly reject. We prefer greater economic and monetary co-operation, which can be achieved by keeping our sovereignty.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Does my right hon. Friend agree and confirm that her words today mean in effect that she would prefer to withdraw from the treaty of Rome and the Single European Act?

The Prime Minister: No. We should like to have the kind of Europe that we believe in and the Europe that we went in to join. If my hon. Friend looks back at some of the speeches, he will see that we were absolutely assured that we should not be giving up sovereignty. That was the basis upon which we went in. On 24 May 1971 the Prime Minister said:

"We agreed in particular that the identity of national states should be maintained in the framework of the developing Community. This means, of course, that, though the European Commission has made and will continue to make a valuable contribution, the Council of Ministers should continue to be the forum in which important decisions are taken, . . . It provides a clear assurance, . . . that joining the Community does not entail a loss of national identity or an erosion of essential national sovereignty."—[*Official Report*, 24 May 1971; Vol. 818, c. 32-33.]

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Despite what the Prime Minister has just said, is it not clear that it is the wish of our partners that there should be a loss of national identity on currency? Is it not true that even the hard ecu, coupled with fixed exchange rates, would lead inexorably to economic and monetary union and to government either of bankers for bankers by bankers or to a strong political central government that would usher in a new Euro-state? If the Prime Minister is to save Britain as a self-governing nation, had she not better make that clear and galvanise the people of this country and all parties in Parliament to say a very polite no to economic and monetary union?

The Prime Minister: If I believed that, I would do just as the hon. Gentleman says, but I do not believe that his interpretation is correct. I accept that many in the Economic Community would like to have their version of economic and monetary union, which would lead to passing powers away from national Parliaments to a non-elected body—in fact, to a central board of bankers—to majority voting and to the giving of more legislative power to the European Parliament. That is their version, but it is not the version that we have accepted. The Single European Act defined economic and monetary union as

"Co-operation in Economic and Monetary policy".

That is all you need, in my view. The hard ecu is a proposal that does not require a central bank, which would make it an inflation-proof currency and which could be used if people chose to do so. In my view, it would not become widely used throughout the Community—*[Interruption.]*—possibly most widely used for commercial transactions. Many people would continue to prefer their own currency.

Therefore, I do not believe that the fears of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) will happen. I am pretty certain that most people in this country would prefer to continue to use sterling. If, by their choice, I was wrong, there would come a time when we would have to address the question. However, that would not be for us but for future generations in the House.

Mr. Terence Higgins (Worthing): Will my right hon. Friend take time between now and the conference in December to explain to her European colleagues what any first-year economic student could tell them, which is that the imposition of a single currency, as opposed to a common currency, would rule out for all time the most effective means of adjusting for national differences in costs and prices? Will she explain that that in turn would cause widespread unemployment, which would probably exist on a perpetual basis, and very serious financial imbalances?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree entirely with my right hon. Friend. It would do just that. It would also mean that there would have to be enormous transfers of money from one country to another. It would cost us a great deal of money. One reason why some of the poorer countries want it is that they would get those big transfers of money. We are trying to contest that. If we have a single currency or a locked currency, the differences come out substantially in unemployment or vast movements of people from one country to another. Many people who talk about a single currency have never considered its full implications.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): Will the Prime Minister ignore the advice of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), who talked about the British state standing alone? Will she bear in mind her humiliating experience when she was forced into the ERM

against all her instincts and her declaration in Madrid? Is the Prime Minister aware that many people in Europe, not only in the United Kingdom, are aware of the formidable economic, political and social problems inherent in stage 2 and moving to a single currency? Does she not think that she would have a far better chance of getting people to talk about a sensible and cautious approach if, in addressing her colleagues in Europe, she used the moderate language of a 21st-century European and not the intemperate language of a little Englander?

The Prime Minister: Bearing in mind that the hon. Gentleman was not there, will he tell me of any language that was intemperate? Those who seem to know most about this are the people who were not there and heard nothing of what was said or of the way in which it was done. Radio and television broadcasts are outside and after the finish of the conference.

We have always said that we would join the exchange rate mechanism when the time was right. That was part of our going into the European monetary system, to which we have belonged for many years. We have put some of our reserves with the European monetary system and have the usual swap arrangements that that entails. The completion of the European monetary system is the exchange rate mechanism. All that can be done by nation states co-operating with one another We do not need to have a federal structure at all.

The time came when most of the other countries had abolished their foreign exchange controls and we had led them, way ahead. Yes, I think that it was we and Germany who were isolated in that we got rid of foreign exchange controls first. The others followed, but Spain still has not done so. When they had done that, and when we adjudged that the time was right—I think that every figure that has come out since has indicated that we were right in our timing of joining the ERM and in reducing the interest rate —we completed our obligation to join. That does not mean that we agree with the next stage, which is a totally different definition of economic and monetary union.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the prospects for the British people enjoying a higher standard of living and sharing in greater prosperity will depend in no small part on securing a currency that is strong and stable—something that has dogged us in the post-war years? Is that not more likely to be achieved if we have a common currency based on the great economies of western Europe rather than relying on our going it alone?

The Prime Minister: No, I think that many of my colleagues in Europe—in our European Council and certainly in the Finance Council—will say that there is no way in which there can be a single currency until all economies are at the same state of development, the same state of prosperity and in a Europe with one economy right across it. I do not think that there is any possibility of that stage being reached for a very long time. To take a single currency long before that has happened would be to weaken it and not to strengthen it. We will have a stronger sterling, with all its history. Many securities and contracts are denominated in sterling. We shall trade better with the great history behind sterling than we possibly could with a single currency.

Mr. Ron Leighton (Newham, North-East): There is no majority in the House for EMU, but is the Prime Minister aware that I attended a conference in Italy last year at which an Italian Minister spoke to me about EMU? I said, "What if Mrs. Thatcher opposes it?" Ungallantly, he laughed out loud and said, "We have met Mrs. Thatcher many times—she squawks and makes a noise at the beginning but always comes round and gives way in the end." What assurances and guarantees can the Prime Minister give the House that she will not give way on this issue, as she gave way on the Madrid condition about British inflation before joining the ERM?

The Prime Minister: That is what they said when I was negotiating for a better budget deal for Britain. Twice, the people in the Commission—our people in the Commission and the presidency of the Commission—advised me to give way. They found out differently.

Mr. Paul Channon (Southend, West): Does my right hon. Friend agree——

Hon. Members: We cannot hear.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members are not alone in that.

Mr. Channon: Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is a grave risk that unless the Community can get its negotiating position together the GATT round of talks may collapse in the next few months? If that happens, it would be no dry, academic exercise but would mean higher costs for consumers in many countries in the next few years. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Community's compromise proposals on agriculture, which have been rejected, are ludicrously modest? Will she urge our colleagues in the Community to try to reach a solution—if not now, at least during the next IGC?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my right hon. Friend. If we do not reach a solution in Geneva in the Uruguay round, it will mean retaliation against us, and people's worst fears—that the Economic Community is nothing but a fortress Europe and a protectionist club—will be realised. If we did not get a result on the agriculture round, it would not be our fault but the fault of France and Germany. There are certain protectionist elements in France, as my right hon. Friend knows. Even when we get our own negotiating position, as I hope that we shall within a week, I hope that it will be on the basis that we have been negotiating for six previous meetings. We still have to have negotiations on the other proposals that we put up with all the countries. There is still a tough way to go before we get a conclusion, but the important thing —important for the welfare of all our people—is that that round meets with success.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): A single European currency means loss of control over our monetary policy. Our monetary policy has been an absolute shambles, so what is the Prime Minister fussing about?

The Prime Minister: Monetary policy was in its greatest shambles under Labour, when inflation reached 27 per cent.

Sir Richard Body (Holland with Boston): Will my right hon. Friend make it clear that, if the procrastination about export subsidies by the European Community on surplus

[Sir Richard Body]

food continues, with the result that the Uruguay round collapses and the United States then resorts to a protectionist policy in self-defence, the one country in the EC that will suffer will be the United Kingdom?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend knows, we always try for open trading. We also try to defend our farmers to see that they get a fair deal because, mostly, the subsidies in Europe go to the smaller farmers. By subsidising the smaller farmers, the efficiency of the larger family farm is undercut. We will do everything that we can to ensure that the picture that my hon. Friend has painted does not come about.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Does the Prime Minister agree that her isolation at the Rome summit will seriously damage Wales's prospects of benefiting under the single market, and from the exports and investment opportunities that will arise? Does she also agree that Wales, which is on the periphery of Europe, needs to be at the heart of the decision-making process in Europe and that a positive approach to Europe is needed? Does not her isolationist stance prove that Wales needs direct representation in the Community institutions?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman's strictures would have been better directed to France and Germany, which have taken an isolationist stance on agricultural subsidies for three years. It would have been very much better if they had come along with the rest instead of sticking out for their own farmers against the good of the EC as a whole. It was those countries which were isolated on that most urgent matter.

As for investment, Wales—like the rest of the United Kingdom—has benefited enormously from the economic policies of this Government. We have brought in tons and tons of investment from overseas to Wales, to Scotland and to the north of England, greatly to the benefit of jobs here. People have great confidence in this Government, which is why they invest in Britain. What a pity the hon. Gentleman cannot speak up a little more for his own country.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Next Wednesday, the doors of this Chamber will be closed to Black Rod as a symbol of the independence of this House. What would be the effect on the independence of this House and on the nation that elects it if the power to veto proposals affecting social affairs, the environment and taxation were to be removed?

The Prime Minister: I hope that, when the next election comes, people who want to come to the House will come to uphold its powers and its responsibilities, and not to denude the House of them. We have surrendered some of them to the Community, and in my view we have surrendered enough.

Mr. Tony Benn (Chesterfield): Is the Prime Minister aware that what we are really discussing is not economic management, but the whole future of relations between this country and Europe? This issue is not best expressed in 19th-century patriotic language or in emotive language about which design is on the currency. The real question is whether, when the British people vote in a general election, they will be able to change the policies of the previous Government. It is already a fact, as the House knows full well, that whatever Government are in power, our agricultural policy is controlled from Brussels, our trade policy is controlled from Brussels and our industrial policy is controlled from Brussels. If we go into EMU, our financial policy will also be controlled. It is a democratic argument, not a nationalistic argument.

However, given that the right hon. Lady is a member of the Government who took us into the European Community without consulting the British people, given that she was Prime Minister in the Government who agreed to the Single European Act without consulting the British people, and given that she has now agreed to joining the exchange rate mechanism without consulting the British people, we find it hard to believe that she is really intent on preserving democracy rather than gaining political advantage by waving some national argument around on the eve of a general election. That is why we do not trust her judgment on the matter.

The Prime Minister: I think that I would put it just a little differently from the right hon. Gentleman, although I recognise some of the force of some of the points that he makes. When the Delors proposals for economic and monetary union came out, it was said immediately by my right hon. Friend the then Chancellor of the Exchequer that this was not really about monetary policy at all but about a back door to a federal Europe, taking many democratic powers away from democratically elected bodies and giving them to non-elected bodies. I believe fervently that that is true, which is why I shall have nothing to do with their definition of economic and monetary union.

We shall continue the co-operation that we have come to establish, as nation states. The Act that enabled us to go into Europe was passed on Second Reading by eight votes and it was made very clear then that we would not surrender our national identity, that it was a matter of co-operation. It was on the strength of that that many people went in. I am afraid that it would be quite different if we went for a single European currency and a central bank and for their definition of economic and monetary union.

Mr. Churchill (Davyhulme): Will my right hon. Friend tell the House how far she believes that, when the moment comes, Germany will be prepared to see the transfer of its monetary policy from the Bundesbank to a European central bank on which it will have one voice out of 12?

The Prime Minister: I think that it is wrong to think that all the Twelve have similar votes or influence in these matters. I think that some in Germany—only some—are backing the scheme because they know that the dominant voice, the predominant voice, on any central bank would be the German voice. If we did not retain our national identities in Europe, the dominant people in Europe would be German. The way to balance out the different views of Europe, as we have traditionally done throughout history, is by retaining our national identity.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): In view of the imminent deaths of thousands of young men—Arab, European and American—would it not be more compassionate and realistic of the Prime Minister to abandon her adamant refusal even to contemplate a negotiated solution to the Gulf crisis?

The Prime Minister: I have not noticed much compassion about Saddam Hussein in Kuwait, about the way in which our hostages, our embassies or the nationals in Kuwait have been treated. There is nothing to negotiate about.

Mr. Faulds: There is everything to negotiate about, you stupid woman——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Faulds: You stupid, negative woman.

The Prime Minister: I seem to smell the stench of appeasement in the air—the rather nauseating stench of appeasement.

The United Nations has clearly said that Iraq must come out of Kuwait——

Mr. Faulds: Have your war. You would love a war. You love war.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is very bad behaviour from the hon. Gentleman. He has asked a question and he is getting the answer. He may not like it, but he must not shout in that way.

The Prime Minister: Saddam Hussein started a war, and it continues day after day with the killing, murder, torture and brutal treatment of people. Some people—and most Members of the House—have the guts to stand up to him.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Prime Minister, may I ask you why you have been so modest this afternoon? In the past, have you not stood alone on European matters and been proved right? I am thinking of United Kingdom contributions, of the reform of the common agricultural policy, of mortgage cartels and of exchange controls. Each time, Prime Minister, you have been right. Why should the House not trust you today?

The Prime Minister: May I thank my knight in shining armour? I could not have put it better myself.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): When preparing the statement on the Gulf that the Prime Minister has said was agreed in Rome, was the right hon. Lady aware of the existence of publicly available estimates by American chiefs of staff that within 12 days of combat there would be 30,000 allied casualties, and that 10,000 of them would be fatalities? If she disagrees with the American estimates, can she tell us what estimates have been made by the British chiefs of staff?

The Prime Minister: I remember when this country had to send forces down to the Falklands. Chiefs of staff were frequently asked what were their estimates of casualties. No one can make such an estimate.

Mr. Nellist: The Americans have.

The Prime Minister: No one can make such an estimate. There are people who can guess, but those guesses have turned out before to be very wide of the mark. It is not a question that I ask, because I know the impossibility of answering it.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the valiant stand that she has been taking to fight for Britain's economic and parliamentary independence in Europe? Will she emphasise that standing apart from the eleven's plans for European monetary union may bring positive economic benefits to Britain? Does she agree that the country with the strongest currency, one of the highest per capita incomes and one of the strongest financial services industries in Europe, is economically and politically independent Switzerland? Does she also agree, therefore, that economic independence is no barrier to economic success?

The Prime Minister: I entirely agree. Switzerland has a marvellous record on currency, manufacturing and services, and we too shall continue to do so if others go for a single currency and we stay outside.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): The right hon. Lady has referred to the 11 other European leaders as living in cloud cuckoo land. Has it not occurred to her that she may be living in cloud cuckoo land if she thinks that the majority of the British people are likely to go along with her short-sighted proposals on economic and monetary union, which are likely to lead to Britain's being excluded from Europe's first division?

The Prime Minister: No, I think that that is totally wrong. I note that the hon. Gentleman believes in a single currency regardless of the many consequences that it would have for this country—regardless of how much we would have to transfer, and regardless of the enormous consequences for our securities. I do not believe that his view is shared by many of the people.

Mr. Radice: We shall see.

The Prime Minister: Indeed we shall, but I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that most people prefer to have the pound sterling and our Parliament. If he does not wish to have either, why does he want to come here after the next election?

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Will my right hon. Friend continue to bear in mind that the success of the Uruguay round and the GATT is vital to the economies of the new democracies in Latin America and the third world? Does she not agree that fine words in Rome butter no tortillas?

The Prime Minister: I agree. We can always talk about the generalities. When it came to getting down to a detailed negotiation, they did not even want to address the subject there. They ran away from it. They then said that they should set a stage 2 without having decided on its contents. We do not know what we are going to do in stage 2 yet, but they have set a date for it. That is very different from what Delors said in his report, when he stated clearly:

"The conditions for moving from stage to stage cannot be defined precisely in advance: nor is it possible to foresee today when these conditions will be realised. The setting of explicit deadlines is therefore not advisable."

What a pity he did not stick to that advice, but tried to change it at the last meeting in Rome.

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): On the question of hostages, will the Prime Minister accept that many hundreds of families in this country, including my constituent Mrs. Maggie Ross, whose husband Alistair has been held hostage at a military installation for three months, will have listened with great care to what she said, and in particular to what she said

[Ms. Diane Abbott]

about there being no question of negotiation? Many of those families will have been bitterly disappointed because, although they may understand her reasons, many of them fear that, where military adventurism is concerned, the lives of the hostages are expendable.

The Prime Minister: I always understand people's anxiety about relatives who are hostages. In my constituency I have perhaps been fortunate in that we were able to welcome home again a young girl aged 12. Of course one understands that anxiety. However, if we were to take it that we could never take action against a brutal dictator because he held hostages, we should never take action against such a dictator and he would be free to continue his ways. He would always take a few more hostages to prevent justice being done and to prevent territory and people's homes being recovered.

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): Would not my right hon. Friend agree that the prosperity of all the people within the European Economic Community is more likely to be achieved by the successful achievement of a single market without barriers than by dreaming dreams of a federal Europe, as the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) so courageously said earlier this afternoon? Will my right hon. Friend never stop reminding her colleagues in Europe that Britain has actually implemented more of the single market measures than any other country and that we have therefore been the best proponents of prosperity in Europe?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Part of the reason for founding the treaty of Rome was not only to bring down barriers within the six countries which joined it at the time, but to be an example to the rest of the world to bring down barriers without as well, so that we should genuinely have much freer trade and a much freer flow of trade to the benefit of trading countries and also to third world countries.

It is therefore vital that we complete the single market and the Uruguay round. We have got on fairly well with the directives. My hon. Friend's recollection is correct. We and Denmark have not only passed the directives but have implemented most of them. We have only 15 or 16 to implement, while Denmark has 15. As I have said, the record of the rest of the Community varies very much in spite of the grand words. When it comes to the practical deeds, they do not match up to the grand words. The chair was taken by Italy and Italy has yet to implement 62 directives. Perhaps that explains why we went to grand words and not to specific practical suggestions.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): In one of the emollient passages of her statement earlier, the Prime Minister said that she believed that solutions could be found for the Community so that it could advance as 12. As the Prime Minister is aware, changes to the treaty are required in order to advance monetary and economic union. Those amendments to the treaty will come forward at the intergovernmental conferences in December. Is she now telling the House that she will not be using her veto power at those conferences?

The Prime Minister: We have been through one intergovernmental conference before. That was the one which led to the Single European Act, which the hon. Gentleman will recall. It started up with very grandiose and rather vague designs. It finished up as a very much more modest document which we were able to sign up to. I believe that that is what will happen in the intergovernmental conferences here. Many, when they look more closely at it, will not want to have a single currency unless they can have enormous transfers of money, and I do not think that those would be forthcoming.

Many will look at some of the other divestment of powers and not want to do that. Undoubtedly, there are some who are prepared to divest their powers and put them over to someone else. They would prefer not necessarily to have the responsibility for some of the difficult things that have to be done. I believe that most of the nation states would prefer to keep their nationality and their national identity. Therefore, there will be a great deal of negotiating. As the hon. Gentleman said, we can have a new treaty only if all Parliaments ratify it.

Mr. John Browne (Winchester): Does my right hon. Friend accept that a single European currency is not a soft option but a harsh option and that the introduction of a single currency, without first achieving a single European market and then a single European economy, would be an extremely harsh option? Does my right hon. Friend accept also that it would benefit neither the consumer nor the producer fairly but merely the bureaucrat, and therefore lead us down a trail towards not only a federal Europe but an undemocratic, bureaucratic federal Europe?

The Prime Minister: I agree wholly with what my hon. Friend has said. When the discussions about the currency and the economic and monetary union get to the Finance Ministers, they will be very much more practical than some of the Heads of Government are about these matters. I am sure that our colleagues will have heard my right hon. Friend the Chancellor say many times that many of his colleagues are very worried about any suggestion of a single currency before we have almost a common economy or an economy with about similar prosperity. It just would not work. Once one goes to a single currency, all the differences would come out in heavy unemployment and in massive movements of people. *[Interruption.]* Socialist countries such as France already have much heavier unemployment than we have. All the differences will come out in even heavier unemployment and massive movements of people from where they had previously been living to where they work.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): Since today the Prime Minister is a great advocate of democracy, will she allow service men and service women the democratic right to join a trade union? If she agrees with that right, she will find that service men and service women in the Gulf would vote against war in that area because they believe in negotiation rather than confrontation.

The Prime Minister: No, our present arrangements have served this country supremely well.

Mr. Robert Hicks (Cornwall, South-East): Does my right hon. Friend agree that in the past 20 years or so many people, particularly young people, have been persuaded to support the Conservative party instead of the Labour party because of our commitment to Europe? In that context, does my right hon. Friend agree that there is increasing sadness among those people about this

country's apparent inability to respond in a positive manner to any proposals involving political and financial convergence and environmental issues?

The Prime Minister: On environmental issues, my hon. Friend will see that we reached agreement yesterday, and he will find that 95 per cent. of our rivers are rated good or fair, which is better than any other European country's record. We have a programme for looking after our beaches and also for improving the quality of water—about £28 billion. We are the only country with such a programme. My hon. Friend will find many places in Europe which have nothing like the quality of water that we have.

My hon. Friend will find also that the question is not whether we are Europeans and key Europeans, as we are, but what sort of Europe we want—that is, whether we want a democratically responsible Europe, or whether we want a Europe of nation states which freely co-operate together. That is every bit as honourable and worthy an objective as trying to make it less democratic and trying to dissolve one's natural loyalties to one's country.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is it not true that, on Europe, the Prime Minister is in the minority in the Cabinet and is not so much the leader of the Tory party on these issues as the leader of one of its many factions? On the Gulf, does the Prime Minister agree that all those who talk about attempts to resolve conflicts and difficulties arising from the invasion of Kuwait by negotiation, surely what has been demonstrated over the past weekend is that all the efforts of the Soviet representative in his mission to Iraq to try to persuade the dictator to give concessions have totally failed? There is not the slightest sign that Saddam Hussein intends to withdraw from Kuwait. Why should one of the most notorious of all dictators, who has committed a criminal act in the invasion of Kuwait and who has committed untold crimes and atrocities in Kuwait since 2 August, be allowed to get away with it?

The Prime Minister: Precisely—but perhaps the hon. Gentleman had better address that question to the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds).

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a very heavy day ahead of us. I shall allow three more questions from each side. I regret that we must then move on.

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): Many hon. Members and, I suspect, many people in Europe will have the most profound respect for the discipline and informed pragmatism that the Prime Minister brings to the discussion of these matters. Does she agree that there is a great danger that the vision of a united Europe bequeathed to us by the great founders, including Winston Churchill, whom I believe was a federalist, could be at best blurred and at worst damaged if, in contemplating the complex, difficult procedures of integrating Europe we dare not consider at any stage any change, however small and however slowly achieved, in the balance of powers between this House and the European Parliament?

The Prime Minister: That is not quite correct. We went in on the basis that was clearly set out—that we were in fact not in any way going to lose our national identity an[illegible]—if my hon. Friend looks back over the debate, nor would any strong national interest be overriden. That was the fundamental basis on which we got a majority of eight for the Second Reading of the Bill which took us into the Community. I believe that that was a very honourable way to go about it, and I believe that it is a very honourable objective to keep our national identity and have co-operation.

When it came to things like wanting a single market, if we were to get some of the directives through, we had to get a little bit more majority voting. That particular batch of majority voting under that single European Act, should cease when we have the single European market. Apart from that, it is better if we go forward by agreement between us all, because we have to get agreement anyway for changing the treaty. As my hon. Friend knows, we have recently completed the European monetary system by joining the exchange rate mechanism. That is for us an extra discipline for keeping down inflation, and it is also very welcome in Europe.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): During her discussions on the Gulf when, presumably, the Prime Minister was pressing for the Baghdad leadership to pay compensation for war crimes in the destruction of Kuwait, did the Prime Minister make any proposals to recompense the victims of the other illegal occupation in the middle east—that of the West Bank and Gaza? In her concern—I paraphrase the Prime Minister—for the unity of the international community on United Nations decisions, did she press the case of the Palestinians for decades have been having their land stolen, their homes demolished and their citizens killed? Why is Kuwaiti blood more precious than Palestinian blood? Is it because it is tinged with oil?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady will be aware that both situations are extremely serious and that both are very different. Kuwait had never threatened to attack or attacked anyone. She wanted only to live in peace. Unfortunately, Jordan attacked Israel. I think that she was begged not to, but she did, and that finished up by Jordan losing part of Jerusalem and losing the West Bank. The West Bank is not annexed to Israel. It has been the subject of many United Nations resolutions, some of which the Arab world did not accept for a long time, but which have been accepted more recently, in the past two years, by the Palestinians and Mr. Arafat. We have been working together, as has the Community for years, from the Venice declaration, to try to find a solution to that problem. It is not easy. It is easier to talk about it than to find a solution on the basis of resolution 242, but we continue to do so.

If the hon. Lady looks at the communiqué, she will see that we discussed this matter and that we are taking forward our previous policies. When this matter is settled and when Kuwait has been restored to the people of Kuwait, we shall continue to go ahead on the basis of our previous policy, which is negotiation. We have previously said that we would be in favour of an international conference so that the previous policies could be taken forward.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my right hon. Friend accept that many people both here and elsewhere in Europe are concerned about the predominance of Germany in the European Community, but that the answer does not lie in a federal Europe because the majority voting system already contains Germany, and to move down the federal route and to go for a central bank would do no more than ensure that that central bank was

[Mr. William Cash]

dominated by the economic realities and the strength of the deutschmark? Does my right hon. Friend agree that we are far better off making sure that we have a wider Europe in which we have a balance of interests, including people from east, west and central Europe?

The Prime Minister: I am totally against a federal Europe and believe that the overwhelming majority of people in this country are against a federal Europe. We should not take any steps in that direction, but should uphold co-operation between our peoples. Of course, Germany will continue to be a very important country in the Community. Chancellor Kohl is always very European in his approach and very generous in his help to the eastern European countries. It is better that we negotiate with Germany as it is now and with the United Kingdom as we are now and that we do not try to have a kind of united states of Europe. It is one thing to have a United States of America from a newly settled country, but it is a different thing for ancient nation states, each with its own traditions.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): Although the Ulster Unionist parliamentary party sits at present on the Opposition side of the House, is the Prime Minister aware that we are shocked at the somersault of policy that has taken place in the British Labour party, which is now prepared to sacrifice the democratic rights of the British people and to accept instead economic policies that are imposed by a bureaucracy based outside this country? In her statement the Prime Minister said that the Government's policy was to oppose a single currency, but I notice that she is now qualifying that with a new adjective and referring to an "imposed " single currency. Has the Prime Minister really shifted her position slightly, and is she now saying that she is prepared to negotiate for an agreed single currency? The matter needs to be clarified.

The Prime Minister: If the right hon. Gentleman looks at our debate, he will find that it was clearly spelled out that we have proposed a hard ecu, which will be inflation-proofed, and that that is a parallel or common currency and not a single currency. However, by choice, if people used it, it could evolve into a single currency. Before any single currency comes about, it would be for future Parliaments and future generations to decide if they wished to abolish the national currency. This Government are against a single currency, but it is not for us to bind our successors in 20 or 30 years' time.

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): What evidence does my right hon. Friend have that the bulk of industry and business, upon the success of which our national livelihood depends, is in any way reluctant to see the ordered emergence of a single currency as a logical consequence to the completion of the single market?

The Prime Minister: A single market and a single currency are two totally different things, as a short study of them would reveal. Some of the great manufacturing nations, such as Japan, the United States and Switzerland, do not have a common or a single currency with anyone else. They have a single currency of their own, and that does not hinder or affect their manufacturing position. Neither does it affect our position as the greatest financial centre in Europe that we are not like the yen, but we are sterling and that we are not like the dollar, but we are sterling. We trade in them all.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): Surely the Prime Minister understands that virtually every Member of the House of Commons agrees about the absolute necessity of securing Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Does she agree that the unanimous Council declaration on the Gulf crisis, with its references to "a peaceful solution" and to the importance of maintaining consensus in the United Nations Security Council is to be warmly welcomed? Is it not clear from the declaration that the Governments of the European Community would not support early military action led by the United States? Can the right hon. Lady therefore give us the assurance that the Government's policy will be consistent with that declaration and that they will give mandatory economic sanctions proper time to work?

The Prime Minister: This matter was dealt with when we debated it in the House. We do not believe in letting any aggressor know what action we propose to take or when. We already have full legal authority under article 51 and through the request of the Emir of Kuwait. The position would undoubtedly be best resolved if Saddam Hussein withdrew totally from Kuwait, if the legitimate Government of Kuwait were restored and if Iraq agreed to pay compensation. Through the United Nations, we could then negotiate with Saddam Hussein about ending the manufacture of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and about Iraq having a much smaller armed force so that we would never be put in the same position again. Whether this matter can be resolved peacefully depends totally on Saddam Hussein unreservedly accepting the United Nations resolutions.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sorry that it has not been possible for me to call all the hon. Members who wish to participate——

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is no good getting frustrated about it. I have done my best today to call hon. Members who were not called when the Prime Minister last returned from a summit——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. I have done my best today to call hon. Members who were not called when the Prime Minister last returned from a summit—that at Houston on 12 July. I shall keep today's list equally carefully.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I hope that it is not a point of frustration, but I fear that it may be.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we spent five and a half hours on dogs, but now an hour and twenty minutes seems to be enough to spend on the most important thing that is likely to happen to this

country in this generation. Why can we not have a proper sense of balance? Why have you cut short this important issue, when dogs were worth five hours?

Mr. Speaker: Order. As I sensed, that was really a point of frustration. I am sorry, but I have to keep a proper balance——

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have to keep a balance of the business before the House. The Prime Minister has been at the Dispatch Box for an hour and a half, which is longer than I would allow for most statements——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. All I can say to the hon. Gentleman is that I shall bear him in mind in the future.

BILL PRESENTED

ESTABLISHED CHURCH

Mr. Michael Latham presented a Bill to abolish the General Synod of the Church of England, on a date to be appointed; to provide for the creation of a Church of England Assembly, consisting of a House of all Diocesan, Suffragan and Assistant Bishops, and a joint House of Clergy and Laity, to be directly elected by all clergy and lay persons on parochial electoral rolls; to empower the Assembly to decide on all appropriate matters, except those within the responsibilities of the Church Commissioners, without further reference to Parliament; to provide for the election of new Bishops by members of the House of Bishops, saving the right of final approval of the chosen candidate by the Crown; to abolish the Ecclesiastical Committee; to abolish the automatic places of Bishops in the House of Lords; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Thursday 1 November and to be printed. [Bill 209.]

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is my understanding correct that you have laid some stress on hon. Members being called on subjects in which they have some specialist interest? Is there any point in me being a vice-chairman of the European Affairs Committee when I am never called to ask a question at times such as this? Do you intend to disfranchise me or——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must resume his seat. I am not having that. I shall send him his computer printout.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have given you notice that I would raise again today a point that I raised yesterday about the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short). I note that she was in her place until I rose, but that she has now left the Chamber. I have also given the hon. Lady notice that I would raise this matter. Now that you have *Hansard* in front of you, Mr. Speaker, and can read what it says, you will note that on several occasions—in fact, on no fewer than 11—I clearly asked the hon. Member for Ladywood to withdraw the allegations that she had made against my hon. Friends.

When I raised that later, after you had had the opportunity to read part of *Hansard*—although not the part to which you took exception—no opportunity was afforded to the hon. Lady finally, on a 12th occasion to note what she had said and realise the offence in the remark that she had made. We have just talked for two hours about the sovereignty of the House. If it means anything, it should also mean the dignity of the Chair and respect for it. For that reason, I ask you to instruct the hon. Lady to return to the House and apologise in accordance with your wishes.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Yesterday's proceedings brought no credit upon the House or upon the hon. Lady. I received the extract from *Hansard* containing the allegation made against the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes). Once the matter had been resolved—in the end it was resolved almost as a matter of farce—I took the view that that was the time to leave it where it was. I have no authority to deal with it again today.

Labelling (Environmental Effects and Safety)

5 pm

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): To move to more tranquil waters, I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for products other than food and drink to carry information about environmental effects and safety; and for connected purposes.

In the normal course of events, when a consumer wishes to make a purchase, I am content to let quality, price and delivery jostle together in the decision with a little touch of caveat emptor thrown in for good measure. However, with the advance of science today and the spread of products, unless one has a chemical degree and a knowledge of the effect of chemicals on the environment, the present labelling and ingredient labelling requirements are worse than useless. That is, of course, assuming that one can read the label in the first place. More often than not, the purchase of such products is made on environmental grounds on the basis of the information on the can or the label.

You will be glad to hear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have not brought a series of samples into the Chamber today. Cans often carry bucolic scenes. There may be birds, bees and butterflies all twittering around on the can, yet inside there will be a chlorofluorocarbon propellant. Courtesy of the Consumers Association, I have information that other claims are put on the side of containers, some of which are completely meaningless. Such claims include, "Product contains no phosphates or nitrates of ammonia", when one cannot buy any brand of that product which contains those ingredients. The case continues in that way.

My Bill for non-food products will help to give the consumer more relevant information when making an informed choice about the purchase of non-food products, particularly with regard to their effect on the environment. The Bill does not tread new ground. I am not breaking forth into the wilderness. The west Germans have had their "Blue Angel" scheme for several years, since 1978. Later, the Canadians introduced their scheme. The logo consists of three doves, intertwined—surprise, surprise—with a maple leaf. The Canadians are promoting the scheme as part of their "Buy clean" campaign. The Japanese have an eco-mark to promote the same, based on a cradle-to-the-grave assessment.

In moving my Bill, I would be wrong to give the impression that the Government have been sitting on their hands and that all the other countries have done the necessary work. My researchers have discovered that a senior official at the Department of Trade and Industry —I shall spare his blushes by not mentioning his name —has been seconded to the Commission to work out a scheme within Europe.

A labelling scheme such as I envisage would be operated through public service agencies at arm's length and would operate more through regulation than legislation. Of course, it would need initial pump-priming but in time the fees that would be generated should make it self-financing. The cachet of having the label put on the product would be a powerful selling aid in this country, which at long last is becoming environmentally conscious.

I hope that what I suggest will be accepted not only in the United Kingdom but throughout the European Community. The Commission hopes to make a presentation to the Council of Ministers later this year. The purpose of the Bill—if it is accepted—is clear. If the EC does not come up with a scheme, the United Kingdom, with its growing commitment to the environment, will put one in place. The financial powers are there to do so, provided that the Environmental Protection Bill completes its passage through the House in the next couple of days.

The scheme must be cradle-to-the-grave. It would be stupid to label a product environmentally friendly and benign, only to discover that the process of its manufacture pollutes. Items would fall into several product sectors. Within those sectors, the merits of each item would be assessed. Those which are judged to reach the standard would be given the qualifying mark. It would be a simple, positive, guide to the purchaser on which products were least harmful to the environment. I envisage that there would be a moving standard within each sector—a constant striving for better quality in existing products and also an encouragement to produce replacements. The product which bears the mark of approval today may well fail to obtain it tomorrow.

As the scheme developed, I hope that next to whatever the mark will be there would be a grading system. A number would indicate the absolute effect that the product has on the environment. In that way, the purchaser would have more than merely a comparison within a sector in making a decision.

A scheme could become a positive sales aid to British manufacturing. For some time, I have been worried about foreign competition. The foreign product imported into our country may not necessarily be produced with the same care and attention to health and safety and pollution regulations which our manufacturers must employ.

In my Bill, I do not attempt to address what the mark will be. I shall leave it to some advertising agency or marketing organisation to come up with some fancy logo. However, I must confess that the capital letter E, standing for ecology, environment and perhaps Europe, has some appeal.

The chances of a 10-minute Bill reaching the statute book are somewhat similar to the survival chances of a snowball in the Sahara. However, I hope that, just as there are nutritional standards and sell-by dates on food, the House will approve the principle of environmental labelling for non-food products. The measure will build on the growing public awareness of the fragile nature of the environment and the need for its protection, and I commend it to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Richard Page, Sir Hugh Rossi, Mr. Robin Squire, Mr. Graham Bright, Mr. Roger King and Mr. Alistair Burt.

LABELLING (ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SAFETY)

Mr. Richard Page accordingly presented a Bill to make provision for products other than food and drink to carry information about environmental effects and safety; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 210.]

Orders of the Day

Environmental Protection Bill

Lords amendments further considered.

Clause 95

FEES AND CHARGES UNDER 1960 ACT

Lords amendment: No. 212, in page 102, line 43, leave out ("sections") and insert ("section").

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to consider Lords amendments Nos. 212, 216, 218, 345 to 347 and 429.

5.9 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendments. The amendments deal with technical points.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 213, in page 103, line 5, leave out ("for varying") and insert

("in respect of the variation of")

The Minister for the Environment and Countryside (Mr. David Trippier): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 213 to 215, 217, and 304; Lords amendment No. 340 and the amendment thereto; 341 to 344.

Mr. Trippier: Her Majesty's Opposition may wish to speak to their amendment to Lords amendment No. 340 before I say anything.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): The Opposition do wish to speak to their amendment, which is being discussed at this late stage in the proceedings because the Government have not fulfilled promises made during the earlier stages of the Bill.

The problem dealt with by the amendment arises out of the persistence shown by Dudley metropolitan council in its long-standing attempts to close loopholes in legislation. The council, quite simply, wanted a say in the procedures by which a licence was granted by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution, under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, to Waste Incineration Services Ltd. This authorised the Pear Tree lane site to be used for the purposes of disposing of solid and liquid organic radioactive waste. I have visited the site, with Councillor Sparks, and have met local residents who have long campaigned about their concerns over waste disposal at the Pear Tree lane and other sites. I have met campaigners from all over the west midlands who are concerned about the way in which radioactive and other toxic wastes are disposed of.

In this case, Dudley metropolitan council was right to have expected to have at least been consulted about the granting of the licence for disposal of radioactive waste under section 6. That is in line with our views on the importance of freedom of information. The behaviour of the HMIP was also in contradiction of the Government's professed aim, set out in their White Paper, which refers to the need for the public to receive environmental information.

The first that Dudley's residents knew about the licence authorising the disposal of radioactive waste was when the council received a copy of the licence, which had already been issued. Where was the consultation? When the council rightly took this matter through the courts, it was rewarded by the courts finding in its favour. The Secretary of State was required to consider whether to involve local authorities and to give them a right to a hearing. No wonder that the legal officer considered that the Secretary of State's previous actions had been

"high-handed, cavalier and unreasonable."

Ever since, we have pressed the Government to recognise that local authorities have a legitimate right to have their say whenever a licence application of this kind is being considered. In a letter to me, the Under-Secretary said:

"It is a matter for local authorities only when the proposed disposal has a significant effect on the locality."

However, he makes no suggestion as to what is significant, and at this eleventh hour in our deliberations on the Bill, the issue has not been resolved. Therefore, we have tabled the amendment: it is plain that the Government do not want a statutory procedure for involving local authorities in these major environmental issues such as disposal of radioactive waste.

Amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 340 makes no suggestion even to any rights to hearings. We are not going that far down the road at this stage. Nor does it advance the position of local authorities, except to complete the limited role that they have already been given by the Government's proposal to notify them of applications in advance. These would then have to be published.

Radioactive licences awarded under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 can be for disposal, accumulation, use or use in connection with radioactive apparatus. Amendment (a), which is concerned with radioactive apparatus, is an example of how the procedure should operate. The Government have provided no clear answer to what is supposed to happen when an authority such as Dudley receives a copy of a licence application. As the Bill stands, despite the assurances given by the Under-Secretary, there is no provision to guide the authority as to the period within which comments should be made, or any sign of what the HMIP might do with any comments it receives.

The amendment is designed to regularise the process, to the benefit both of authorities and of the HMIP. The scheme proposed is that there should be a six-week period within the normal four-month period during which the HMIP considers applications, in which the authority may submit comments to the HMIP, which the inspectorate would then be required to consider. This is a light requirement on the HMIP, but it would at least ensure that the comments made by authorities were not simply ignored, as happened in the case of Dudley council. The purpose is to prevent uncertainty about applications from dragging on for any long period, and equally to protect the HMIP from comments received from authorities late in the process, which may cut across the process of determination, which by then would be further advanced.

5.15 pm

The amendment makes the further proposal that notifications to local authorities under the Bill should include a reminder of the calling in power given to the Secretary of State under paragraph 12 of schedule 5, which inserts a new section 12B into the Radioactive Substances Act 1960. Under this power, the Secretary of State may instruct the chief inspector to refer to him any particular application which will then be determinable by him. It is understood that it would be open to local authorities to request the Secretary of State to exercise his power. In practice, this would probably be heeded only in a case where a decision reached by the inspector appeared to have ignored a significant matter drawn to his attention by the local authority. Again, I refer the Under-Secretary to the use of the word "significant" in his letter to me.

Nothing in the amendment would constrain the decision of the Secretary of State as to whether to call an application in, but it would serve as a limited form of appeal against decisions to grant applications in certain narrow instances. It would be helpful to have on the record an assurance that it will be open to authorities in specific instances to petition the Secretary of State in this way. If that assurance can be given, and if we can have some guidance as to the way in which officials will deal with this scheme, the residents of Dudley and their councillors will have the satisfaction of knowing that they closed a loophole in legislation, and that they have done all that they properly can to bring the attention of the Government to the wider implications of the way in which waste disposal licences involving radioactive substances are dealt with.

Mr. Trippier: Perhaps I may assist the hon. Lady by making clear what the situation will be when the Bill as it stands—that is, without the amendment—becomes an Act of Parliament. I am concerned about what she said about Dudley metropolitan council. I would not profess to be as much of an expert as she is, but I will look at this one again. Considerable influence has been directed at the Government to ensure that this kind of thing cannot happen again. Even if I were to take verbatim what has been said by the hon. Lady, the amendment is in any case defective—although I hope that she will forgive me for saying so—because it refers to the procedures that should be applied to applications to use mobile apparatus, but that need not concern us. The principle that the hon. Lady is making is accepted in general terms.

Local authorities will be sent copies of all applications for registration and authorisation once they have been received by the chief inspector. They will then have an opportunity to comment at an early stage in every case. At present, local authorities see applications only if they are involved in a formal confrontation process. Local authorities will be sent a greater amount of information. In addition to copies of applications, they are to be sent copies of all certificates. At present, certificates of registration for mobile radioactive apparatus are not required to be sent. They will be sent copies of certificates for enforcement, copies of prohibition notices, records of convictions and any other documents that the Secretary of State may direct the chief inspector to send.

Local authorities will have a role to play in making this information available, as the public will be able to inspect those documents at their offices. That, as the hon. Lady knows full well, is consistent with our approach, which she has supported. I welcome the increased public access to environmental information. Authorities are to be entitled to charge a reasonable fee for the provision of photocopies of documents that will be open to public inspection.

There may be a minor difference of opinion between us on the great majority of cases in which radioactive materials need to be registered to be kept and used. Certainly, in the case of mobile apparatus, local authorities will have no executive or regulatory function. I entirely accept that the hon. Lady may not necessarily be asking for that, but it is a statement of fact.

As a result, authorities will also lack the highly specialist expertise that will be necessary to enable them to comment on these matters in an informed and detailed way. For that reason, the control of radioactive substances has always, under successive Governments, been under central Government control—at present through Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution in England and Wales and Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate in Scotland.

As I have said, the amendment is inappropriate, and I ask the House to reject it.

Ms. Walley: Given what the Minister has just said, may I ask him whether he is prepared to discuss further with his officials and with officers of the metropolitan council of Dudley ways of dealing with some of the issues that have been raised—including the timetable under which HMIP would give information to the local authority concerned? We do not have a final way of dealing with this, but we accept that, if there are further consultations of that sort, that will at least benefit HMIP and enable the problems that have been highlighted by the Dudley case to be of wider benefit in tightening up legislation on radioactive waste and its disposal.

Mr. Trippier: I am happy to give the hon. Lady the assurance that she seeks.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

New Clause

PUBLIC REGISTERS OF INFORMATION

Lords amendment: No. 250, after Clause 115, insert the following new Clause—

("Publicity

.—(1) The Secretary of State shall maintain a register ("the register") containing prescribed particulars of or relating to—

(a) notices given or other information furnished under section 102 above;

(b) directions given under section 102(8) above;

(c) prohibition notices;

(d) applications for consents (and any further information furnished in connection with them) and any advice given by the committee appointed under section *(advisory committee for purposes of Part VI)* below in relation to such applications;

(e) consents granted by the Secretary of State and any information furnished to him in pursuance of consent conditions;

(f) any other information obtained or furnished under any provision of this Part;

(g) convictions for such offences under section 112 above as may be prescribed;

(h) such other matters relating to this Part as may be prescribed;

but that duty is subject to section *(exclusion from register of certain information)* below.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State—

(a) to secure that the register is open to inspection by members of the public free of charge at all reasonable hours; and

(b) to afford to members of the public facilities for obtaining copies of entries, on payment of reasonable charges.

(3) The register may be kept in any form.

(4) The Secretary of State may make regulations with respect to the keeping of the register; and in this section "prescribed" means prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State.")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Mr. Elliot Morley (Glanford and Scunthorpe): I beg to move amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, in paragraph 1(d), after "below", to insert "or any other committee".

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss amendment (b) to the Lords amendment; and Lords amendment No. 251 and amendment (a) thereto.

Mr. Morley: The issue of genetically modified organisms has not received the attention that it deserves, although it has far-ranging consequences. I hope that new developments in this country will be beneficial, and the research has a potential for good for our food and agriculture industries. However, there is no doubt that we need a tight framework to ensure that such research—especially that involving the release of genetically modified organisms into the environment—is carried out in a way that is tightly controlled and open to public scrutiny.

I am grateful for the concessions accepted in the Lords amendments. I am aware that the Government appreciate the importance of these issues and that they have gone a long way towards dealing with some of the worries expressed by the Opposition and other organisations.

We welcome the significant changes in Lords amendment No. 250, particularly the setting up of a register of information for the regulatory procedure. The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment will have its advice published in the register for the public to see, but other committees, particularly the Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification, do not seem to be empowered in the new clause to have their recommendations and advice published for the public to see. I imagine that there may be an amalgamation of advice from both committees and from the Health and Safety Executive, so it would make sense if the Government accepted our amendment to allow other relevant committees to have their advice published for the public to see.

As for amendment (b), although we accept that applications for consent will be registered, the Lords amendment does not seem to provide for information on future revocations or variations of consent to be registered. I know that it was argued in the Lords that there are registers under subsection (1)(c) and (d), but it does not seem clear whether that will be allowed under the Lords amendment, even though I appreciate that the Secretary of State has powers under subsection (1)(h) to prescribe other matters, and that he can use those powers to clarify the situation, whether or not the information is included in the amendment.

We need to examine commercial confidentiality. I realise that, when research involving the release of genetically modified organisms is being carried out, people may for various reasons want to sabotage the experiments by undermining them commercially; so many people would accept that it is reasonable to keep secret the details of a site where the experiments had been carried out. But it is not justifiable to keep secret details about the company or institution carrying out the experiments. Such information must be available to the public. General information about the operation should also be made public, so that people can see what is going on.

I know that there are difficulties in keeping a site where genetically modified organism experiments are taking place secret, but it is not unreasonable to expect general information about such experiments to be provided. I see no reason why the names of the companies and institutions concerned should not be provided for people who have an interest in these matters—that is merely part of the accountability which I am sure the Government would accept is essential for sensitive experiments of this nature.

5.30 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): This is a legal minefield. Because of time constraints, I will ask the Minister only one question. Is there any working party or group in the Department of the Environment or in any of the other Ministries—such as the Department of Trade and Industry—that may be as directly or more directly involved in the thorny, difficult and intractable question of the patenting of animals? It raises many difficult issues of patent law, and it is crucial that someone should sort them out.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): I associate myself with the opening remarks of the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley), and agree that genetically modified organisms have considerable potential for benefiting mankind, but that they must be carefully controlled and managed. Like all scientific advances, they offer the potential for harm as well as good.

The Lords amendments give statutory backing to our previously declared policy on public access to information about part VI matters, and establish a public register of information. Amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 250 would require details of advice given to the Secretary of State for the Environment by "any other committee" to be recorded in the register. That is not necessary, because information on the register will relate solely to part VI, and only the committee established by virtue of amendment No. 253, which we have yet to consider, will be relevant to consideration of the matters in question.

In practice, that committee will be the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment, the composition and terms of reference of which we announced last April. There are others concerned with genetically modified organisms, such as the Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee but they are not directly concerned with environmental safety, so their advice would not be relevant to the matters to which the part VI register relates.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked about the patenting of animals. I confirm that colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry are negotiating on an EC directive covering precisely that issue, which I hope reassures the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Morley: Does not the Minister agree that in terms of the specialised subject of release, there would be a purpose to seeking the advice of the Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No. A matter concerning environmental safety will fall to be considered by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment.

The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe spoke also to amendment (b) to Lords amendment No. 250, which would require details of revocations and variations of consents, and so on, to be included in the register. Again, I assure him that that is unnecessary. Lords amendment No. 250, subsection (1) requires the register to include particulars of, or relating to, a number of notices —including, in paragraph (d), applications for consents. It is clear that revocations and variations of such consents are included, and that effect is given to amendment (b) by the existing subsection (1).

Amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 251 would modify the Secretary of State's ability to exclude information from the register, on the ground that its exclusion might result in damage to the environment. All member states of the Community agree in principle that there must be such a provision, and a similar measure exists in the directive on access to information on the environment adopted in June. I assure the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe that the ability to exclude information is a reserve power that will be used only with the greatest discretion.

The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe suggested that experiments and tests might be sabotaged if it were known that releases were taking place in a certain way, at a particular location. I can give an example to illustrate his point. The release of a genetically modified plant might be allowed only under specified conditions that might include—I cite a particular instance from the continent—the requirement that the plants are covered with bags to prevent dissemination of the seeds and their uncontrolled dispersal into the environment. Were the plot to be sabotaged, dispersal could occur, thereby damaging the environment, which would be the exact opposite of the intention of the conditions under which the experiment was allowed to proceed.

In such cases, disclosure of too much information could lead indirectly to environmental damage. On those grounds, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will, on reflection, choose not to press the amendment.

Mr. Morley: I am grateful to the Minister for his assurances, but I must press him on the role of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment. While it could be argued that its terms of reference cover releases of genetic material into the environment, the Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee is meant to consider the environmental consequences of escape from containment of genetically modified material. Is not there a case for the ACGM giving advice on containment experimentations, which ought to be recorded for public scrutiny?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: If such a matter for concern came before the Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee, it would properly refer it to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment. In those circumstances, the matter would be discussed, and advice issued. Therefore, I insist that the wording that amendment (a) seeks to introduce is unnecessary. The committee we are to establish will be adequate for the task, in that it will consider all matters relating to environmental safety.

Mr. Morley: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment to the Lords amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

New Clause

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PURPOSES OF PART VI

Lords amendment: No. 253, before clause 116 insert the following new clause—

(".—(1) The Secretary of State shall appoint a committee to provide him with advice—

(a) on the exercise of his powers under sections 105, 106 and 107 above;

(b) on the exercise of any powers under this Part to make regulations;

and on such other matters concerning his functions under this Part as he may from time to time direct.

(2) The chairman and other members of the committee shall hold and vacate office in accordance with the terms of their appointment.

(3) The Secretary of State shall pay to the members of the committee such remuneration (if any) and such allowances as he may, with the consent of the Treasury, determine."

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Mr. Morley: I beg to move amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, in line 7, leave out from 'concerning' to end of line 8 and insert

'the operation of this part as it may consider desirable'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have to inform the House that amendment No. 253 involves privilege.

Mr. Morley: I emphasise again that we welcome the concessions that the Government have made by establishing the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment, which was announced last April. This amendment seeks clarification on the role of that committee. Will the Minister confirm that the advisory committee will have a wide-ranging area of advice as its remit—for example, what it can do and where it can intervene? We believe that our amendment gives the committee greater freedom to operate within its remit.

Will the Minister confirm that the terms of reference agreed by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment at its first meeting on 3 July will be allowed? The terms of reference were to advise the Health and Safety Commission and Executive, the Secretaries of State, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and other bodies as appropriate on all aspects of human and environmental health and safety, on the introduction into the United Kingdom environment of genetically modified and other novel organisms and in particular to advise on proposals for the specific introduction of research needs and on appropriate regulations and written guidance.

Certainly we should have no quibble with those terms of reference, but the new clause seems more restrictive than the words used in the committee's terms of reference, which refer to all aspects of human and environmental

health and safety. Also, the new clause is not clear about the advice, reference needs and written guidance that the committee refers to.

The Royal Commission on environmental pollution has suggested that the advisory committee should advise on a whole series of headings, such as the scope for categorising releases, the need for research, especially on releases, the undertaking of a review of releases that have been carried out, as well as liaison with overseas organisations. It is also possible that the committee may advise on any need for changes in the legislative procedure in future.

I should also like an assurance that the committee will have the power to produce an annual report, which will include developments that it has been involved with and lessons to be learnt from them.

Will the Minister also assure me that the Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment will have a broad-based representation? I accept that the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment has such a broad base and I congratulate the Minister as it covers a wide range of interested parties, not only on the technical and scientific side but on the wider environment side. I should appreciate assurances that the Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee will also have that broad base.

There is concern about the ethical implications of such research. While I believe that genetically modified organisms—plants and animals—have great potential and could have great advantages, there are a whole series of ethical implications. I understand that a commitment was given to the Lords that the Government would consider such implications, and would make a statement in due course. Can the Minister inform the House at which point in the next Session of Parliament a statement can be expected and what form it will take?

5.45 pm

Mr. Trippier: I respect the point that the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) made about the ethical considerations that must be addressed. He will remember that the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) raised that matter in Committee, and that several members of the Committee commented upon it. I welcome what he said, and that matter will certainly be addressed.

There will be an annual report, and I am glad to be able to give the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe that assurance. However, he must remember his words only five minutes ago, when he was talking about accountability. I agreed with him at the time. With such a complicated and technically obtuse subject as genetically modified organisms, eventually it must be the Secretary of State's responsibility to decide what happens to advice given by the advisory committee, for reasons that I thought we had agreed in the Standing Committee—I shall quickly reiterate them. The Secretary of State for the Environment, who is answerable to the House and ultimately to the country, must be the person who is responsible in law for the committee and for the advice that it gives.

I can confirm to the hon. Gentleman that the statement that I issued in April on the terms and conditions of the advisory committee still stands. I confirm that membership of that committee, which I have already announced, is wide-ranging, and draws from people with incredible expertise in this complicated area. I have had the pleasure and the privilege of meeting all of them. I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he seeks, but I ask him seriously to consider withdrawing the amendment because as it stands, it gives the power to the committee to take powers unto itself with regard to part V of the Bill and, in my wildest dreams, I cannot believe that that is what he intended. I believe that he would wish the Secretary of State of the day, in whichever Government, to have that responsibility. If not, I do not know how on earth he can square it with the comments that he made five minutes ago.

Mr. Morley: I respect the Minister's statements. I also take as a compliment the fact that he said that there may well be another Secretary of State. Perhaps the Opposition have not peaked quite as early as the Minister said we had at the weekend. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment to the Lords amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put and agreed to.

Clause 118

CREATION AND CONSTITUTION OF NEW COUNCILS

Lords amendment: No. 254, in page 123, line 31, at end insert—

("(3A) The Councils shall establish a committee to be called the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (in this Part referred to as "the joint committee").")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 254; Lords amendments Nos. 255 to 258, 264, 268 to 270; Lords amendment No. 271 and amendments (a) and (b) thereto; Lords amendments Nos. 272, 274 to 280; Lords amendment No. 353 and amendment (a) thereto; Lords amendments Nos. 382, 383, 402, 403; Lords amendment No. 404 and Government amendment (a) thereto and 405.

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): I beg to move amendment (a) to the Lords amendment, in line 2, after 'shall' insert

'within one month of the date of the Order coming into effect on or after 1st April 1992 made by the Secretary of State under Section 147(3) below in respect of this section'.

Mr. Gould: It is 15 months or thereabouts since the decision to dismember the Nature Conservancy Council was taken or announced. Few would defend the way in which the matter was handled. Baroness Blatch virtually conceded as much in another place. It was clearly done without consultation, it was a hole-in-the-corner exercise and was a virtual bombshell, which exploded to the great consternation of the NCC, its staff and the entire conservation world.

I suppose that one could say that the decision was another of those poisoned chalices that the current Secretary of State's predecessor bequeathed to him. The list extends from opposition to dog registration, to the poll tax, to dismemberment of the NCC. I find it surprising that the Secretary of State somehow manages to convey that he has no sympathy with so much that is central to the

[Mr. Gould]

Department's policy, including those issues, as well as targets on carbon dioxide emissions. Nor can it be said that the passage of 15 months has done much to improve the welcome that those proposals have received.

The Government's decision is still condemned by the overwhelming majority of conservation organisations. I shall select one example—not entirely at random—but simply because it is a representative voice of the conservation world. In a briefing issued this morning, the Council for the Protection of Rural England said that it "remains of the opinion that these proposals for reform have been mismanaged from start to finish."

It reiterated its view that

"the best way forward would have been for Part VII to have been deleted from the Bill and reorganisation addressed as a central part of the White Paper".

We understand that, unfortunately, that option is no longer open to us. We regret that, but it is worth noting that that remains the view of the CPRE, and of so many of the other major conservation organisations.

The concern expressed by the staff of the Nature Conservancy Council has not diminished during those 15 months. If anything, it has increased. Earlier this year a ballot of NCC staff revealed that only one person supported the Government's proposals for every 10 people who were opposed to them. In a recent ballot this month we discovered that that ratio has moved substantially against the Government. It is now 17:1.

That is not because, as Ministers have on occasion offensively suggested, the staff have voted solely in their self-interest. As the staff pointed out, they are well acquainted with the fact, and welcome it, that their jobs are not threatened. No job is threatened and few members of the staff will have to move. Furthermore, it is expected that the number of jobs will increase. When, however, they were asked whether they believed that the proposals would benefit nature conservation, only 39 of the 1,332 staff employed by the Nature Conservancy Council could bring themselves to say yes. The Government ought to accept that that was a principled statement by the staff, entirely divorced from their own self-interest, as to how they see nature conservancy being served by the Government's policies.

Mr. Dalyell: Will my hon. Friend allow me to give him the figures for Scotland? The Scots were supposed to be in favour of this nonsense. The fact is that 21 people were in favour of it, whereas 112 were against it. From my personal knowledge I know that the 112 include many of those who care most and know most. There were 26 "don't knows". Those are the Scottish figures.

Mr. Gould: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He has removed a sedulously fostered myth. While the ratio of opposition is not quite so high in Scotland as in the rest of the United Kingdom, it is still—at 5:1—absolutely overwhelming.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): It is strange to extrapolate from the figures produced by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) the belief that the Scots are enthusiastic about the proposition that the hon. Gentleman advocates. No part of the country has been rendered more desolate than Caithness and Sutherland by the malign influence of the Nature Conservancy Council. I believe, therefore, that the Government have got this absolutely right and that the Scots are behind them. I hope that the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) will make it absolutely clear from the Opposition Front Bench that if the Labour party wins the next election it will not seek to reverse the Government's sensible decision.

Mr. Gould: The hon. Gentleman's somewhat intemperate attitude and language are pointed up by his total failure to understand what my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) said. The hon. Gentleman is wrong to say that my hon. Friend advanced evidence in support of some proposition. It is the Government who have advanced a proposition. My hon. Friend advanced evidence to show to what extent that proposition is opposed by those who are most directly and expertly informed about the matter.

Far from the Labour party believing that the Government have got it right, I want to say straight away that although we well understand the need to devolve and decentralise many of the Nature Conservancy Council's functions, which the NCC also recognises, we have also made it clear that it is neither a necessary nor an acceptable part of that exercise to do unnecessary and violent damage to the cause of nature conservation throughout the country.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): Since the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) may unwittingly be interpreted as having criticised the work of the Nature Conservancy Council in Scotland, may I point out that I visited his constituency earlier this year and discussed with one of his constituents the splendid work that the NCC has carried out on a friend's farm in the Caithness area? Its record of service in protecting that farm, in co-operation with a highly responsible farmer, does not suggest that the hon. Gentleman's criticisms should be quite so bitter as they may appear in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Gould: My hon. Friend may have been misled into thinking that the hon. Gentleman's criticism of the NCC was unwitting. I understand that, because so often what the hon. Gentleman says does sound unwitting. On this occasion, however, I feel that one has to concede that it was witting, whatever that may mean.

The Government do not carry public opinion with them because they have failed to satisfy the concern about the gap that has been left by the demise of the Nature Conservancy Council, a point that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland obtusely refuses to acknowledge. We have repeatedly made it clear that we accept the case for decentralisation, but we do not accept that it is right to carve that great hole in the nature conservation effort throughout the United Kingdom.

It is also clear that many functions of both a national and an international character can be carried out only by a national body. There is no dispute between the Government and ourselves on the point. The Government recognise it. Why else would they have recognised the need to create, by amendments even at this late stage and by means, I imagine, of more provisions still to come, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee? Why else would they have gone to such great lengths to create that body if if were not designed to fulfil those national and international functions that are left unfulfilled after the demise of the NCC?

Although there will be a dispute, in which I intend to participate, about the precise functions of the JNCC and its staffing, relations with other bodies, funding and location, it is impossible to say—except as between the rest of the House and the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland—that there is any dispute about the fact that there is a gap to be filled. The JNCC is the Government's response to the need to fill that gap. Having acknowledged that such a gap must be filled, the Government have failed to use the time at their disposal to prepare the JNNC properly for its new responsibilities. It is that which is now giving cause for concern.

The question is no longer—perhaps regrettably from our viewpoint—whether the Government were right or wrong in principle. The question now is whether they were competent in practice in preparing that body for its new role. It is in that area that the real concerns persist. It is for that precise reason that there was such uproar in another place when Lady Blatch mishandled—one has to say, with all kindness—the explanation to their Lordships of the Government's proposal. It is because those concerns persist that we have tabled the amendment and wish to press it.

The competence of the new body is a cause for concern. It was that question that caused such embarrassment to the Minister of State's junior ministerial colleague. I cannot recall any other Committee in which a Minister has wriggled for so long on a hook of his own creation and found it so difficult to get off it. Fair-minded Members on both sides of the House who sat on the Committee will recognise that that is a fair description of what happened.

If we take the nub of the matter—who decides what is and what is not a Great Britain responsibility—the problem is that the JNCC does not have the power to resolve it. That is one reason why very great and fundamental concerns persist about the JNCC's role. I do not want to be too critical of Professor Holliday, but the confusion was not helped by an exchange that took place at a meeting on 26 September.

I have a verbatim record of what was said. It was put to him in the following terms:

"It doesn't seem very likely to me in view of this that the Committee"—

that is, the JNCC—

"is going to survive for very long at all. It will simply wither away to a core which will consist of international matters because everything else in say five years will be drawn back by the country agencies."

That is a reference to this precise jurisdictional point. Professor Holliday responded to the suggestion that the JNCC might wither away by saying:

"Yes. Well, you may be right. I hope you're not."

We all know the difficulty of responding to points such as that in a meeting and I should not wish to hold Professor Holliday to that response. It did not help. It left the well-founded worry about the control of the JNCC over its own functions and the apparent endorsement—I put it no higher than that—of the suggestion that it might wither away because the country bodies would draw back from it the powers claimed. That apparent endorsement was unhelpful to the concerns expressed on that point.

Mr. Trippier: I am following the hon. Gentleman's speech closely and I do not think that he will have any difficulty in answering the question that I wish to put to him. It is an extension of what was said by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan). The House must understand what the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) is saying. Is he saying that, in the unlikely event of a Labour Government taking power, the JNCC would become a quango and have authoritative power, or would he leave it with the scientific responsibility that is proposed in the United Kingdom or what? I think that that requires only a couple of sentences.

6 pm

Mr. Gould: Let me preface what I say by acknowledging the Minister's recognition of the possibility of a Labour Government. That is a welcome advance.

The choice offered by the Minister is misleading and that is why the Government have got into trouble. Before the JNCC can exercise what the Minister described as its "scientific responsibility", it has to know over what areas and over what issues it has the power to exercise those functions. That is where the problem arises It has no power to make that decision. If for any reason the country bodies decide that a particular issue, however much it may seem common sense, is not a Great Britain issue, the JNCC is left powerless.

Mr. Dalyell: Professor Holliday has been a friend of mine ever since his Stirling days. He is an extremely candid, frank and realistic man. He has stated the facts. I understand that the Government have not given him a chief officer in the JNCC. Heaven knows how it expects to be ready by April.

Mr. Gould: As always, the problem is that points come thick and fast. My hon. Friend is right on all that he said. In the exchange from which I quoted, Professor Holliday described what had been perpetrated as a "camel", and one understands what he meant by that analogy.

In answer to the Minister's question, there should be rules to resolve this point. My view is that the JNCC should be able to decide what is and what is not a Great Britain issue. It is plainly unsatisfactory to leave the JNCC in its present circumstances without any such power and with the possibility always that its budget and the definitions of what it can do are not within its control and can be retrieved. That is why Professor Holliday was tempted, if I may put it that way, to make the concession that he did in the passage that I have just read out.

The next concern is the dispute that has arisen about whether the JNCC should also be able to deal with countryside matters. The answer seems to be that it should not. However, the waters have been muddied by the Government's equivocation in their White Paper and on other occasions over the possible need for further legislation—I cannot imagine why we should have to wait for further legislation—to amalgamate the functions of the JNCC and the Countryside Commission in England. If it is a good idea—apparently it has been decided that it is in Scotland and Wales—why not in England? Why cannot the Government make up their mind? It is hard to follow the Government's logic.

There are also the more fundamental disputes about the costs of reorganisation and the increase in the budget that will be needed to fund adequately the new arrangements, bearing it in mind that the JNCC has no control over its budget. Sir William Wilkinson, the chairman of the NCC, has been repeatedly—and I believe unfairly—criticised by Ministers for claims that he has made about the costs involved. It is now clear that Sir William Wilkinson was

[Mr. Gould]

right. He could not defend himself because he was relying on the Inbucon report, commissioned by the Department of the Environment, to which he had access. He knew that the figures that he was quoting were offered and confirmed by that report. Because at that time Ministers had decided that the report was not available for publication, Sir William Wilkinson was left defenceless against the charge made by Ministers that he was inventing the figures.

Mr. Maclennan: Sir William Wilkinson has admitted to me and stated publicly that he exaggerated the figures by a factor of three. He spoke about £30 million when the reality of the Government's proposals was £10 million.

Mr. Gould: I do not know whether it is fair to ask the hon. Gentleman whether he has read the Inbucon report. Before he again expresses himself so intemperately, particularly against somebody who is not here to defend himself, he should read that report. He will see why Sir William Wilkinson used the figure of £30 million. It is not his figure, but is contained in the Inbucon report. We now have the advantage of knowing what is in the report. In an amazing volte face in another place, Baroness Blatch suddenly announced that it was the Department's view that the report was now the property of the NCC and that it was up the NCC to decide whether to publish it. It has now done so. Therefore, for the first time, we and everybody else are able to decide whether Sir William Wilkinson was justified in basing his arguments on those figures. There they are in the report.

Because it became clear that the report would be published, the Government have now confirmed that the direct administrative costs of the reorganisation that they have proposed will be £9·18 million and that an additional 254 staff will be required. I observe—as has been observed in another place and on other occasions—that if the Labour party had been in Government and had brought forward proposals costing that amount and requiring such a large number of additional staff for no advantage but purely as an administrative rearrangement, we should have been criticised and there would have been a tremendous outcry.

Mr. Trippier: I am trying desperately to be fair and patient with the hon. Gentleman. Surely he is not asking the House to stretch its credulity to such an extent as to believe that there will be no advantage when so many hon. Members, including some of his hon. Friends, have acknowledged that the purpose of the Government's legislation is to bring about nature conservation and make it more effective at community level.

Mr. Gould: No doubt the Minister has been saying that for the past 15 months. I simply refer him to the point that I made earlier, which is that he has failed to convince anyone of any reputation in the conservation world. I thought that I was being kind to him when I said that there was no obvious advantage to be gained from the expenditure. The truth is, as everybody interested in nature conservation agrees, that there is considerable disadvantage.

It is clear from perusal of the Inbucon report why Sir William Wilkinson constantly referred to a figure of £10 million as the administrative cost and a total cost of between £20 million and £30 million. The Inbucon report says that £20 million is

"the minimum necessary to ensure that the new agencies can carry out their statutory obligations."

It goes on to say that £30 million is required to deliver the "enhanced conservation believed essential to tackle issues in the decade to come."

I have already had a hasty and ill-thought-out reply from the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), but I want to know from the Minister whether he accepts the assessments and the figures produced by the Inbucon report. We need to know whether, if they are accepted, the Government now commit themselves to funding those increased sums.

The most urgent concern is about the preparedness of the new agencies. That is the issue to which our amendment is directed. We are concerned particularly about staffing. The latest figures on vacancies are extremely worrying. I have been provided with the most up-to-date table. The figures show, for example, that the percentage of posts filled at the headquarters of the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland is only 44 per cent.—56 per cent. vacancies. We have heard that only 46 per cent. of posts at the headquarters of the Countryside Council for Wales have been filled—54 per cent. vacancies. Only at the Nature Conservancy Council headquarters in England is the percentage of posts filled more than 70 per cent. That is desperate. We simply cannot expect those bodies to be ready by 1 April when they are still suffering such immense staff shortages.

Naturally, we should like to press the Government to give us an assurance that those vacancies will be filled. I fear that that is now a forlorn hope; that there is no prospect of filling all those vacancies in time for 2 April 1991. Let us again be kind to the Minister: can he give an assurance that in every case where the target is not met, at least 70 per cent.—that is a pretty limited target—of vacancies will have been filled by 2 April 1991? If he cannot give that assurance—I shall listen carefully to his reply to see whether he can—how does he expect the new agencies to operate?

Is it not the case that total confusion reigns in the preparations that have been made; that the Countryside Council for Wales is so short staffed that its finances will continue to be run from Peterborough for at least the first year; that the two Scottish bodies, the NCC and the Countryside Commission, will remain in their separate offices in Edinburgh and Perth for at least the foreseeable future; that Mr. Ian Mercer has still not accepted the job of chief executive of the Countryside Commission of Wales, although that offer was made some months ago; and that no decision has been taken on where the JNCC will be located and no chief officer has yet been appointed?

The charge is not so much that the Government have got it wrong—that they have damaged nature conservation unnecessarily—but that they cannot even retrieve the position that they have created because of hopeless confusion and unpreparedness. As Melanie Griffiths said in *The Guardian* recently,

"Malice has now been superseded by incompetence."

In protest against that incompetence and the cavalier disregard of nature conservation, we shall press our amendment.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): It is astonishing to listen to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) trying to

find a difficulty for every solution and moaning and carping about the excellent progress that has been made towards the implementation of the Bill on 1 April 1991.

I was at an NCC meeting this morning, where there was no panic or long drawn faces that the target that has been set for Scotland and Wales cannot be achieved. Nobody appreciates more than the council that its staff must be helped into the right places at the right time. The vast majority of the staff at Peterborough and at the NCC in England will be staying in post. Some are volunteering to go to Wales, some are volunteering to go to Scotland, some are volunteering to return to another civil service post and others are taking early retirement.

There is not the difficulty with staff that the hon. Gentleman suggested. Until it has resolved who should go to which post, the figures that the hon. Gentleman gave for shortages in Wales and Scotland will be true, but there is no question but that we shall have adequate staff in place in Wales and Scotland by next spring.

Mr. Gould: I am interested in what the hon. Gentleman is saying. If I understand him correctly, he may be taking it on himself to offer an assurance that staff will be available and that the vacancies that I mentioned will be filled. Would he care to put a figure on it, and should we accept his assurance as being as valuable as that of the Government?

Sir Hector Monro: I cannot give an assurance that is more important than the Government's; I am only a member of the council. I said that there is no panic in Peterborough about resolving problems. After all, there is still a considerable number of months to go until 1 April. Much work is being done and, there is confidence that it will be carried out for 1 April.

Mr. Dalyell: As the hon. Gentleman is responsible, possibly more than anybody else, for bringing the tartan curtain down, why did 184 of his staff at Peterborough vote against him and only three vote for him? How could that be?

6.15 pm

Sir Hector Monro: When one has been a member of the council for as long as I have, one realises that there is much advantage in the devolution proposed. For heaven's sake, if I thought that nature conservation in Scotland was 100 per cent., I would not support the Bill, but I do not think it is. There is much to do in Scotland, England and Wales. It is very much better that each country looks after its own responsibility. The hon. Gentleman is flogging a horse that was never even a runner.

Two or three years ago, I thought, "Goodness me, couldn't we look after the problems of Caithness much better from Edinburgh than we do from Peterborough? Would it not be much better if our chief scientist was in Edinburgh instead of Peterborough? Would it not be better if we were able to look after our own affairs?" It is important that nature conservation problems are tackled locally. It is much easier to do that in Scotland if one is based in Edinburgh and has staff in regional offices throughout Scotland.

I accept that that will cost more money, but I want it to cost more money, because that is the only way that we shall achieve better results. The NCC for Scotland must have additional regional offices and sub-offices so that more of its officials are spread across Scotland, and that can be equated to Wales and England. We are spread far too thinly on the ground; we are losing the community touch, which is so important. Local thought must go into nature conservation.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has been so strongly in favour of nature conservation over the years and was very much to the forefront during proceedings on the Wildlife and Countryside Bill. I cannot understand why he cannot see the advantages of running this operation from Edinburgh or from wherever we decide to run it. I accept the possibility of an alternative location, but Edinburgh is more likely to be the office that will deal with our national heritage.

The hon. Member for Dagenham did not begin to make a case for splitting the NCC again. I accept his comments about our proposal costing money, but it is unreasonable for the Opposition to press the Government, before the Bill is passed, on how much money will be available. Ministers for Scotland, England and Wales have always said that sufficient money will be available to fulfil the responsibilities that we are asking the devolved councils to carry out.

Lords amendment No. 254 establishes the JNCC and states what its responsibilities and composition will be. Over the past six months, we have known that Sir Frederick Holliday would be chairman and we know that Lord Cranbrook, Magnus Magnusson and Mr. Michael Griffiths from Wales will run the respective councils. One cannot accept that those four gentlemen, who are of the highest calibre in conservation in the United Kingdom, would put their names to the whole operation if they did not think that it would be successful.

Mr. Trippier: I am hugely enjoying my hon. Friend's words, and I am grateful for his support for this legislation. I want to continue with his point. Could anyone seriously expect the four individuals whom my hon. Friend has catalogued for the benefit of the House to fail to ensure that the number of staff required were in place at the appropriate moment?

Sir Hector Monro: I should be very surprised if those four men were not determined to have the staff in place. The chief officials, the designated chief officials and the current permanent staff are also determined on that. Everything is working smoothly. Of course, no one says that it will be easy to get the calibre of staff that we require, but there is a determination to achieve that and to have everything running by next summer.

I see no reason why we should fall down on any of our statutory duties, such as the notification and renotification of sites of special scientific interest or the implementation of management agreements. As the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) said, the new bodies will be able to keep a closer eye on the problems of the flow country, which he has so rightly highlighted in the House for many years.

We should welcome this group of Lords amendments. I know that we shall keep an eye on the common standards of designation of SSSIs, and it will be the overall duty of the joint committee to keep standards in each country as high as they are at present. All that is good for the establishment of the joint committee, which will have functions in Great Britain and internationally. The Government are right to accept the Lords amendments, and I give them my full support.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): I will address my remarks to amendment (b) to Lords amendment No. 271, which is also supported by Liberal Democrat Members. The amendment is a probing amendment, as we want the Government to explain their attitude to the dumping of nuclear waste. The amendment would allow the Nature Conservancy Council to make recommendations to local authorities about the effects of the dumping of nuclear waste on nature conservation in their areas. I should like the Government to explain their attitude to the important question of nuclear dumping, and especially its effects on nature conservancy. How will nuclear dumping relate to the work of the Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland or of the Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, if the Lords amendment is agreed to? During the passage of the Bill, the Government have said nothing about this important issue.

It seems incredible that a Bill concerned with the environment does not mention nuclear dumping, which is the major issue in Scotland. The Government may have thought that they were in trouble over the poll tax, in view of the reaction of the Scottish people, but I assure them that that will be as nothing compared with the massive outcry and anger throughout Scotland if a decision is taken to carry out nuclear dumping in our country.

What is the relationship between the Nature Conservancy Council and local government? Amendment (b) allows for contact with local government, which means contact with democracy in Scotland, through democratically elected councils which can speak on behalf of local people. In northern Scotland, the councils have already spoken out strongly against nuclear dumping. They have held plebiscites and have taken soundings of opinion.

Local authorities also have responsibility for industry. Nuclear dumping would strongly affect employment and industry, especially tourism, farming and fishing. Surely any nature conservancy body should have something to say on this and should be in contact with local government to describe the problems, difficulties and consequences of plans to dump nuclear waste.

Dumping sites are being proposed for Dounreay, but they could appear elsewhere. The problem affects the whole of Scotland, especially with the transportation of nuclear waste, which will affect land, sea and, possibly, air. Any nature conservancy body worth its salt should be able to be in contact with local authorities, which will be left with many of the practical problems.

It is hard to envisage that any conservation body would have recommended that Nirex be given planning permission to test bore at Dounreay or anywhere else in Scotland. The consequences of waste dumping for nature conservation could be serious, given the danger and problems associated with deep level storage and the transportation of nuclear waste.

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): Would the hon. Gentleman suggest that nuclear waste from Chapelcross near Annan in Scotland should be dumped in England?

Mr. Welsh: If the hon. Gentleman cares to study my party's policy, he will find the answer to that question and to others affecting nuclear dumping. The important point is that any Government worth their salt would ensure that nuclear garbage was not created because it exacerbates the problems. The hon. Gentleman's own party should look carefully at its policies, which would create extra waste to be disposed of. We have to take care of the problem that has already been created, and my party has answers to that. We are especially concerned not to increase the problem, because one should never accelerate into a position where there could be an accident.

Nuclear waste affects the environment of the whole country due to the transportation of such environmentally dangerous products by land, by sea and, perhaps, by air. I have heard of bad neighbours but, in planning terms, the combination of nuclear waste and environmental protection is ridiculous.

Amendment (b) would offer the opportunity for a dialogue between the new conservancy body and the local authorities. That is especially relevant when one considers the economic impact of nuclear dumping on the economy of the rural areas, whose basic industries of fishing, farming and tourism depend on the public perception of a clean environment. That is very much to the fore in the work of the Nature Conservancy Council.

The new conservation body should have the power to investigate the impact of nuclear dumping on all the possible sites in Scotland. Nirex has 12 sites in reserve, although it has so far declined to disclose them. Wherever the problem occurs, contact should be possible so that the effects are clearly made known to the local authorities. The Nature Conservancy Council cannot ignore the effect of nuclear dumping, although the Bill tries to do so. What is the point of cleaning up the environment in Scotland only to have Scotland turned into the world's nuclear dustbin? That must not happen. We do not need or want this stuff. Scotland must not be treated in this fashion.

Will the Minister tell us what is the role of the Nature Conservancy Council in the nuclear dumping debate? How can it intervene and what is its relationship with the local authorities which are the planning and economic authorities in Scotland? What advice can the council give on these important issues? We have tabled the amendment to elicit comment from the Government about the role and powers of the Nature Conservancy Council when faced with one of the most important environmental issues.

Mr. Trippier: I should not like the hon. Gentleman to sit down without getting it off his chest that he was a strong supporter of part VII of the Bill, notwithstanding his questions, which I hope to address later.

Mr. Welsh: The Minister knows that I favour maximum devolved power to Scotland and that I want to see a vastly increased and better resourced nature conservancy body in Scotland, because the Scottish environment deserves that. The Minister is well aware of that, because I made it clear in Committee.

The amendment has been tabled to enable us to ask the Minister about the relationship between the Nature Conservancy Council and the local authorities on the important question of nuclear dumping. That issue will be very much to the fore in Scottish politics—it will be the hottest issue around. The Scottish people will rise up in anger against any plans for nuclear dumping in our country. If the Government do not know that already, they will certainly find it out. Will the Minister explain the relationship and explain what powers the body will have and what it will do on this, the most important of issues in Scotland?

6.30 pm

Mr. Hardy: On Second Reading, I kept my promise to make a reasonably short speech. My speech today will be even shorter. On Second Reading, I had to devote most of the time available to me to the pernicious and continuing problem of toxic waste in my constituency. I do not propose to refer to that matter now, but on that occasion it meant that I could say only one or two words about the future of the Nature Conservancy Council. Had I had the opportunity then, I should have liked to support the arguments advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould)—a relevant aspiration on this occasion—and to ask the House to consider the following proposition. It is only three or four years since the NCC's headquarters in Peterborough were officially opened—it is not as though, before the Government's proposal, the NCC had been languishing in incompetent idleness for decades. The people there, who are dedicated and competent people, had been operating in Peterborough for only a short time.

I had the privilege to speak at the opening ceremony. I recall that the three people on the platform then were the then Secretary of State for the Environment, now Lord Jenkin, Sir William Wilkinson, and myself. I remember vividly that the then Secretary of State made the sort of preposterous claim that some of the Minister's colleagues may shortly be making as we approach the general election —indeed, the Minister may not be able to resist the temptation to make them himself. Lord Jenkin suggested at that gathering that only the Conservative party and the Conservative Government were interested in the environment. He actually claimed that every environmental Bill that had gone through Parliament in the previous 40 years had come from a Conservative Government. That claim was regarded as preposterous by most of the distinguished members of the gathering. I suspect that if that distinguished gathering were asked now whether it approved of the Government's approach on this matter, a response similar to that presented by my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham would be forthcoming.

I fear that this whole development is an exercise in the divide-and-rule principle. In my view, there is an urgent need for an increase in the resources available for nature conservation. Instead we are to have, at the very least a hiccup in the council's commitment and activities. Only last year, the conservation bodies of Britain, led by the Royal Society for Nature Conservation, published a document called "Losing Ground". I hope that the Minister has read it. It is a stark and serious representation of the damage being done to our environment, not least to our SSSIs sites of special scientific interest. It seems to me to be singularly unfortunate that the Government should be inflicting major changes on our official conservation structures at a time when the environment is in retreat.

I shall not criticise people such as the chairman of the English conservancy council. Lord Cranbrook, like his father, has a substantial record and that body will undoubtedly seek to make the best of a bad job. The Minister should bear in mind, however, that it is not all that long since Lord Rayner was set upon the Nature Conservancy Council as part of the Marks and Spencer exercise to detect inefficiency in the public service. Lord Rayner may have been able to detect inefficiencies in certain parts of the Government, but I think that the Minister will confirm that the principal conclusion reached in respect of the NCC was that it did not have sufficient resources.

The most sensible approach that the Government could have adopted would have been to ensure that the resources were available and certainly not to take part in an exercise that will delay the defence of our environmental and ecological inheritance, which is under continuing threat and has not been helped by the Government's proposals.

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) seems to assume that I come unwitting and unprepared to this debate. I must disabuse him of that assumption. Unlike him, I have seen the depredations of the Nature Conservancy Council in my constituency. It has planned to extend the area covered by sites of special scientific interest to 230,000 hectares of Caithness and Sutherland. I presume that the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), who argued by anecdote, was speaking of Mr. Sam Sinclair—a farmer for whom I have great admiration. The hon. Gentleman should extrapolate from that modest experience an understanding of the blight that the NCC is casting not only on my constituency but on large tracts of the highlands of Scotland, which he is kind enough to grace with his presence on holiday from time to time, and get more closely to grips with the problems of the highlands.

The one species that is at risk now is the human species. Sir William Wilkinson, whose praises have been sung on a number of occasions by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has had the effrontery to suggest that the flow country of Caithness and Sutherland, which he proposes to protect by means of SSSIs, is one of the wonders of the world—comparable with the Taj Mahal. Would that that were so—would that we had one tithe of the visitors to the Taj Mahal to boost the flagging economy of Caithness and Sutherland, which is being attacked by environmentalists with no knowledge of the country, who know nothing about it and have never even visited the place.

Mr. Morley: I have visited Caithness and Sutherland on many occasions and I have spent some of my own money supporting research programmes for the benefit of the community in that area. I presume that the blight to which the hon. Gentleman refers is the restriction on forestry in the area, but will he confirm that forestry in the area is very heavily subsidised? Before the 1988 tax changes, every job in forestry in that area cost the taxpayer £200,000 or more. Would the hon. Gentleman put internationally agreed nature conservancy obligations, under the agreed definition of SSSIs, before the interests of totally uneconomic forestry?

Mr. Maclennan: I did not necessarily have in mind the interests of forestry. The interests of hill farming and crofting are much longer established in my constituency. Over the years, those activities have provided many more jobs than forestry. Forestry may have prospects for the future——

Mr. Hardy: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Maclennan: No, I must deal with one intervention at a time.

I quote from a letter that I received yesterday from the Highland regional council's director of law and administration:

[Mr. Maclennan]

"Notwithstanding the claim by the Nature Conservancy Council that the SSSI designation carries no presumption against development nor imposes material restrictions, the hill farming community in particular maintain profound reservations. There is continuing concern that the designation imposes the threat of restriction on hitherto normal agricultural and other land use operations. Affected parties are bound to obtain the NCC's agreement before proceeding with so-called potentially damaging operations. . . .The Regional Council would instance the concern and objection against designation voiced by the Caithness branch of the National Farmers Union and riparian owners in respect of the river Feshie where threat to normal and historic operations arises. Provision for appeal in such cases would provide a forum for proper exchange and reconciliation of conflicting views.

Of course, that is the fundamental objection that Highland regional council would wish to express: as a result of section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, there is no forum in which disputes on land use can be settled—either with regard to equity or, for that matter, with regard to conflicting views about what is in the interests of the environment.

What is most disturbing about the views expressed earlier by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) is that he seems to have it in mind, when or if a Labour Government are returned to office, to give the committee whose functions which we are discussing authoritative—perhaps even authoritarian—powers that would go considerably beyond those intended by the Government. I believe that the Government's approach is wholly right, and that the committee should have a more limited role than the role that appears to be advocated by the hon. Member for Dagenham.

I see that the impatient hon. Member for Wentworth wishes to intervene.

Mr. Hardy: It is a natural impatience. The hon. Gentleman has already referred to my earlier intervention.

As the hon. Gentleman is, I believe, currently a member of the Liberal party—or whatever its present name is—in the interests of the political record, will he recognise that his party has for a considerable time donned the green mantle? On many occasions, Liberal spokesmen have called for the defence of the flow country of Caithness and Sutherland because of its enormous international importance. From the hon. Gentleman's speech, I discern that he would be happy to see the important ecological character of the flow country sacrificed in the interests of forestry or food production for a small number of people, but in complete defiance of our international commitments —commitments which other members of his party have enthusiastically supported.

Mr. Maclennan: Probably no Member of Parliament has a greater knowledge of the flow country than I have, as it lies squarely within my constituency. With the greatest respect, I must tell the hon. Member for Wentworth that the flow country amounts to a relatively small area of ground—as it was originally understood in Caithness—which is unsuitable for afforestation and which no one has ever proposed should be afforested.

The flow country was redefined by various acolytes of Sir William Wilkinson to cover what he called the peak lands. The peak lands of Caithness and Sutherland are in no way unique; they are contiguous with those in Ross-shire, Inverness-shire and Argyll, and stretch across half the land mass of Scotland. The idea that, by a process of creeping designation, half of Scotland should be rendered subject to the jurisdiction of the Nature Conservancy Council, and to the restraints on activity that will be in place as a result of the council's designation, is preposterous and shows no sensitivity to the needs of the resident community or, indeed, the desirability of an environment that people from other communities might conceivably wish to visit.

I am delighted that the Government have taken the handling of the difficult and sensitive task of resolving conflicts of interest concerning land use—which have bedevilled the highland question not just for decades but almost for centuries—away from that insensitive body in Peterborough.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): What is wrong with Peterborough?

Mr. Maclennan: The hon. Gentleman obviously regards the Peterborough lot as a sensitive crowd.

Mr. Douglas: I speak as a former member of the Scottish committee of the Nature Conservancy Council. In my day—with Morton Boyd and others—these issues were handled with great sensitivity; however, I am not up to date with some of the current factors. I share the hon. Gentleman's concern, but he should not think that these things were dealt with insensitively in the past. I hope that what the Government propose for the future will mean that the issue will again be treated sensitively.

Mr. Maclennan: The so-called flow country is an invention which did not exist 20 years ago. When I was elected as a Member of Parliament almost a quarter of a century ago, no hon. Member would have known what was meant by the flow country of Caithness. Far from being one of the wonders of the world, it was an impenetrable bog. One or two people wandered up there and looked at some of the rarer mosses, and enthusiasts recently out of college discovered some interesting variants. Of course they were enthusiastic about it and of course, having been given jobs by the Nature Conservancy Council, they sought to persuade people that the rare birds, which are not that rare in Scandinavia, and the grasses and mosses in the bogs of Caithness were of great importance.

I do not quarrel with that view, but I quarrel with the idea that one must have hundreds of thousands of acres to demonstrate their rarity. That is a preposterous suggestion; however, that it should enjoy the support of the Labour party does not come to me as any surprise, because Labour Members have shown no knowledge or understanding of rural matters. I had great problems when I was in the Labour party for just that reason.

6.45 pm

The Government seem to have got a difficult balance just about right. I am delighted with the appointment of Magnus Magnusson to run the Scottish Nature Conservancy Council. I am a strong supporter of nature conservation, and of the conservation of the flow country. Last summer, I went to open up the Spittal centre, in the middle of the flow country, which is designed to inform visitors. It will help them to understand the millions of circulars put out by the Royal Society for the Protection of

Birds. The flow country is certainly interesting and worth seeing, and if I can encourage others to go there my contribution to the debate will not have been in vain.

We cannot accept the idea that this body—against which there is no appeal—should continue to exercise such functions from Peterborough, and be run by a gentleman who is prepared to exaggerate the costs of doing so by a factor of three. It is wrong for the hon. Member for Dagenham to suggest that I have not given some thought to this matter. I have had a long exchange of letters with Sir William Wilkinson on the subject of the cost of these proposals. He has made it abundantly clear that I was right, and that the reorganisation itself is costing less than £10 million. He has constantly stated that it is costing £30 million. It is disreputable for a public employee to seek to mislead Parliament as he has done for so many months. His distortion of the position has soured the debate.

Mr. Gould: As the hon. Gentleman has chosen to repeat those unfortunate charges against a worthy public servant, I think that he should answer a simple question. Has he read the report on the basis of which Sir William Wilkinson made those points?

Mr. Maclennan: In his correspondence with me, Sir William himself has drawn precise attention to the points that the hon. Member for Dagenham has made. I am not at issue with him on the facts. Sir William has admitted that the reorganisation will cost a third of what he originally claimed. That kind of exaggeration is on a par with the suggestion that the flow lands of Caithness are the equivalent of the Taj Mahal.

Mr. Dalyell *rose*——

Mr. Maclennan: I do not wish to take up the time of the House, and I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) will have other opportunities to intervene.

I hope that the new committee, which has an important job to do in drawing together the scientific information that we might wish to use in international forums, will be allowed to get on with that job and will not be seen by some over-enthusiastic advocates of environmental empire-building as the repository of the powers that they would wish to be exercised. It must not be a vehicle for a new quango. It must be what the Government have provided. This is one of the very few areas in which we can say that the Government have got it right in terms of public opinion in the areas most affected by the operations of the NCC—the highlands and islands of Scotland.

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): It is a great pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) and I had particular sympathy with much of what he said. In strengthening the Nature Conservancy Council, as the Government intend, there must nevertheless be a word of warning. For all too many people, a conservationist today is a young man or woman who appears on the scene inappropriately dressed, probably wearing a woolly hat and a dayglo anorak, who proceeds to tell people what they should and should not do with their property.

I believe that the proposals will strengthen the NCC and that is right. Nevertheless, there must be more responsibility with that strengthening. That in turn means that the people who represent the NCC, particularly in Scotland and in Wales, must know what they are talking about. They must know the area.

In the past, people from Peterborough arrived in the highlands of Scotland or on the west coast to tell a farmer whose land was being destroyed, perhaps by the Greenland white-fronted goose, that he must do nothing to stop the geese eating his grass, destroying the field and thus ensuring that the farmer's stock had nothing left to eat. Those farmers make their livelihood from the land. In future, I hope that the people who arrive from the Scottish branch, understand something about the topography of the highlands, and about the way of life and farming in that area. Together with the conservationist ethic, I hope that they will also bring responsibility and a full knowledge of the way of life of those people, so that conservation and knowledge can walk side by side.

Mr. Dalyell: I think that it is time to unsour this debate. I recall that in 1965, like many of my colleagues, I was sweating my guts out in Caithness and Sutherland trying to get the present hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) elected as a Labour Member of Parliament for the constituency. I just cannot remember him telling the electors that they were living in an impenetrable bog. I do not think that he said that. The truth of the matter is that the flow country is nationally important. Bluntly, I can speak only for myself. If the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland is concerned, as he should be, about the future of his constituents, he should look to the future of the fast reactor and the work at Dounreay. However, that is a different subject from the flow country.

I know that other hon. Members want to vote on this issue, so I will cut my speech to the minimum, on condition that we get some clarification from the Secretary of State for the Environment about a point that has been bothering us. He is familiar with the problem: what exactly do the figures amount to? As we understand it, the £9·78 million is just enough to stand still. In order to bring about the necessary improvements or enhancements, at least £20 million to £30 million will be needed.

I promise to shut up if the Secretary of State will come to the Dispatch Box and give us his interpretation of the figures. This is a perfectly serious question. My hon. Friends the Members for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) and for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) have made all the major points. Will the Secretary of State clarify the financial position in relation to the £9·78 million and the chairman's figure of £20 million to £30 million? Will the Secretary of State curtail my speech?

Mr. Trippier: I will reply in a moment.

Mr. Dalyell: Well, it would be more satisfactory if the Secretary of State would reply. I have a long speech with me.

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Chris Patten): I learned many years ago that it is fatal to enter this Chamber while the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is waiting to speak, because on several earlier occasions he has lured me to the Dispatch Box to deliver myself of observations which I would otherwise have kept to myself.

My hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside will shortly reply to the debate. He will reply

[Mr. Chris Patten]

in terms to the point advanced by the hon. Member for Linlithgow on this occasion as on others about the costs of reorganisation. We have returned to that matter several times in the Chamber, and also in Committee.

Over the past decade, we have substantially increased the funds available to the Nature Conservancy Council, to the tune of about 140 per cent. That record contrasts substantially with the record of our predecessors. The amount of money that we make available for reorganisation and for future enhancement of the work of the NCC will ensure that it manages to go from stength to strength, carrying out important for nature conservation within the reorganised framework which we have quite properly put before the House. My hon. Friend the Minister will, I hope, have a chance to address the House on the detailed figures, provided that the hon. Member for Linlithgow allows him to do so within the next two or three hours.

Mr. Dalyell: I will keep to my part of the bargain and resume my seat.

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): I seek clarification about Lords amendment No. 271. I am slightly suspicious about the reference to

"functions which may . . . be discharged only through the joint committee;"

I want some reassurance in particular about the designation of sites of special scientific interest.

The Minister is aware that we very much welcome the creation of separate Nature Conservancy Council bodies for the three nations. I firmly believe that a separate Scottish body will make a significant contribution to better managed conservation and to caring for the whole countryside when it joins with the Countryside Commission.

My party and many other bodies in Scotland welcome the proposal because of the perception, and in many instances the reality, that the NCC was indeed run by a group of faceless scientists in Peterborough who failed to recognise that nature conservation and designation would work only if they took local opinion with them. The absence of that was an arrogance that we could well have done without.

Indeed, there was a time—matters have since improved, I think—when the public image of the NCC in Scotland was at an all-time low. Many people in the field were figures of fun and subjected to ridicule. It must have been difficult for them to operate. I do not want that ridicule to continue. The wildlife habitats in Scotland are as good as they are because of the way in which the land has been managed by the past and present rural population. There would be nothing to designate if crofters and farmers had not looked after their areas.

7 pm

My worry is the imposition of blanket SSSIs occupying large tracts of country. That has happened all too often, and it makes life difficult for crofters and farmers because the owner of the land may do nothing without first obtaining the approval of the NCC. That is when ridicule occurs. As the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) said, young NCC personnel wear woolly hats and dayglo coats and have accents similar to the hon. Gentleman's. It is not accepted happily by crofters and farmers in my part of the country when they are told that they must do this, that and the other to preserve the corncrake, the pine marten or whatever.

Before SSSIs are imposed, the NCC is supposed to carry out a broad scientific survey of an area followed by detailed field investigations. How many sites have been imposed on the basis of superficial surveys? How much indiscriminate conservation has taken place? Thirty-two square miles of land on the island of Isla in my constituency has been designated, but to what purpose? All the concern about which we have heard is rightly for conservation and for habitats, but what about the people? If they are pushed out because of declining land values and an inability to farm or to croft as before, we shall see clearances. I do not say that that will happen. I am confident that, when we in Scotland have our own body, designation will be done with much greater sensitivity.

Mention has been made of Caithness and Sutherland. I too received a letter from the Highland regional council. My hon. Friend the Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) did not give the important figures. The regional council's letter states that the

"designation extends to over 70,000 hectares already and the intentions of the NCC in the whole area of Caithness and Sutherland will extend designation to about 230,000 hectares Also we have evidence of proposals to designate individual areas of vast dimension, one extending to over 400,000 hectares".

We must examine that blanket designation much more carefully in future. Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 was never intended to mean that vast tracts of land would be designated. Rather, it was intended to mean that unique places of scientific interest would be preserved.

The other great worry to people in Scotland, and to my constituents in particular—I hope that it will be rectified when the new body is set up—is that the NCC has been judge and jury and there has been no right of appeal. People are upset that that has happened. I have had many letters from constituents. One constituent says that he recently received notification of the designation of 180 acres of his farm as an SSSI. He said:

"The offending article is a rare . . . (weed) which flowers under"

a loch on his farm. That loch covers 70 acres. He said:

To protect this they have not only notified the loch but also over 100 acres of ground round about it. The agricultural value of this land is small but as it is surrounded by fences and trees and also has a road through the area it is a very valuable site"

for planting broadleaved trees—

"one of the main things I am prohibited from.

In effect they have wiped about £25-30,000 of asset from my farm, plus any potential purchaser of the farm is going to be greatly put off".

A potential purchaser will be put off because of the designation.

He went on to state:

"They inform me I will be entitled to no compensation!"

I hope that there will be a big improvement in what goes on in Scotland. I too welcome the appointment of Magnus Magnusson. It was a master stroke on the part of the Secretary of State to have chosen that gentleman, for all sorts of reasons. I hope that the Minister will assure me that, in future, designation will be in the hands of the Scottish body.

Mr. Morley: The Opposition have tabled amendment (a) to Lords amendment No. 271, in respect of sites of

special scientific interest. The crux of the debate is whether the NCC is being reorganised on the basis of malice or of providing a better delivery of nature conservation services. The way to judge that is based on the scientific delivery of that service.

The same amendment was supported by Lord Carver, who chaired the committee which inquired into the joint co-ordinating committee and the role of the part VII amendment, which was praised by the Government, and also by Lord Buxton. He is not a Labour supporter, but he resigned from the council of the NCC because he was a man of principle and did not like the destruction of the world's oldest nature conservation body and one of the world's best nature concervation bodies.

Anybody who genuinely care about nature conservation would recognise that, if we are to designate and monitor sites of special scientific interest, exactly the same criteria and the same scientific bases for designation must apply in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We cannot have different bases for designation of countryside areas. Apart from anything else, how can we meet our international obligations if we do not have agreed criteria for designation?

Mr. Maclennan: I am interested in the hon. Gentleman's point. It is some long years since I suggested that there should be an attempt to come up with the categories of scientific definition that the hon. Gentleman describes. Does he really believe that we can have such categories across the United Kingdom in respect of places such as the flow country, which is peat bog, in Caithness? There is absolutely no parallel in England.

Mr. Morley: I am pleased that the hon. Gentleman accepts that there should be agreed criteria, but he does not understand how the designations work. It is simple to agree a criterion for designation in terms of, for example, what species are in the data book and what percentage of species are of national or international importance. All those criteria exist at the moment and are well known to scientists.

There is therefore no difficulty about having agreed criteria so that such sites in Scotland, England or Wales are designated on exactly the same basis, so that decisions are not influenced by vested interests or by those people in dayglo coats and woolly hats who may exist in Walthamstow, although I have not come across those mythical creatures either out in the countryside or in the scientific community.

We need to have that basis and those criteria. As Lord Buxton said in the debate in the Lords, if we do not have agreed criteria for designation,

"it can only mean that the reasons behind it are political, bureaucratic, nationalistic or something of that kind, which should have no relation to the standards which are applied to sites of scientific interest."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 23 October 1990; Vol. 522, c. 1306-7.]

It is significant that not a single national nature conservation body in either England or Scotland has been convinced by the Government's argument. There is no doubt that there is an argument for local delivery of nature conservation. Opposition Members believe in that, as do the nature conservation organisations. We believe that we could have a system which delivers nature conservation on a local basis and which involves local people and local decision-making. However, there must be some national criteria for designating sites of scientific importance and for meeting our international obligations, which we do not have at the moment.

The Government must accept the amendment. I ask all reasonable and thinking Members to consider how we can have important sites of scientific interest if decisions on them are to be influenced by vested interests, as has happened in Caithness and Sutherland, be they landowners, foresters or farmers. Sites of special scientific interest involve management agreements. From the point of view of the crofters, who were mentioned by the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan), it is better to have a management agreement that encourages them to stay on the land and to croft in traditional, environmentally friendly ways than to have income support, which is based on packing more and more sheep on to their land, with all the environmental degradation that that involves.

We want a change in support—and I believe that we can achieve it—but we want it on the basis of science, not with the involvement of vested interests. If the Government do not accept the amendment on scientific grounds, they should hang their heads in shame, as should all those who support them, for what is no less than environmental vandalism.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): This is probably the first time that it is an advantage in this House for this hon. Member to have Welsh, Scots and English ancestry. I shall be brief, because hon. Members are gathering in the expectation of a vote.

The debate has been passionate and has aroused strong feelings. That in itself says something about the degree of dissatisfaction with the centralised character of the Nature Conservancy Council. My colleagues and I have always believed that there was a strong argument for the NCC to be devolved to powers in Scotland, England and Wales.

On that principle, we have therefore taken what has at times been an unpopular line and have supported the Government. We have also not argued against—indeed, we have argued in favour of—a co-ordinating role. Time will tell whether the proposed new structure is the right one and whether it is adequately funded. The money that has been allocated may not be sufficient, but we shall see.

7.15 pm

We welcome the scientific advice that it is proposed that the joint committee will offer to the national councils in England, Scotland and Wales because such advice should be given impartially. I agree with the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) that it should be given by a body a step away from the local pressures, so that each nation's decisions can be made by locally well-informed people and, most importantly, to ensure that the decisions that are ultimately reached are made after the proper balance has been struck between environmental and economic considerations as part of a proper debate.

We must ensure that we have the best scientific advice and the best and most appropriately informed local decision making. That is why my hon. Friends and I are signatories to both the amendments. I do not know whether they will be pushed to a vote, but I hope that the Government accept them because I hope that they accept that there is a need for adequate scientific advice relating to the SSSIs.

In answer to the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh), it is equally important to ensure that the environmental arguments against nuclear waste dumping should be heard loudly and clearly. It is very clear, especially in Scotland, that people do not want nuclear waste on their land. Proper Government policy would ensure that they do not have it.

I hope that the Minister will accede to the request that the Government should accept the amendment. I hope that he will listen to the voices that are sceptical about the new arrangements.. I hope that he will give the House an undertaking that, whatever the difficulties of their birth, the new arrangements will enjoy the Government's watchful concern, so that, as and when more resources are needed by conservation bodies, either locally in each of the three nations or across Great Britain, the Government will not be reluctant to produce either the resources or the support for the conservation of what are often among the most important scientific and environmental sites in the world.

Mr. Trippier: I find myself in a unique position. I have never experienced or participated in a debate in which the Government have had the support of three Liberal Members. It is incredibly unnerving but, because of something that I shall reveal to the House in a few moments, I am comforted by the fact that the Liberal peers down the Corridor did not take the same view as the Liberal Members of this House. That is another superb example of the left hand not knowing what the right is doing. Nevertheless, I welcome the support that I have received from those hon. Members today.

The Government's case for reorganising the countryside agencies has been fully spelt out in both Houses on seven separate occasions. We also gave detailed written and oral evidence to the Carver committee and then responded positively to the Carver recommendations. The majority of these substantive amendments translate that positive response into the Bill. So everyone knows where the Government stand.

The same could not really be said for the Labour party —or indeed, as I shall seek to illustrate, for the Liberal Democrats. However, I pay tribute to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) for at last ensuring that we have some insight into the Labour party's thinking, even if there is not an "Earthly Chance" that he will have to worry about how to translate this into action.

I must, however, be fair to the hon. Gentleman—he knows that I often am. In fact, some of what the documemt has to say is surprisingly good. Let me run through a few of its main prescriptions. It states:

"there does need to be devolution of the management of the countryside . . . and nature conservation so that decisioms taken are responsive to the needs of local people and their economic well-being."

That is exactly what part VII is all about and what it is seeking to achieve from next April.

The Labour party document also states:

"We need a body which can take a strategic view of threats"

to the ecology of Britain

"and can ensure that the UK meets its international obligations under EC directives, the Ramsar Agreement amd other similar agreements and treaties".

That is exactly what I shall be expecting the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to cover. That body is notable by its absence from the Labour party's document, in which it did not get even a single mention.

Finally, the Labour party states:

"we want to see an integration of nature conservation and the functions of the Countryside Commission".

At first sight, that seems to mark a major difference, but the document says later that Labour would proceed with a merger only once a consensus had been achieved after extensive consultations. Obtaining consensus from the many interests involved may not be as easy as Labour Members imagine, but even so, I cannot see that there is much daylight between this and the assurance which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State already gave in the Government's White Paper that we would review the case for merging the Countryside Commission and the NCC for England after the new agencies had settled down.

For once, therefore, I must congratulate the Labour Party. It has wrestled with the obvious divisions in its ranks between the nature devolutionist tendency and the nature centralisation tendency.

Mr. Morley: There are no such divisions.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) says that there are no such divisions—as if there were not Conservative Members present who served on the Standing Committee and watched with interest the great divisions on the other side of the Committee. In the same way, we saw divisions in the House on Second Reading. Arm wrestling, not only in the House but in Committee, went on between those groups. It made interesting diversions for all of us.

Mr. Gould: The Minister is living in a fantasy world.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman is hardly qualified to speak: he hardly attended the Standing Committee. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State probably paired for the majority of the time, but I estimate that he attended about five times as many sittings as the hon. Member for Dagenham. After the arm wrestling, the devolutionists came out on top. That is hardly surprising, because the Leader of the Opposition issued a ringing endorsement of the Countryside Council for Wales as long ago as November last year.

The supreme prize for the earliest endorsement of the Government's proposal must go to the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson), who welcomed what he described as a sensible rationalisation. He said that within a few hours of the original announcement.

The hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) spoke to amendment (b) to amendment No. 271. The amendment is completely unnecessary. The existing NCC has never lacked the power to give advice to all the relevant authorities on matters which relate to nature conservation. The new bodies will be in exactly the same position. There will be no change.

Any proposal for the disposal of low-level waste will be treated as a development proposal under the planning system and the NCC will be consulted as appropriate.

As I said, it was entertaining to see the divisions in the Labour party when we examined part VII of the Bill. As ever, the Liberal Democrats opted for a more subtle form of disarray. They supported the proposals in this House, and castigated them in another place. I have no wish to embarrass the hon. Members who have spoken today, but their noble Friend Lord Ross voted against the Government in every Division on part VII. He voted to extend the remit of the JNCC to cover the countryside. He voted for amendments that would have put the JNCC on

the road to being an independent quango—something which I recall the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) rightly deprecated when we considered similar amendments in the House——

Mrs. Ray Michie: I am surprised that the Minister chooses to refer to what Lord Ross did in the other place. He should know that here in the House we are dealing with what the Bill does and how it will affect our constituencies. I am surprised that he is not prepared graciously to accept our support. Regardless of what was said in the other place, in my maiden speech in the House in 1987 I called for a separate Scottish NCC. There is nothing new in that.

Mr. Trippier: I respected and admired the hon. Lady for calling for it. I was impressed by her foresight. I was simply saying that there seems to be a great deal of difference between the Liberal party in this House and the Liberal party stance in the upper House. I have already taken the opportunity to compliment the three Liberal Democrat Members on the speeches that they have made in this debate.

Resources and staffing have been raised on three occasions. On resources, I reaffirm the commitment that we have given throughout, that the new agencies will have resources fully adequate to fulfil their functions. I cannot anticipate what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will say in the statement on public expenditure next month, but I remind Opposition Members of the Government's record in raising the budget of the NCC by 150 per cent. in real terms since 1979, and that of the Countryside Commission by 112 per cent. over the same period. So the Government have every right to be believed when they say that they will provide sufficient funding for the new agencies.

Since the Inbucon report was prepared for the NCC, detailed government studies about the staffing of the country agencies, the needs of the JNCC, the scope for common services and information technology requirements have come to fruition. That matter was fully covered by Lady Blatch in the upper House. I do not propose to rehearse the arguments again. I am confident that the agencies will have sufficient staff to take over from the NCC and the Countryside Commission next April and that, once established, they will rapidly prove how unfounded are the Opposition's fears that the agencies will not be worthy successors of the existing agencies.

Mr. Dalyell: When is the chief officer likely to be appointed to the JNCC? Without a chief officer, how can it possibly be in place by April? Does the Minister accept that it takes £9·78 million even to stand still, and that extra money will be needed in the statement for any enhancement?

Mr. Trippier: That latter point may well turn out to be right. I am happy to confirm that it will take approximately £10 million to deal with the reorganisation. I have said that publicly in the past. The figure has been confirmed by Sir William Wilkinson. I do not demur from anything that I have said in the past. It is a substantial figure, but the principal part of the reorganisation costs will deliver better conservation at local level. That is the purpose of this part of the Bill.

The whole House should take this opportunity of sending our best wishes to the new chairman Lord Cranbrook, Mr. Magnus Magnusson, Mr. Michael Griffith and Professor Holliday. The Government do not have to prove their commitment to nature conservation. When the Opposition were last in office, they cut the budget of the NCC in real terms. The truth is that they do not care. They are the environmental vandals. I ask the House to support the Government.

Question put, That the amendment to the Lords amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 186; Noes 307.

Division No. 345] **[7.28 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bellotti, David
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Cartwright, John
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie

Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Hara, Edward
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Sir Thomas
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Sir Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Sir Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*

Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walters, Sir Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question agreed to.
Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

Clause 120

Countryside Functions of Welsh Council

Lords amendment: No. 259, in page 124, line 5, leave out ("enactments specified in") and insert ("Acts amended by").

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to discuss also Lords amendments Nos. 260 to 262, 352, and 354 to 365.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): The amendment is important for us in Wales and I should be grateful for some comments from the Minister on the way in which the Bill has been changed since it was sent to another place.

Several amendments are linked with amendment No. 259; a particularly important one is Lords amendment No. 261, which broadens the responsibilities given to the new body and says that it

"shall have regard to the social and economic interests of rural areas in Wales".

We need fully to understand two aspects of this issue. The first is that, although we have in our national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty places which need the protection of the legislation and of the body that we are setting up, other areas also warrant attention. I take it from a reading of the debate in the other place and from the wording of the Lords amendment that the new body will be given a broader remit to enable it to pay attention to the needs of areas outside the national parks and the areas of outstanding natural beauty.

The Countryside Council for Wales should have a broad remit in all areas of outstanding beauty. Part of the Snowdonia national park and some areas designated as heritage coastline and areas of outstanding beauty are in my constituency, but other areas not so designated equally require the attention and help given by the legislation.

7.45 pm

A second reason why it is important that the social and economic interests of rural areas be considered alongside environmental interests is that the countryside is not an area of some dead hand, merely to be kept as a park for people from outside to play in. The countryside in Wales, in national parks and elsewhere, is a place where people live and work and need to enjoy a full, balanced life, so the social and economic interests of these areas must be considered, too. If that is done sensitively, with one ear to the needs of the local population, the right balance can be struck; but if it is not struck, there could be a real threat.

I am sorry that no Minister from the Welsh Office is present for this debate. Welsh Office Ministers need to take an interest in it, because a body for Wales is being set up in a Welsh context. Differences in Wales have merited the structure that the Government have brought forward, and the Welsh Office will be directly involved in its day-to-day activities.

Some years ago, before a major electric pump storage scheme was to come along in Snowdonia—the exciting Dinorwig scheme in my constituency—a rearguard action against the project was fought even though it provided 2,000 jobs for a period and 100 permanently. A "Save Our Snowdonia" campaign was launched, and the registered officer of that campaign, if I recollect aright, operated from Birkenhead. That did not go down very well with the people living in the area. Not for a moment am I denigrating the need to take into account the environmental interest of such beautiful areas, or the importance of access to them for people from outside who want to enjoy them, but the people who live and work in the areas also have interests which must be considered.

In the debate in another place on this clause, Baroness White said that not all the uncertainties had been cleared up in the late changes to the legislation. She referred to the differences between England and Wales and said, at column 1305 on 23 October——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will paraphrase it. I think that he knows the practices of this House.

Mr. Wigley: Indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker. The burden of the Baroness's point about some of the weaknesses of the wording in the Bill was that it was unfortunate that, even at this late stage, we have not managed to come up with legislation to deal more thoroughly with these matters. Lord Prys-Davies said the same on another occasion.

There remain some question marks about the wording of the Bill, and I should be glad of some clarification from the Minister. Perhaps he will let us know about the appointment of the person who will apparently take over the new body in Wales. That has been a matter of some controversy, and I very much hope that the final appointment will prove to be broadly acceptable. I have been asked questions about the appointment over the summer—for instance, about whether it was going ahead.

Lords amendment No. 352 provides for an annual statement by the council on promotion of the enjoyment of the countryside by disabled members of the public, which is most important to them. We have seen a growth in activities for the disabled such as angling, which bring considerable pleasure to people who cannot participate in activities enjoyed by others. It is often necessary to make

[Mr. Wigley]

thoughtful provision for the disabled in the form of ramps, specially designed car parks, and even footpaths that are, within reason, laid out in such a way that the disabled can use them. However, a balance must be struck, because one wants to protect the natural environment, but it often conflicts with the interests of the disabled.

Although I welcome the new responsibility being placed on the council to take into account the needs of the disabled, it is one thing to require the council to make a report, and quite another to ensure that the necessary action is taken—particularly as it might have resource implications. As the Government accept Lords amendment No. 352, will they also give special consideration to the resource implications of making provision for the disabled in national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, and the countryside generally?

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) asked whether the Countryside Council for Wales's remit will extend beyond national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty. The answer is a straightforward yes, and so it should be. The commitment by my colleagues in the Welsh Office to the Welsh mandate, which was debated in another place, means that consideration will be given to the social and economic interests of rural areas. Normally, my immediate reaction would have been that responsibility for social and economic development should lie with the Development Board for Rural Wales. However, as the hon. Gentleman suggests, it should be considered also by the new body.

Mr. Wigley: The Minister will be aware that the Development Board for Rural Wales covers only the old five counties of mid-Wales, so it is important that the new council should have responsibility for the important rural areas outside those five counties.

Mr. Trippier: I am even more pleased to give the hon. Gentleman an assurance that the council must consider the social and economic consequences for those new areas. In England, such a mandate would be confined to the Rural Development Commission, quite separately from the Countryside Commission, but that will not be the case in Wales, which I am sure the hon. Gentleman will welcome. Mr. Michael Griffith has been appointed and is the chairman in waiting, but unless I misunderstood the hon. Gentleman, I have no knowledge of the criticism to which he referred.

Mr. Wigley: I was speaking of the new director who will be answerable to Mr. Michael Griffith, who has been the subject of some controversy.

Mr. Trippier: I am not qualified to comment on the appointment of an executive director, which would normally be the responsibility of the countryside council and its board members, not Ministers. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not wish it to be otherwise. Perhaps he would like to raise that issue with Mr. Griffiths.

Lords amendment No. 261 provides a clear mandate for the new Countryside Council for Wales and carries through the same statutory functions of the Countryside Commission. That does not mean, as was suggested in another place, that those two organisations will have to do exactly the same things. However, they are being given the same kind of skeleton, and each can flesh it out in its own way, within the limits imposed. That also means that they will be able to learn from each other, whereas, if they had different functions, one body might not be able to adopt the other's successful ideas because it lacked the necessary statutory authority.

As to access to the countryside by the disabled, the hon. Gentleman has a proven track record, and I compliment him on his interest in, and concern and support for, the disabled, as I have in the past. I have not the slightest doubt that improved access must include that for the disabled. I shall draw the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, who I am convinced will be sympathetic to the points that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

Question put and agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to. [Some with Special Entry.]

New Clause

PUBLIC REGISTERS OF LAND WHICH MAY BE CONTAMINATED

Lords amendment: No. 292, before clause 133 insert the following new Clause—

"—(1) For the purposes of the registers to be maintained under this section, the Secretary of State may, by regulations—

(a) specify contaminative uses of land;

(b) prescribe the form of the registers and the particulars to be included in them; and

(c) make such other provision as appears to him to be appropriate in connection with the maintenance of the registers.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local authority, as respects land in its area subject to contamination, to maintain, in accordance with the regulations, a register in the prescribed form and containing the prescribed particulars.

(3) The duty imposed by subsection (2) above on a local authority is a duty to compile and maintain the register from the information available to the authority from time to time.

(4) A local authority shall secure that the register is open to inspection at its principal office by members of the public free of charge at all reasonable hours and shall afford to members of the public reasonable facilities for obtaining, on payment of reasonable charges, copies of entries in the register.

(5) Regulations under subsection (1)(c) above may prescribe the measures to be taken by local authorities for informing persons whose land is the subject of entries in a register about the entries or for enabling them to inform themselves about them.

(6) In this section—

"contaminative use" means any use of land which may cause it to be contaminated with noxious substances;

"land subject to contamination" means land which is being or has been put to a contaminative use;

"local authority" means—

(a) in Greater London, a London borough council or the Common Council of the City of London;

(b) in England and Wales outside Greater London, a district council;

(c) in Scotland, a planning authority; and

(d) the Council of the Isles of Scilly; and

"substance" means any natural or artificial substance, whether in solid or liquid form or in the form of a gas or vapour.")

Read a Second time.

Ms. Walley: I beg to move, as an amendment to the Lords amendment, amendment (a), in subsection (1)(a), at end insert '( ) define contamination'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take the following: Amendment (b) to the proposed amendment, in subsection (1)(b), after 'them', insert

'together with the types of investigation to be conducted for the purposes of identifying contaminated land which is—

(i) contaminating other land or water (including contamination from mine workings);

(ii) causing no damage in its present condition; or

(iii) suitable for development or other use.'.

Amendment (c) to the proposed amendment, in subsection (3), at end insert

'and to undertake such investigations for the purpose of the compilation of the register as may be by the Secretary of State by Order made eligible for such assistance as he considers appropriate, and in respect of land falling within subsection (1)(b)(iii) above the cost of such investigations may thereafter in whole or part be a charge on that land payable to the Secretary of State by the person developing or otherwise making use of the land).'.

I have to inform the House that Lords amendment No. 292 involves privilege.

Ms. Walley: As there exist clean air quality standards, we should be moving towards a system of quality objectives for clean land also. Anyone who has lived near derelict or contaminated land will know the importance of having it cleaned up in the interests of the community and of the public at large. Identifying which land is contaminated and the nature of the contamination is the first step towards achieving that objective.

At earlier stages of the Bill, it seemed that the Government were not in favour of establishing a contaminated land register. The very fact that we have moved on from that position is to be welcomed. This evening, the message that needs to be got across is that when the Minister agreed that the Government would go away and consider this matter he gave his assurance that that would be done in full consultation with the local authorities concerned. If we are to make any progress with drawing up a register of contaminated land, local authorities will have to be fully involved and will need the resources to carry it out.

8 pm

Consultation with local authorities is the reason for our amendments. We have had a commitment to consultation and the Department of the Environment has issued a consultation document, which I understand was based on fairly extensive studies carried out in Cheshire, but a scheme was not properly introduced. At that stage, there was concern about the way in which a contaminated land register would be established. It is important for the Government to confirm that that consultation exercise should continue. During the course of further consultation —I hope that the Minister will give us an assurance that full consultation will take place—we should get some idea of what form it might take. It is all well and good to know that there may be contamination somewhere, but that knowledge needs to be supported by additional investigative effort to determine whether or not contamination exists. Having established that it exists and its nature, it is then important to decide on remedial action. Also, the local authorities involved need a priority ranking for deciding how soon action should be taken.

I am sure that the register will be useful when bids are made for improvement of derelict land and in helping local authorities to decide how to deal with rolling programmes for contaminated land.

The compilation of a register should be far more than an aid to potential developers which, according to the Lords amendment, is now the Government's intention. Registration of contaminated land should be a wider issue. The register should be used as a basis for restoring such land either for development or, if it does not reach that grade, for some other useful purpose. Therefore, we need to do a thorough job, and we need complete information on the nature of contamination.

When considering the form of consultation, we must decide whether blight which might arise when a site is registered as contaminated should be taken into account. We need to have regard to the effect that registration could have on nearby property values. That, in turn, raises the issue of compensation. However, blight should not be regarded as an argument against the register. We need to work out a method which will bear in mind the long-term implications of a register.

The need for a clear and complete definition of contamination, as set out in our amendments, is fundamental. That definition needs to be established and then applied nationally. If that is not done, misleading comparisons about the scale and nature of the problem could be made in different local authority areas. In the preceding debate, we discussed sites of special scientific interest and the need to study them on a national basis so that standards applied to one could be applied uniformly to the others. That should also apply to contaminated land.

During consultation, we need to have regard to the question of liability for contamination and to consider blight. If we are to do more than a mere desktop study of the way in which the contaminated land register will be compiled by each local authority and how it will be applied nationally, it is obvious that financial resources will be required. That calls into question the estimates given of the cost of setting up the register. Has the Minister taken into account the greater financial consideration that will be involved, especially in view of the debate on standard spending assessments which I understand will take place tomorrow? It is important to know how much of the additional cost will be accepted by the Government, and how much money will be available from central Government to deal with the problem. I have also touched briefly on methodology. It is important that extra resources are provided so that the problem can be dealt with in much the same way in different areas.

For all those reasons, we believe that it is important that the final stages of this legislation should not be concluded today without further assurances from the Minister about how he expects the registration of contaminated land to be dealt with.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I and my colleagues are signatories to these three amendments, and I do not wish to amplify at any length what the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) said.

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

Each amendment contains valid points. Clearly, we need to define contamination. We welcomed Lords amendment No. 292 which provides that there should be a public register, as it is important. Like many other hon. Members, I know from constituency experience—this applies especially in urban areas but also elsewhere—that people want to know exactly what use has been made of a particular site, the chemical and physical effects and their consequences upon the land. The only way to achieve that is a public, and easily accessible, register. The imposition of a duty upon local authorities to keep such a register will be a useful addition to the right to know about the local environment, whether one is a local resident, an occupier, a prospective purchaser or whatever.

The second amendment seeks to establish the seriousness of contamination, and that is equally important. Once one knows the extent of contamination the appropriate response can be made, and once such knowledge is publicly available it is more likely that, even if other authorities do not respond, public opinion will be mobilised and will force public or private authorities to take the appropriate action

The second amendment seeks to establish the extent of contamination and that may also have beneficial effects, as it may release land for development which would otherwise have been blighted. Clearly the Minister and his colleagues in the Department of the Environment would welcome that. Sometimes, urban land does not sell, or it cannot be developed because it is thought to be contaminated, and the register would deal with that problem.

The third amendment is practical. The person who benefits should contribute to the cost of administration involved in establishing the physical quality and the consequences of contamination upon the land.

I hope that all the amendments are either immediately acceptable, or can be accepted as suggestions for moving in the right direction. Also, I hope that the Minister will give us an assurance that the welcome addition of a register can be strengthened by the addition of these amendments.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): I welcome the fact that the Minister has honoured the commitment that he gave in Committee that the Government will take note of the Select Committee's report on contaminated land, which was published while that Committee was dealing with the Bill. We welcome the fact that a move has been made—it is certainly a step in the right direction.

The amendments try to improve on what the Government have done. I hate to say so, but the Minister is genuinely concerned about the problem of contaminated land. I know, because he represents a neighbouring constituency to mine, and ours is a part of the country that has more than its fair share of contaminated sites, because it was in at the birth of the industrial revolution. The same is true of sites in many industrial towns and other places. I therefore do not doubt the Minister's concern.

The Select Committee recommended that there should be a national register and a national method to ensure conformity. That important principle is enshrined in one of the amendments. It would be wrong if one system were used in Brighton, Eastbourne and Bournemouth and another one in Bermondsey, Manchester, Rossendale and Burnley. We must ensure that the same criteria are used to determine contamination. The Select Committee recognised that that may cause difficulties. We suspect that many areas of land are contaminated, but the problems cannot always be identified. I recognise that it would be impossible overnight to compile an accurate record of the type of contamination on each site.

Contaminated land could be used for one purpose and it would not cause problems. However, there might be problems if the land use changed. For example, contaminated land could properly be used for parking cars. The site would be open to the air. If, however, the land use changed and houses were built upon it, the contamination would cause problems. We must ensure that the initial development on contaminated land is suitable. We must also ensure that the land is suitable for future development. we do not wish large areas of land to be made sterile. The Minister is aware of the problems that that would cause in his constituency.

This is a complex issue. Our amendments go further than the direction in which the Government are moving, due to the amendment that was carried in the other place. If the Minister cannot accept them, I hope that he will at least assure us that consultation will take place on the serious issues involved. We all know that there are difficulties. There should be consultation with the local authority associations and local authorities to ensure that we get it right. We do not want problems to arise later because we rush through legislation and get it wrong.

If the Minister is not prepared to accept the amendments, I hope that at least he will say that the Government are not absolutely certain that they have got it right, that they will hold consultations so that future disasters can be prevented and that they will ensure that there are safeguards to cover both immediate and subsequent developments. I hope, too, that the Government will ensure that everything possible is done, by means of better industrial waste disposal, to prevent the creation of new contaminated sites. Their aim should be to keep to a minimum the creation of further contaminated sites, which would only add to the problem caused by the already large areas of contaminated land.

Mr. Trippier: I am most grateful to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) for his constructive and kind speech. I am also grateful to him for the nice things that he said about me. At the risk of being sycophantic, may I in turn say that I was most grateful for the all-party Select Committee report on the subject which, as the hon. Gentleman said, is incredibly complicated. A principal advantage of the Standing Committee procedure was that both sides of the Committee worked closely together and tried to get the legislation right.

We are entering the dramatic phase of having to identify what is contaminated land. It might help if I explained as briefly as possible what Lords amendment No. 292 says and then dealt, again briefly, with the amendments to it. After that, I shall explain how the consultation will take place. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) was right to press me about that point.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): Many contaminated sites cannot be identified because records have been either misplaced or lost. If housing is to be constructed on certain sites, should not the builder be required to carry

out test bores to establish whether the land is contaminated? It may not always be possible to identify contamination, but that procedure would go some way towards eliminating the problem of building houses on contaminated land.

8.15 pm

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman may take comfort from the fact that I believe that we should go further than that. He has identified an incredible problem that is to be found in many industrial areas. The records have been lost. Many hon. Members who have served in local government will recall that prior to local government reorganisation the records of land in rural district council areas that was either contaminated or uncontaminated were kept in the memory of the chief executive. They were not written down for posterity. I make a light-hearted point about it, but I believe that that is fact, not hypothesis.

I intend to ensure that the registers include details of all land that may be contaminated so that the checks that the hon. Gentleman believes ought to be carried out can take place. The registers would be compiled by local authority officers. They would have to scan the area in some detail. We estimate that it would cost—I always love coming out with such a comment on the Floor of the House—about half a person a year.

Mr. Redmond: I accept what the Minister says, but the problem that concerns me is that the poll tax and the rate support grant have placed a stranglehold on local authority finances. To carry out such an exercise, which I accept would be a good one, would cost money. Local authorities ain't got that money. Should not an obligation to contribute towards that expenditure be placed on firms that want to build on land that may be contaminated?

Mr. Trippier: If developments take place on land that has been contaminated but cleansed, principally by means of the derelict land grant that we make available, using taxpayers' money—it is the most successful grant that is made by any Government Department, because there is a leverage of 7:1, which I believe is unbeatable—the Government can and do play their part. If we were referring to half a dozen or a dozen district councillors having to do the job, I might agree with the hon. Gentleman. I do not intend to enter into a major debate on the issue, but the money is there. The derelict land grant is focused on mining closure areas. The hon. Gentleman will concede that in those areas we have changed the rules in order to allow soft after-use. We have not insisted on hard or economic development of those sites. I am sure that the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) will confirm what I have said. He played a part in persuading me to change the rules when I had direct responsibility for the derelict land grant.

Mr. Hardy: I am grateful to the Minister for the courteous and considered way in which he has dealt with a problem that both my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) and I share. However, a powerful and grave anxiety remains, which I am sure that my hon. Friend shares: that although the Government have changed the rules, a change that owes much to the Minister, and although a slightly more helpful attitude has been adopted, the fact remains that the amount of money that is made available to assist the local authorities represented by my hon. Friend and me to surmount the appalling problems that are to be found in the largest areas of dereliction in Britain is relatively modest. Therefore, we are less sanguine than the Minister believes we ought to be.

Mr. Trippier: There you go, Madam Deputy Speaker. That shows that one cannot win. When I was the Minister responsible for derelict land grant, I tried to find the extra money that the hon. Member for Wentworth wanted me to spend in his constituency. I even moved it from Lancashire—the finest county that God ever gave to man—trundled it across the barbed wire to the other side of the M62 and sent it up to the Rother valley. I do not know how the hon. Gentleman has the brass neck to raise this matter on the Floor of the House when he knows that I did him the best favour that has ever been done for him by any Tory Minister. I am speechless. Well, I cannot be speechless because I have to continue with the amendment.

I have said that the register must contain all land that may be contaminated. It is important to make it clear that if there is the slightest doubt about any land, it must be on the register. I hope that all hon. Members grasp that. The public will have access to those registers. That was a courageous decision for us to take. They will give owners and potential buyers of a site details of any uses of that site that may have caused contamination. It was courageous of us to take that decision because it might blight an area. Many district authorities in our part of the world, especially in the north, have worked day and night to encourage inward investment and economic development. The district authorities may have to say, "Now that the register has come on stream, we have to admit that we have a lot of contaminated land." That would go down like a lead balloon with those considering investing in the area. That was what the hon. Member for Burnley referred to. It was a difficult decision, but I think that we have made the right one.

Opposition amendment (a) would require the Secretary of State to define contamination in regulations. We have concluded that that would not be helpful. As the hon. Member for Burnley suggested, contamination is hard to define precisely. It is a term for the scientific community to define, both generally in terms of the latest thinking and in relation to specific cases. A fixed definition might cause more problems than it solved. For example, levels of background natural "contamination" have yet to be established in many areas. A statutory definition might quickly become out of date.

Amendment (b) would require regulations to specify the types of investigation to be used to identify land as contaminating other land and water, causing no damage in its present condition, or suitable for development or other use.

In our view, it would be hazardous to create any rigid framework for the classification of sites such as the Opposition propose in the amendment. It is likely to be impossible to prove scientifically that a site is causing no damage in its present condition. The idea that a site is established as suitable for development or other use takes us back to the concept of "multifunctionality"—sites judged suitable for any use. I remind the hon. Member for Burnley that that idea was rejected by the Select Committee. Assessment of an individual site has to take into account many factors, including very detailed

[Mr. Trippier]

consideration of specific uses. In any case, a one-off survey would not be sufficient, as subsequent uses of land might alter the classification.

The object of the registers is to draw together information on the possibility of contamination. They cannot, in themselves, include judgments on actual contamination at sites or on their development potential. We have given that careful consideration. The people compiling registers would be able to pass such judgments only if they had full and up-to-date survey details on every site.

Registers will, of course, reveal a need for investigation of particular sites. I accept that that will require knowledge of the history of the site, the nature of the possible contamination, and the current or proposed use of the land. Elsewhere in the Bill we are strengthening provisions for dealing with sites that represent a risk to human health or to the environment. For example, there are clauses on monitoring of closed landfills and on statutory nuisance. The latter places a duty on local authorities to inspect their areas to detect any accumulation or deposit that is prejudicial to health.

The amendment also raises the question of the Government laying down methods of investigation in regulations. That would be impracticable and inappropriate. We shall certainly provide information and guidance to authorities, but techniques in this area are constantly changing and their selection has to be based on site-specific conditions such as soil types, combinations of contaminants and hydrogeology. Site investigations need to be carefully designed in terms of both information obtained and use of resources.

Amendment (c) would provide for Government support for local authorities' investigations, with costs recoverable in some cases by charges on the land concerned. In our view those cost recovery measures are neither workable nor necessary. This is a point for the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes). I agree with most of what he said, but in one instance his comments ran counter to the principle of "the polluter pays". In bringing contaminated land back into use—back into the market place—the person who will enjoy the profits from the development should pay for the site investigations. I do not think that there is any difference between us on that.

If those who have contaminated the site in the past can be traced—I am hopeful that they can be in most cases—they should be made to pay. We shall encounter some difficulties with those who are impossible to trace, but if ever there was a case for the derelict land grant, this is it. I accept that not only is it the most successful Government grant in terms of leverage but it is the most widely appreciated, particularly in industrial areas that have become derelict as a result of the change in the industrial and economic pattern.

Mr. Pike: The Minister referred to multifunctionality. He is right to say that the Select Committee recognised that to deal with contamination in that way would probably involve unrealistic costs that could not be justified or met. Can he give an assurance that the register, which will be maintained in accordance with the amendment carried in the other place, will show that the contamination has been dealt with only to a certain standard? He referred to a chief executive in a rural district remembering what has happened, and I am sure that he will understand that in 20 or 30 years people may want to develop land for a different use only to find that the land may not be suitable because the contamination has not been dealt with to the necessary level. Will he give an assurance that that will be maintained on record?

Mr. Trippier: That sounds like a perfectly sensible suggestion. I promise the hon. Gentleman that I shall look at that. I can say now that I shall look at it favourably. There would then be a consistency between that and other public registers about which we talked a great deal in Committee. Under part I of the Bill, which deals with improving public access to environmental information, incredible detail must be shown on a register under the integrated pollution control. I know that the hon. Gentleman will accept that.

I think that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I wrap all that up with the consultations that we are now conducting with the local authority associations. I do not think that anyone should be so arrogant as to suggest that we have all the answers in this regard. We do not. We have a great deal to learn. The process of consultation will be carried through. It will involve not only the local authority associations but the many district authorities. I am concerned principally with district authorities that have had particular problems in the past and with those that have proved that they can deal successfully with the new forms of technology that can cleanse land. Another neighbouring authority to Burnley and Rossendale and Darwen is Blackburn. In evidence given to the Select Committee that authority was cited as a superb example of what can be done.

I hope that, with those assurances, the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North will feel able to withdraw the amendment.

8.30 pm

Ms. Walley: We have no doubt about the importance of derelict land grants and how, where they have been made available, they have transformed large areas of derelict land.

I take on board the Minister's comments that some of our amendments may constrict rather than allow us to keep abreast of the latest developments in technology. I rather suspect that the main thrust of his comments is that provided there is adequate consultation with local authorities, and that it takes place on the widest basis possible, the issues that we have discussed in terms of methodology and how priorities must be established to deal with contaminated land, including the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), will be returned to time and again. I am sure that, in the full process of that consultation, the issue of finance will be returned to time and again and I suspect that we shall have to press for more finance to be made available to local authorities to deal with the polluter-pays principle. We accept that there is a legacy of contaminated land, but in some cases there will not be a polluter who is directly responsible for the contamination.

On the basis of the assurances given by the Minister, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lords amendment No. 292 agreed to.

Subsequent Lords amendments agreed to.

New clause

PUBLIC REGISTERS RELATING TO DEPOSITS IN THE SEA AND INCINERATION AT SEA

Lords amendment: No. 295, after clause 133, insert the following new Clause—

(" . In Part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, for section 14 (registers of licences) there shall be substituted the following section—

"*Duty of licensing authority to keep public registers of information*

14.—(1) It shall be the duty of each licensing authority, as respects licences for which it is the licensing authority, to maintain, in accordance with regulations, a register containing prescribed particulars of or relating to—

(a) applications for licences made to that authority;

(b) the licences issued by that authority;

(c) variations of licences effected by that authority;

(d) revocations of licences effected by that authority;

(e) convictions for any offences under section 9 above;

(f) information obtained or furnished in pursuance of section 8(3), (4) or (5) above;

(g) the occasions on which either of the Ministers has carried out any operation under section 10 above; and

(h) such other matters relating to operations for which licences are needed under this Part of this Act as may be prescribed.

(2) No information shall be included in any register which in the opinion of either of the Ministers is such that its disclosure on the register—

(a) would be contrary to the interests of national security, or

(b) would prejudice to an unreasonable degree some person's commercial interests.

(3) Information excluded from a register by virtue of subsection (2)(b) above shall be treated as ceasing to prejudice a person's commercial interests at the expiry of the period of four years beginning with the date on which the Minister made his decision under that subsection; but, on the application of any person to whom it relates, the Minister shall decide whether the information should be included or continue to be excluded from the register.

(4) Where information of any description is excluded from a register by virtue of subsection (2)(b) above, a statement shall be entered in the register indicating the existence of information of that description.

(5) It shall be the duty of each licensing authority—

(a) to secure that the register maintained by the authority under this section is available at all reasonable times for inspection by the public free of charge; and

(b) to afford to members of the public facilities for obtaining copies of entries, on payment of reasonable charges.

(6) Registers under this section may be kept in any form.

(7) In this section "prescribed" means prescribed in regulations.

(8) Either of the Ministers may exercise any power to make regulations under this section and any such power shall be exercisable by statutory instrument, subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament." ")

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.—*[Mr. David Curry.]*

Ms. Walley: Given what has been said about the importance of access to information, we welcome the public register and the access to information about sea dumping. We have some concern about commercial confidentiality, albeit with the proviso that there is a four-year limit on the amount of time that must elapse before the information can be made public.

We are somewhat concerned about the philosophy behind the new clause. The Lords amendment causes us much concern, especially as the 13th sea dumping convention is taking place in London this week. I do not want to miss this opportunity to press the Minister further. I tabled a question on 26 October, asking for assurances that the Government favour a global ban on industrial waste dumping at sea. Will the Minister assure us that he is backing the demand of the Nordic countries and that he is concerned to ensure an end to sea dumping? Will he give a firm statement on the view that the Government have taken?

Mr. Simon Hughes: I welcome the new clause, but we are getting near to the controversial bit of the Bill—the next new clause is on dog registration, which we debated yesterday and will no doubt return to tomorrow.

Will the new clause cover what is probably the most severe allegation made against the Government's environmental policy—their policy on marine pollution? The Minister will know—I have read the exchanges between him and my hon. Friend the Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) in Committee—that there is a commonly held view, backed by plenty of evidence, that our practice on dumping at sea is among the worst in western Europe.

Will the register of information allow the public to know accurately, and on a regularly updated basis, the amount of sewage and toxic waste being dumped and the amount of chemicals incinerated? The Minister and his colleagues have had to try to explain the range of dumping, but it has been impossible for them to defend it. They said that they would ban the dumping of certain types of waste at sea, yet they gave exemptions to about 70 per cent. of the practices in question. The register is good only if it provides information by which people can decide whether the Government, as the relevant authority, and the other authorities are dealing with what is probably the worst aspect of our pollution practice.

If the Minister is satisfied that the register will do that, at least some ammunition—which may perhaps be used against him—will be available to the public. I hope that he realises that, so far, the pressure that has been applied by private and public agencies has not achieved a sufficient change in policy to give us an environment record of which we can be proud. I hope that he can give some significant assurances.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. David Curry): I assure the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) that, although he may want much ammunition, the target will become smaller.

I shall briefly list the items that are dumped at sea and the termination dates that we have agreed for them. Incineration will finish at the end of this year. Incineration is not carried out in British waters; the only incineration site is in Dutch waters, but we no longer practise it. Only two industrial liquid wastes will be dumped by 1992, because of the major industrial and employment implications. We have made it clear that the dumping of those wastes must end by early 1993, and that that date will not be extended.

[Mr. David Curry]

The dumping of power station fly ash will finish at the end of 1992. The dumping of colliery stone occurs on beaches in the north-east in particular. I recently announced that we had given British Coal a period within which it had to make an application for continued disposal and prove that there was no valid alternative disposal. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey will be aware that the implications for the future of colleries must be considered. Sewage sludge will end by 1998, and the only dumping that will be practised by almost all countries is dredged spoil. No countries have plans to end that.

The timetable shows that there will be precious little dumping. Our objective remains clear: where there is a valid alternative, we shall take it and insist on it being observed.

We have no contentious issues to raise at the dumping convention, as we do not practise the dumping that it is seeking to ban. The United Kingdom is exploring with the Nordic countries the proposals for the phasing out of industrial waste. I reassure the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) that we take this matter very seriously. Our policy is the absolute minimisation of the dumping of industrial waste at sea. We shall continue to pursue that, but as soon as a viable alternative comes forward, we shall insist that it is followed.

Ms. Walley: Will the Minister say, yes or no, whether he will support a global ban on dumping at the convention that is taking place in London this week?

Mr. Curry: We are exploring with the member states at the convention precisely what they are seeking, and precisely the terms and the scientific basis on which the views are being stated. The United Kingdom does not practise the dumping of the products that are being discussed.

Question put and agreed to. [Special entry.]

Subsequent Lords amendments and amendments to Lords amendments agreed to.

Manuscript amendment to Title agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a Committee be appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to certain of their amendments to the Bill; That Mr. Boswell, Mr. Gould, Mr. Heathcoat-Amory, Mr. Allen McKay and Mr. Trippier be members of the Committee; That three be the quorum; That the Committee do withdraw immediately.—*[Mr. Trippier.]*

Mr. Simon Hughes: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will you confirm that this is a debatable motion?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman knows from the expression on my face that it is a debatable motion.

Mr. Hughes: I read that in your face, Madam Deputy Speaker. This point has been made by me and my colleagues at the same stage in earlier Bills. I hope that, sooner rather than later, the House will change the practice so that the famous Committee, which goes off and meets in a huddle behind your chair in what appears to be a broom cupboard and then emerges a couple of minutes later having, as if by magic, produced reasons for disagreeing with the Lords in certain amendments, can be more widely representative of the parties in the House. If it is possible for this change to be undertaken by Ministers or by Whips, it would be most welcome not only to me and to my colleagues, but to hon. Members of other parties who share my concern.

I want to place on record the fact that there were reports in the press last night and this morning that, if the other place were to stand firm tomorrow in its view on any of the matters on which we disagreed with the Lords amendments yesterday, there would be a crisis which would result in the Bill being lost. That is not true. In reality, if the Lords decided to reaffirm their position on, for example, the registration of dogs, the matter would come back to this House. Even if we had to sit a little late tomorrow night, there would be plenty of time for the constitutional process——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is attempting to inform the House of what appears in the press. Although this Chair has many responsibilities, it has none for what appears in the media. Is this a point of order for the Chair, or is the hon. Gentleman debating the motion?

Mr. Hughes: I am coming to the conclusion of my speech on the motion. The motion should be accompanied by a clear view from this House that there is no problem if the House of Lords decides to stand firm because the matter can come back to this place. We have time to debate it and decide whether to agree with the Lords. If the Lords want to stand firm, they should be encouraged to do so. I encourage them to stand as firm as they can. We are happy to support them tomorrow, and we may be able to get an extra four people here to do so.

Question put and agreed to.

Committee to withdraw immediately.

Reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Lords amendments reported, and agreed to: to be communicated to the Lords.

PETITION

Schools (Newham)

9.47 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I present a petition signed by more than 1,000 residents and electors of the dockland area of the borough of Newham, south of Newham way. It is an area of rapidly increasing population and of moderately sized homes which are either owner-occupied or rented from the council or from housing associations. The primary schools are over-full and there are no secondary schools.

Despite Government plans for considerable development in the area, no funds have been earmarked for a secondary school by the Department of Education and Science. Indeed, a recent decision by the Secretary of State for Education and Science to retain 800 places in an opt-out school in the north of the borough has prejudiced the borough plan for the construction of such secondary schools on designated sites south of Newham way.

The petition reads:

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House will urge the Secretary of State for Education and Science to ensure that sufficient resources are provided now for extension to and new building of primary schools and for the construction of two new secondary schools for pupils living in that part of the Borough of Newham south of the Newham Way, and further pray that the secondary schools incorporate sufficient community provision to serve the planned increase in population without prejudice to the needs of, or services to, pupils or the whole community in the remainder of the Borough and that these necessary schemes by completed without capital financial liability to its citizens.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

To lie upon the Table.

Parking Tickets

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn—*[Mr. Neil Hamilton.]*

8.49 pm

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): It is pleasant to be introducing an Adjournment debate at such an early hour because, as the House knows, it gives us a rather more generous allocation of time in which to pursue cases involving justice. This is the third occasion on which I have had such good fortune. On the other two, a certain amount of progress was made as a consequence of the extra time and I hope that, when I eventually conclude my speech, the Minister's response will prove acceptable to my hon. Friends and to me.

The case that I shall raise tonight concerns the serious nuisance caused to one of my constituents and his family and I therefore feel entirely justified in raising it. The implications of the case are of considerable and wide relevance—rather wider than a glance at the Order Paper would suggest—as I shall show in developing my argument.

I am concerned about the outrageous and distressing experience of a decent man and his family and about a degree of official incompetence which would have been regarded as unimaginable—even in London—a decade ago, and which remain astonishing and unacceptable in South Yorkshire today. I have no hesitation in presenting this case tonight and in drawing certain wholly reasonable conclusions from it. I hope that the Minister will be prepared to comment upon those conclusions as well as offering the answers that I shall invite him to give towards the end of my speech. It is also important that the Minister should make it very clear that my constituent is, and should be, free from any blame and that he is the entirely innocent victim of muddle and incompetence who deserves a full apology and redress. He is a victim not only of public incompetence but of the criminal and irresponsible action of another person.

My constituent is an elderly man in his late 60s. He lives quietly at Turner close, Rawmarsh and has a happy family life. His bungalow forms part of one of Rotherham council's splendid housing schemes for the elderly, within a neat, cared-for and caring community.

Mr. Tom Chedgzoy and his wife have led good and responsible lives. They have brought up a family of six sons, five of whom survive, and theirs is a close-knit, locally centred family. There are 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren and a fourth great-grandchild is due soon. Mr. Chedgzoy was originally an engineer. During the war, he served as a petty officer in the Royal Navy and thereafter he developed his own small business. When Mr. Chedgzoy retired, he settled down to live a more relaxed life with his wife in his happy community and in close proximity to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Chedgzoys had looked forward to a happy and contented retirement with the occasional day out fishing and the occasional day's holiday at the seaside—a point that is relevant, as my remarks will show.

Mr. and Mrs. Chedgzoy have lived a quiet and contented life during the 47 years for which they have been married. It is relevant for me to point that out to show that they are good people—ordinary decent people. There are many such people in our constituencies and they form the essential spine of our national fabric. They may not have

[Mr. Peter Hardy]

made the headlines; they may not have made millions. But this country owes a great deal to people such as Mr. and Mrs. Chedgzoy and their families.

I have mentioned the different generations to show that Mr. and Mrs. Chedgzoy, their five sons and their grandchildren—their great-grandchildren are not yet old enough to uphold the splendid family tradition—have never been in trouble with the police. Yet in this year of grace, they have been caused distress, justified anger, severe anxiety and considerable inconvenience.

My attention was drawn to the problem in September. Mr. Chedgzoy had never written to his Member of Parliament before; he had never really needed to. He wrote to me after taking a great deal of trouble to help himself, as I shall show.

In the spring, Mr. Chedgzoy received a registered letter containing a parking ticket. Apparently, he had committed a parking offence in London. He found that astonishing. A few weeks later, he was given further ground for astonishment when yet another parking ticket arrived.

Mr. Chedgzoy contacted the authorities to explain that he had not committed the offence. He wrote to Westminster city council and returned to it the correspondence that he had received, stating that there must have been an error as neither he nor his car had been in London on the dates mentioned. In fact, Mr. Chedgzoy has the good fortune not to have visited London since around 1955—35 years ago. Certainly his vehicle was not involved in the offence because, on those dates, his vehicle was by his bungalow in Rawmarsh. The vehicle carries the registration number F997 WUY, but it is a Maestro, whereas the vehicle recorded in connection with the offence was a large blue Rover.

Following his letter, Mr. Chedgzoy received nothing from the authorities, except a card of acknowledgement stating that the information that he had sent was receiving attention.

Then came another bolt from the blue. Yet another registered letter arrived at Mr. Chedgzoy's address, virtually accusing him of committing yet another parking offence. At that point, Mr. Chedgzoy sought the help of the citizens' advice bureau in Rotherham. He made two visits to the Rotherham CAB office. There, he was given the good advice that he should set the matter down in writing and send the information to Westminster council and to the police. He did that. The CAB also suggested that he should write to the driver and vehicle licensing centre in Swansea. Mr. Chedgzoy acted on that advice and the centre replied informing him that F997 WUY was, indeed, his registration number and no one else's. The centre suggested that he return the notices to the authorities responsible with an explanation. Of course, he had already done that.

Then Mr. Chedgzoy received yet another registered letter, which caused him great inconvenience, for the third time. As I said, he has a bungalow near Skegness. He is an elderly, decent and responsible man and, on each occasion, he returned from holiday to deal with the registered letters that he received. For the third time, then, a few days' break was spoilt by those astonishing developments.

At this point the position had become intolerable. Mr. Chedgzoy wrote to me, and I received his letter on 25 September. I immediately wrote to the chief executive of Westminster city council. I made a mistake with the address, but I shall refer to that later. I also wrote to the Home Office and to our own South Yorkshire police authority. I found the situation incredible, and I did not wish to see our police officers placed in a position that they would find objectionable were they to receive relevant information and requests from their colleagues in London. I also contacted the magistrates court in Rotherham, because Mr. Chedgzoy had been informed that the Rotherham court had inevitably been involved: following the alleged offences, he had been awarded a fine for failing to pay the parking charge in London.

Mr. Chedgzoy had to trail to the office of the Rotherham magistrates court, where he was kindly received. I am grateful that the staff there were able to give him reassuring advice and to assist him to complete a statement that served as a disclaimer and was then sent on to Westminster. The South Yorkshire police have also sought to assist him, and an officer called on him to offer reassurance and to say that the South Yorkshire police were seeking to be helpful. I was extremely grateful for that action. At least we now know that the Metropolitan police have been informed of the rectitude of Mr. Chedgzoy's position.

I then received the first of two letters from, not the chief executive but the managing director of Westminster city council. I am not sure that I like that title; I do not regard a local authority as a business. However, given the support that has been lavished on that council by an admiring Government, I suppose that if current generosity is maintained—perhaps in the rate support grant that we imminently expect—it will be able to act like a business, because it will be declaring a dividend rather than collecting any poll tax.

That may sound a little far-fetched, but the fact remains that if my local authority—which is obviously more efficient than the city of Westminster—had received the same level of support this year as has Westminster city council, we should not have had to face rate capping because we should not have had to levy a poll tax. Indeed, Mr. Chedgzoy and I—and every other citizen in the Rotherham metropolitan borough—would have qualified to receive a payment in excess of £100 in lieu of any demand for poll tax. Instead, we have been starved of resources and poll tax-capped as well. We have had to watch Westminster city council receive the basic standard spending grant of 459 per cent. more per head than we have. The same argument applies to my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) as Doncaster has had a similar experience. Several of my hon. Friends will be aware of that. I see my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) in the Chamber, and he knows that what I have said about our local position is correct.

Not content with robbing Yorkshire in the most astonishing way over this year's local government spending, Westminster city council wants to take money from disabled and elderly pensioners such as Mr. Chedgzoy.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): I cannot understand why Westminster council, having made a mistake, did not seek to rectify it immediately. When one punches up a vehicle registration number, it takes about 10 seconds for the name and address of the owner to come up on the police computer. In addition to the registration

number of the vehicle; it shows the vehicle model. A parking ticket, therefore, also shows the model. There is obviously a discrepancy in the case referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy), but no one in the efficient Westminster authority managed to pick that up and save this elderly gentleman some aggro.

Mr. Hardy: Yes, that is the case. I have spoken to police officers in my area who are astonished and bemused by my constituent's experience. I can confidently say that if a large blue Rover car was repeatedly parked in my constituency, and the police and the local authority had been informed that the registration number had been allocated to someone else, the police would have checked up. As was pointed out by my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley, the police could have found that information within 10 seconds.

Throughout the months of my constituent's experience, no one had done that. The result is that he has received a succession of registered letters bearing the unfortunate news that he has been committing offences. I wonder whether it is an exercise by the local authority. Having robbed South Yorkshire in rate support grant, Westminster council now aims to make money from our people as individuals. I do not believe that such an experience could be repeated in my constituency or in the constituencies of any of my hon. Friends present in the Chamber tonight.

In his first letter, the managing director of Westminster wrote to ask me whether I could provide the relevant references so that the matter could be considered. He offered an assurance that the matter would not be referred to the court in Rotherham. I provided a reference for the managing director. However, Mr. Chedgzoy had written to Westminster council many weeks before telling it about the position. While the card of acknowledgement had been received, no one had taken any notice, even though someone was fraudulently and probably frequently displaying the wrong number plate in Westminster. That is serious, partly because my constituent's complaint and the information were obviously unheeded. However, that is not unusual. The same authority wrote to me to say that I had made no payments on my poll tax when I had made my payments. I do not like to pay the poll tax, but I certainly do not like paying it to an authority that then tells me that I have not paid it. When Mr. Chedgzoy contacted me about Westminster's deficiencies, his request for help did not fall on infertile ground.

The managing director of Westminster had assured me that the matter would not be referred to the Rotherham court, but it had already been referred there. That was bound to happen because Mr. Chedgzoy had been fined in London, but lives in Rotherham. Therefore, he was placed in the ignominious position of having to report to the police court. As I have already said, no one from Mr. Chedgzoy's family, not one of his sons or his grandchildren, has had such an experience. My constituent did not like that.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): This is a very interesting story, particularly when we consider that Westminster council was held up as an example of an efficient council during the local council elections a few months ago. Has my hon. Friend given any thought to what this exercise will cost the ratepayers of Westminster?

Mr. Hardy: It is bound to cost the ratepayers of Westminster a great deal. As I develop my speech, my hon. Friend will hear me state that I suspect that the cost involved could be even greater than he might imagine at the moment.

I received a leaflet through my letter box in London the other day stating that Westminster council is

"the best guarantee of a low community charge and efficient local services."

We know that the council has a low community charge, but it also lacks efficient local services if the experience of that pensioner in my constituency is anything to go by.

Mr. Redmond: I am at a loss to understand why the managing director did not take the appropriate steps to rectify the matter when he first received a letter from my hon. Friend's constituent. Given that the council has acted so inefficiently and has obviously cost the poll tax payers of Westminster a great deal of money because of that inefficiency, should not the managing director resign and, before he resigns, send a letter of apology to my hon. Friend's constituent and rectify the distress, worry and anxiety caused to my hon. Friend's constituent out of his own pocket instead of it being paid for by the poll tax payers in Westminster?

Mr. Hardy: I do not share my hon. Friend's last sentiment. I shall refer to a second letter from the managing director in a moment and my hon. Friend will understand then that I am responding to his intervention.

I called to see Mr. Chedgzoy at his home two or three weeks ago. I was astonished to learn that despite my representations, he had been given cause for further and infuriating distress because the previous day a registered letter had arrived informing him that he had committed yet another parking offence. I was very angry about that because I had already pursued the matter. I had assumed that that might have led to some proper and intelligent consideration. Mr. Chedgzoy acted properly and responsibly throughout. He acted on the advice of the citizens advice bureau. The local police had certainly taken helpful action, yet the grinding wheels of official incompetence had produced yet another grievous error.

A few moments after I arrived at Mr. Chedgzoy's home, the local community constable, PC Greatorex, called to add a word of assurance that the South Yorkshire police were seeking to be helpful. Mr. Greatorex, the present community constable in Park Gate and Rawmarsh, like his splendid predecessor PC Armstrong, maintained his duties in the most commendable way. Mr. Greatorex called to give an assurance to that elderly couple that they should not have cause for anxiety. I suspect that Mr. Greatorex was almost as cross as I was to learn that yet another ticket had arrived the previous day.

I then made a suggestion that did not wholly delight Mrs. Chedgzoy, for I said that it might be best in future to put all those things in the basket, and that, one day, Mr. Greatorex, as the community constable, could come around and arrest Mr. Chedgzoy. I said that I hoped that he would make sure that that was in my presence and that I would then accompany Mr. Greatorex and Mr. Chedgzoy to the police station, where I could vouch for him. The result would have been that a substantial suit for wrongful arrest would follow. However, Mrs. Chedgzoy was somewhat put out by the suggestion and took the view

[Mr. Hardy]

that she was not going to have her husband arrested after 47 years of decent, good married life. I resisted the temptation to press the suggestion further.

However, as I said, I received a second letter from the managing director of Westminster council. It also causes me some concern. He said:

"In fairness to the city Council,"—

obviously, I wish to be fair to the city council; the Government have been more than fair to the city council and to its parking enforcement contractors—

"the fraudulent and illegal use of false number plates is not something of which we could have been aware."

Had that been said after the first offence, the remark would have been reasonable. After the second offence, it might have been forgivable, but after the months since Mr. Chedgzoy mentioned the offence, it was not really a justified comment. The managing director went on to say:

"I am sure you would agree that it would be entirely inappropriate for the City Council to become involved in what has now shown itself to be a crime."

Someone surely must be concerned that an individual is parking his car in Westminster, using my constituent's number plates, getting my constituent into trouble, and evading responsibility for his actions.

Mr. Redmond: I am sure that we shall get from the Minister a satisfactory explanation of why the parking ticket was sent to my hon. Friend's constituent. The traffic warden who looked at the registration plate would also have checked the tax disc. The registration number on the disc would have been different from that on the number plate. That would not be possible unless the owner altered both things. I should hardly think that he would fork out for a tax disc. Will my hon. Friend comment on that point?

Mr. Hardy: My hon. Friend is quite right. I find the matter completely incredible, and so do my constituents.

The managing director went on to state:

"We must leave the various police forces involved to apprehend the owner of the bogus F997 WUY".

I should have agreed with him if he had said that months ago, but at least we can be relieved that he says:

"I am copying this letter to Superintendent Hotson at the Paddington Green Police Station, to whom I have already spoken, so that his officers are alert to the problem."

Splendid. Well done. What a pity that that action was not taken a long time ago.

It may sound as if I am extremely critical of the owner of the large blue Rover, but those of us who do not spend all our time in London have considerable sympathy for the people who have to travel round this city. The owner of the large blue Rover may have reached his wits' end and found that the various bus routes and underground lines that he would have to use to reach Westminster are unreliable and unpleasant, as well as expensive.

Last week I had to attend a meeting in Farringdon of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which should be a straightforward underground trip on the Circle line from Westminster. However, on that occasion, as on the two previous occasions when I have had to travel to the same place, I was unable to complete my journey. Those of us who have to travel to King's Cross station to get a train when we leave this city should be given a medal every time we use the Victoria line. Our wives who have to meet our trains should get them as well because we frequently miss our trains as that line is so unsatisfactory. Although the owner of the large blue Rover bearing the fraudulent number plates may well have acted with a sense of despair, he should have realised that he was collecting parking tickets, but that a pensioner in my constituency was receiving them.

I have spoken at length to my local police force to find out what happened. It might interest the Minister if I gave him some figures. If the Metropolitan police sent information to the South Yorkshire police in Rotherham, to Chief Superintendent Wain or to Superintendent Sellars and their colleagues, telling them that a car with false number plates was parked in any part of the C2 division, which serves my constituency, or in C3 division, which serves the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley, our police would be on to that information with remarkable speed. However, similar speed has not been shown in this case.

I am not making any false claims because, despite the tight resources and the serious economic problems facing my area, and although we have had 2,525 crimes in the C2 division of the South Yorkshire police this year, our detection rate is running at 61·86 per cent. I would wager that the Minister would not care to provide the figures for the Metropolitan police detection rate when he replies to the debate. Of course, he could reduce the figure for offences in London by the number that my constituent is supposed to have committed, which makes me wonder how reliable the figures are.

There is a further cause for concern. If the owner of the large blue Rover with fraudulent number plates has got away with this offence since the spring, I wonder how many more people have tumbled to the fact that all they need to do is to find out the registration on the number plates of pensioners from, say, Pontefract, Doncaster, Rother Valley, Penistone or Barnsley, who do not come to London frequently. They can then continue in their criminal irresponsibility. It is time that the police were asked to do their utmost to catch someone who is involved in doing that, because it can cause a great deal of distress to perfectly decent people, as in this case.

I wonder whether this case is unique. The other day, before I had Mr. and Mrs. Chedgzoy's permission to raise their case and to mention their name—I have never used a constituent's name in public without first securing permission—a journalist asked me their name and address and I said that I was extremely sorry, but that until I had seen Mr. and Mrs. Chedgzoy I could not give it. The journalist said that he thought that he knew of the case anyway. I said, "I am surprised if you do, but tell me." He said that on the previous evening he had been having a drink with a solicitor friend, who had said, "I think that I am acting for Mr. Hardy's constituents," but he was not. Mr. Chedgzoy did not employ a solicitor. I respect that journalist's confidence and I shall not reveal my sources, but it seems that there is another case involving defective number plates. Someone else telephoned me the other day to tell me that her husband had had a similar experience.

I wonder whether some of the wide boys of London have worked out a marvellous dodge to save their fares on public transport and evade paying to park their motor vehicles. Perhaps the Minister has an opportunity to nip a crime in the bud and thus assist the Metropolitan police in reducing the crime figures before we have a general election. Certainly in my constituency we should love to

fight an election on law and order. That also goes for the constituencies of my hon. Friends who are here this evening.

The Government bear a heavy responsibility in the matter. In the past year or two I have noticed a number of cases in which letters from my constituents to Government Departments have gone astray. I have also noticed that several Departments take a long time to give a reply, let alone a satisfactory one. When I wrote to the Home Office Minister on 25 September giving the details of the case, I expected to receive a rather swifter response than I did. After all, I was telling the Minister about an injustice—a case in which great distress had been caused to an elderly person, someone had acted fraudulently and that elderly person had been caused a great deal of inconvenience. That elderly person has a splendid record and he deserves a great deal better. I still have not had a reply from the Home Office but I look forward to hearing from the Minister this evening.

Mr. Chedgzoy is certainly not a yuppie. He is an ordinary, decent south Yorkshire man who has never caused any problems. He has paid his way, paid his taxes, earned his living and brought up his family decently. He has never been in any trouble. He certainly does not have the yuppie values. Indeed, the man with the large blue Rover is probably more likely to be a yuppie than Mr. Chedgzoy. However, the fact remains that there has been profound injustice and appalling incompetence. The Chedgzoy case shows that things are simply not good enough. I hope that the Minister will make his innocence clear and express a real regret for the experience that Mr. Chedgzoy suffered and the distress that he was caused.

The Minister should also advise Westminster city council of the case. Here I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley, who suggested that Mr. Phillips, the managing director, should pay out of his own pocket. My hon. Friend would never allow an officer to bear responsibility for something that went wrong in Doncaster, although he probably would not allow anything to go wrong in Doncaster on this scale. My hon. Friend would accept that the authority appointed the man and should pay the compensation. I firmly believe that that is appropriate.

Mr. Chedgzoy has had three holidays spoilt. He had to travel to Rotherham. He is disabled. He and his wife have been caused so much distress that earlier this year one of their sons offered to pay the charges and the fines and have done with the matter because he observed the sadness that it was causing to the family. He did not want his parents to have to put up with any more aggravation or horror. The Minister would be entirely justified in telling the council that it should do much more than offer the personal apology that the managing director, Mr. Phillips, offered.

I am sure that Mr. Chedgzoy will accept Mr. Phillips's apology, but the council has a greater obligation. I hope that the council will not stuff any more silly leaflets through my letter box proclaiming that it operates an efficient local service when the Chedgzoy case demonstrates clearly that there is a great deal of inefficiency and incompetence in the council, which has created the sadness that I was happy to raise tonight.

9.24 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): I was sorry to learn of the problems encountered by the constituent of the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy). I can appreciate that this must have been a distressing series of experiences for him. I can understand why the hon. Member has taken the trouble to raise the subject this evening, and done it in a typically thorough, lucid and wide-ranging way.

I have had inquiries made with the Metropolitan police, the South Yorkshire police, Westminster city council, and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to try to determine how this upsetting series of events occurred. I hope that I will be able to offer some illumination to the hon. Member and his constituent.

It may be useful if I first explain briefly the mechanics of the fixed penalty system. After a fixed penalty notice, or parking ticket, is issued, the recipient has 28 days initially in which to pay or, if he disputes the offence, to request a court hearing. If no payment is received, the police find out who is the registered keeper of the vehicle from the records at DVLA. They then send a "notice to owner" to that person.

A person who receives a "notice to owner" can pay the penalty, request a court hearing or complete the statutory statement in the notice that he was not the owner of the vehicle and provide any information he has about who did own it if he has recently bought or sold it. If no reply is received to the "notice to owner", the penalty is automatically increased by 50 per cent. and registered as a fine for enforcement by the local magistrates court. The court may use all its normal powers to enforce payment of the fine.

These procedures seem to have been properly followed in Mr. Chedgzoy's case, although the situation is complicated. I was trying to follow the hon. Member's speech closely, but it did not shed light on the complication that Mr. Chedgzoy had received penalty notices both from the Metropolitan police and from the Westminster city council.

I know that a fixed penalty was issued by the police to a car bearing the same number as his vehicle. No payment was received. The police established that that number was registered to Mr. Chedgzoy. They issued a "notice to owner" but again no reply was received. I accept, although I am not certain of this because it is the dates that matter, that Mr. Chedgzoy may have already been in communication with the Westminster city council. The Metropolitan police, for whom I am able to speak in this place, registered the penalty as a fine with Mr. Chedgzoy's local court.

The court then sought to enforce payment of the fine. At this stage, Mr. Chedgzoy exercised his right to make a statutory declaration that he had no knowledge of the fixed penalty in question—the one in question here being the one from the Metropolitan police. This had the effect of cancelling the fine, for such a declaration is the safeguard provided for causes such as these.

The police have now managed to establish what lay behind the events. It appears that another vehicle carries the same number as Mr. Chedgzoy's car and has parked illegally. Therefore, it should have been the one to bear the fine. The Metropolitan police have traced the other vehicle and its driver. The vehicle, which has a registration number differing by only one number from Mr.

[Mr. Peter Lloyd]

Chedgzoy's car, was involved in an accident in early part of the year. A garage undertaking repairs replaced the front index plate but made an error on one digit, with the result that the front plate bore the registration number allocated to Mr. Chedgzoy's car. The driver did not notice the mistake until it was pointed out by police; he is now rectifying it.

Mr. Hardy: I am fascinated by the information, but I have a question. Did the owner of the car with a misplaced digit on its number plate receive parking tickets that were addressed to my constituent, or did he not notice that he had been receiving parking tickets for his inaccurately digited number plate since March or April this year? I find that an incredible explanation.

Mr. Lloyd: As I understand it, he had paid a number of parking tickets, but not all the tickets that had been issued on his car. The police tell me that they could not investigate sooner because they had no reason to think that anything was amiss until Mr. Chedgzoy wrote to them at the end of September and subsequently provided full details earlier this month.

Mr. Redmond: When a parking ticket is made out, it is normal practice for the traffic warden or whoever makes it out to check that the vehicle excise disc is valid. That being so, the number on the excise disc would have been different from the number on the plate, so someone slipped up badly, causing a lot of pain and grief to the constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy).

This is not good enough. The Minister has been pouring out all this information in my hon. Friend's Adjournment debate and seemingly everything is suddenly light and clear, but month after month this sort of incompetence has caused a hell of a lot of grief to an old lady and gentleman.

Mr. Lloyd: It has indeed caused a lot of grief, as the hon. Member for Wentworth has explained. I am explaining that the Metropolitan police did not know that there was a problem of this nature until September. Certainly there should have been a check to determine whether the vehicle excise licence number and the number on the front plate matched. There was a difference of one digit, and being a fair-minded man, the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) will understand how a one digit difference might not have been noticed.

Mr. Lofthouse: Of course mistakes can be made, but did both front and rear plates need to be replaced?

Mr. Lloyd: The front and back plates differed by one digit——

Mr. Hardy: Incredible.

Mr. Lloyd: No doubt the hon. Gentleman inspects his own front and rear number plates at regular intervals, but many people do not. Being a fair-minded man, he will understand that drivers may not always check, and even if they did they might not notice a difference of one digit. Perhaps I do the hon. Gentleman an injustice; perhaps he is fair-minded but far more observant than many of the rest of us.

Mr. Hardy: I would not claim to be so observant. I might well fail to notice a one-digit difference between the plates, but I am sure that, if I failed to notice it over a period of seven months, a member of my family would have noticed it. I find the whole thing incredible. I should make it clear, however, that Mr. Chedgzoy sought to inform the authorities before September. He telephoned more than once and was assured that he should not worry: it would all be sorted out. Plainly, it was not. That suggests that in future people should rely less on the telephone and more on correspondence.

Mr. Lloyd: I listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman but I was not sure from his account exactly to whom Mr. Chedgzoy made his representations. Were they made to Westminster city council, or were they made also to the local police? I am merely reporting that the Metropolitan police, who issued only one of the tickets, did not know until the date that I gave, after which they made inquiries and discovered that the situation was as I have described it. I understand that only one fixed penalty was issued by the police in respect of the vehicle in question and that it was not paid. As I said earlier, it appears that some fines were paid in respect of the offending vehicle.

The other correspondence received by Mr. Chedgzoy concerned unpaid excess charge notices for overstaying at parking meters, issued by Westminster city council. I am informed by the council that those notices have now been cancelled, as the hon. Member for Wentworth said, and that it has written to Mr. Chedgzoy telling him so and expressing regret for any distress that he may have suffered.

The hon. Member for Wentworth will understand that I cannot speak for a local authority—not even Westminster city council—or comment on the promptness and manner of Westminster city council's response to Mr. Chedgzoy's communication and to that of the hon. Gentleman. However, I will draw the hon. Gentleman's remarks this evening to Westminster city council's attention.

The hon. Member for Wentworth suggested that Mr. Chedgzoy should receive compensation for the stress and inconvenience that he suffered. That is something for the organisations involved to consider, and no doubt they will do so when they read this debate. However, it seems clear that there was nothing improper or incorrect in the action of the police or the council, in the way that the hon. Gentleman described this evening. It is clear that Mr. Chedgzoy was the unfortunate victim of a set of circumstances beyond the control of either authority.

I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's concern, and understand why he raised the case this evening. I have every sympathy with the Kafkaesque situation in which Mr. Chedgzoy found himself, and I hope that he will gain some satisfaction from knowing that the reasons why it arose have now been discovered by the Metropolitan police. They will be writing to Mr. Chedgzoy with a full explanation and to express their regret. I am grateful to the hon. Member for Wentworth for raising the matter this evening, so that I could put before him and the House all the information that I have.

The hon. Gentleman referred in particular to letters that he wrote to the Home Office. This is the earliest opportunity that I have had to hear about the background and information surrounding the case and to respond to the hon. Gentleman. When a right hon. or hon. Member

writes to the Home Office about a problem as unhappy and mysterious as the one described tonight, we always want to respond as soon as we have an explanation to offer. Having given the hon. Gentleman an explanation, I repeat my regret and express again my sympathy for Mr. Chedgzoy, and I assure the hon. Gentleman that his comments and my response this evening will be placed before both the Metropolitan police and Westminster city council.

Mr. Hardy: I am grateful to the Minister, who has displayed his traditional courtesy. I note that he does not feel that there has been any impropriety or incompetence on the part of the authorities. All I can say is that I certainly hope that no South Yorkshire authority ever displays the degree of accomplished competence that has been shown in this case. Until the London authorities reach the standard maintained in South Yorkshire, people like Mr. and Mrs. Chedgzoy would be well advised to wait another 35 years before setting foot in London again.

Special Constables

9.38 pm

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): The latest crime figures, announced two or three weeks ago, show that despite a major improvement in police funding amounting to an increase of 60 per cent. since 1979, crime continues to increase.

Each year in the Gracious Speech, reference is made to some new measure designed to stem crime, but despite a battery of initiatives ranging from the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to the introduction of the successful neighbourhood watch schemes, it continues to increase. I sometimes believe that the originality of my right hon. and hon. Friends' thinking is equalled only by the originality of criminals in devising further means and methods of formulating crime.

I make one suggestion to my hon. Friend. I have an idea which seems to have been somewhat neglected so far. Perhaps it has been neglected because it is unfashionable and it may even be unpopular in certain official circles. It does not cost very much and it is certainly not high-tech. Indeed, it smacks a little of the amateur and harks back to an earlier time in our country's history. It concentrates more on men than on machines—more on informed local interest and less on the impersonal computer. It is more pavement and less Panda-oriented and motivated.

My hon. Friend will know what I am referring to because he has answered a number of my questions about special constables, who always strike me as a sensible British institution and seem to introduce a non-standard note of originality. By definition, they are volunteers—men and women who freely give up their spare time to help and protect their community—and it is my firm belief that we are much the better for their presence and their efforts. We should, however, be seeking substantially to increase their numbers and to improve their training.

I am delighted to have the support of my good friend, my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) this evening. I also note that, although customarily silent, the Whip on duty, my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) is affirming his interest in this genuinely interesting and important matter.

There is also a case for substantially improving the training of special constables. After all, they are an integral part of the police force and should be seen and treated as such.

As my hon. Friend the Minister is aware, there are about 15,500 special constables in post. In 1974, there were 24,000. By comparison, in the past 11 years total police manpower has increased by about 24,500 to a United Kingdom total of about 126,000. Total spending on the police is now running at about £4·5 billion per annum. It might benefit the House to contrast that enormous expenditure with the cost of special constables, which is between £500,000 and £1 million. Special constables are unpaid and receive only their uniform and modest allowances.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): I am delighted to have my hon. Friend's permission to intervene, as he has reached one of the nubs of a complex argument. It seems to me, and to my local constabulary of

[Mr. Michael Stern]

Avon and Somerset which has mentioned the matter to me on a number of occasions, that it is attempting to recruit special constables with one foot in a bucket of concrete.

As my hon. Friend rightly said, there has been a decline in the number of special constables. Unlike other areas of activity in which concerned citizens seek to influence the society in which they live and to play their part in improving it, special constables are not paid, as my hon. Friend pointed out. When a constabulary such as Avon and Somerset attempts to recruit special constables it is competing against the Territorial Army, which can make some payment.

I should like the tradition of unpaid service that the special constable represents to be preserved, as I am sure my hon. Friend would. I understand from a recent parliamentary answer by my hon. Friend the Minister that a campaign is to start early in the new year to recruit more special constables. Some form of imaginative compensation may be needed that would make the difference between this form of service to the community and others slightly less one-sided financially. I should be delighted if my hon. Friend could expand on the point.

Mr. Pawsey: I am pleased that I gave way to my hon. Friend. He clearly deserves his reputation for eloquence. Moreover, he shows that he is very interested in the conditions of service of special constables.

Special constables are unpaid. They receive only the most modest of allowances and a uniform. Incidentally, I have to tell the House, and I take no pleasure in so doing, that those modest allowances are less than adequate or fair. For example, for reasons which frankly I do not understand, a special constable is allowed only 60 per cent. of the meal allowance that a regular constable receives. There may be a good reason for that obvious anomaly, but if there is, I suspect that it has rather more to do with good budgeting than with good diet.

The Minister is aware that even the sick pay entitlement of special constables is worse than that of regulars. I find it genuinely surprising not that there are so few special constables but that there are so many, given the lack of incentives—a point well made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West. I therefore urge the Minister to begin a really effective recruitment campaign which will substantially increase the number of special constables. The campaign must contain a modest form of bounty, perhaps as little as £500 per year. That bounty should be found from new money. It should not come from existing police budgets. If it did, that would be a disincentive to the recruitment of special constables. The Minister should also introduce a fair sick pay scheme for special constables who are injured in the course of their official duties. It should equal that which applies to the regular police.

I urge my hon. Friend also to direct his undoubted talents towards the recruitment of more coloured special constables. At present, there are only 453 coloured specials out of a total of 15,500. I acknowledge my hon. Friend's reply to a parliamentary question that I asked, which appeared on 25 January in the *Official Report*. I hope that he will consider, if he has not already done so, more direct contact with ethnic groups. I ask him also to consider making better use of the ethnic press and to invite ethnic leaders to meet him so that he may advise them about the duties of special constables and seek to persuade them to encourage more ethnic community members to become special constables.

Earlier I referred to training. In July this year I asked my hon. Friend the Minister

"what action he intends to take to improve the training of special constables."

My hon. Friend gave one of his typically helpful and complete replies. He said:

"We are already reviewing the training needs of special constables with the intention of producing a national training package. This will include training in basic policing skills and knowledge, such as powers of arrest, classification of offences, stop and search powers, traffic law and community involvement with management training for those in supervisory roles."—[*Official Report*, 12 July 1990; Vol 176, c. *318-19.*]

That was a full reply, but I am anxious to draw my hon. Friend a little further.

For example, can he say how long the training courses might last? Will there be a test at the end of the courses? Who will be the instructors and where will the courses take place? Will they take place within individual force areas or will there be a training college to which recruits might be encouraged to go? Can my hon. Friend say when the improved training courses might commence? Will they be available to existing members of the special constabulary or will they apply only to new recruits?

I appreciate that I am asking my hon. Friend a number of questions and I must confess that I have not given him prior notice. Nevertheless, given his undoubted expertise, the chances are that he will be able to respond in full. If, sadly, he is not able to do so, I am sure that his excellent officials will be able to provide me with a written response in due course. My hon. Friend knows me well and he knows that I have asked those questions in a genuine and constructive desire to be helpful. I therefore look forward to his full reply.

In my view, the effectiveness of any disciplined force is in direct proportion to the training that the force receives. Therefore, specials need to be informed about new legislation and new policing methods being introduced. They should be able to take their place alongside their regular colleagues without any sense of inferiority. They should be secure in the information and advice that they have received and they should be fully capable of dealing with any problems of law enforcement. The regular arm should be confident enough in the specials not to be continually looking over their shoulders wondering what the specials might be doing.

There is thus a need for a more comprehensive form of training than currently exists. I believe that good training will reduce the at times arm's-length attitude adopted by some forces. It may also turn out to be a positive aid to recruiting as properly trained specials will be seen as capable of playing a real and positive role in policing. They would release more regular police for more active duties. Properly trained specials could also play a stronger role in supporting the regular force with back-up and patrol work. I hope that my hon. Friend will inquire into the considerable differences in the number of special constables in various police forces, and I hope that he will ask why the number of special constables in some forces has been allowed to fall.

Another parliamentary answer, which appeared in the *Official Report* on 15 March, shows that there are wide discrepancies between police forces. In Bedfordshire, there

were 215 special constables in 1985, but by 1989 that already small figure had fallen to 137. In the Thames valley, there were 715 special constables in 1985, but sadly by 1989 the figure had fallen to 568. I am not saying that the decline applies across the board. In some countries, there has been a modest improvement. In Leicestershire, for example, there were 220 special constables in 1985, but that had jumped quite spectacularly to 327 in 1989. In Northamptonshire, a modest improvement was also shown, from 203 in 1985 to 240 in 1989. Nevertheless, I continue to be concerned about the wide discrepancy among police forces.

Mr. Stern: My hon. Friend is right to link training and the varying experience of different counties in recruiting special constables. Does he agree that the parallel that I drew with the Territorial Army shows what can be done? He will have noted, as I have in my constituency, the emphasis that has been placed recently on the benefit of joining the Territorial Army not only for what the individual will learn but for that individual's employer in terms of the employee's improvement in general mental attitude to employment and its demands which service with the TA offers.

Does he further agree that, in areas where there has been a relative lack of success in the recruitment of special constables, an effort could be made—indeed, we may hope for such an effort in the recruitment campaign in 1991—to persuade potential employers of the advantages of employing those who serve as special constables? Does he agree that that may need to be addressed in the near future?

Mr. Pawsey: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. He rightly says that there will be an undoubted benefit to employers whose employees undergo the appropriate training as special constables, and he is right to draw an analogy between special constables and the Territorial Army. For reasons that I do not clearly understand, the TA is regarded as being a more prestigious organisation.

My hon. Friend is right to say that benefits will accrue to employers as a result of employees serving as special constables. For example, a special constable may be able to advise on improved methods of security. That is one positive benefit which would be useful to employers. I appreciate, as I am sure my hon. Friend the Minister does, the further helpful and knowledgeable contribution made by my hon. Friend.

I hold the view that the better the training, the more professional the application. That, in turn, may ensure a higher level of acceptance by those forces which still regard the specials as suitable only for looking after the village fete. It is evident that several police forces take that wholly mistaken view, which deprives them of much additional expertise.

As the special constables are unpaid volunteers, they undoubtedly bring great enthusiasm to policing and it is wasteful that better use is not made of their time——

It being Ten o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Mr. Pawsey: I was referring to the enthusiasm brought to policing by the special constables. It would be wasteful if that enthusiasm, time, talent and effort were not utilised most effectively. I very much hope that my hon. Friend and his colleagues at the Home Office will be able to re-emphasise their positive support for special constables. I am sure that that would do a great deal of good, both for the morale of special constables and for the prospects of the recruiting campaign which my hon. Friend is to mount in the reasonably near future.

There is great concern about rising crime. The specials are men and women who are prepared to do something about the crime wave. They do not just talk about it—they have acted. They put their free time and energy where others simply put their mouths. More specials would be a positive contribution to law enforcement. A strong and particular bond would emerge between the volunteer specials and the public—or it would do if there numbers were greater. The specials are unsung heroes and deserve a far higher profile, which would also assist recruiting.

I wish to draw my hon. Friend's attention to a splendid speech made only last month at Hutton hall by the noble Lord Ferrers to an audience of senior regular and special police officers. He said:

"But like everything in Life you get out of anything in direct proportion to what you put in. Put in little and you will get out little. It is just the same with the Specials. You will only get out of the Specials what you are prepared to put into them. Put in little, and you will get out little. Put in a lot, and you will get out a lot.

The contribution which Specials can make to the work of any particular force will be in direct proportion to the effort the force is prepared to make in managing them effectively.

And this brings me back to what I said a short while ago. It is essential to work out a coherent strategy of how you want to use Specials and how you can achieve those aims."

The noble Lord is right. Given good managment and a worthwhile role—not on the lines of the village fete, as I mentioned earlier—the specials can play a considerable part in the battle against crime, but they can play that part only if they are well trained, well motivated and well managed, and their management depends to a large extent on the leadership that comes from the regular police.

In my own county of Warwickshire, we are fortunate in having a chief constable who positively believes in the special police. It is no coincidence that, in Warwickshire —which, admittedly, has a small police force—we have 347 specials. That is slightly up on the 1985 figure. I recall attending, a year or so ago, the passing-out parade of the special constables, held at the police headquarters in Leek Wootton in Warwickshire. It was indeed a memorable occasion. We were graced with the presence of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, who was Home Secretary at the time, and I recall the admirable speech that he made. The House will not be surprised to know that the new special constables were smart and that their enthusiasm was obvious. They had clearly been made welcome and they felt part of a team. There is no arm's-length attitude in Warwickshire.

I have referred to increasing police manpower, but despite the increase of 24,000 the public would still like to see more bobbies on the beat. Police recruitment continues to be slow, and the situation is likely to worsen as the number of school leavers continues to fall. More special constables would be welcome, not in place of regular police but in addition to them. At a time when private armies are apparently increasing—witness the increase in the number of security firms and the emergence of the Guardian Angels on our tubes—it is unfortunate that the number of specials is falling.

I do not wish to imply that I regard special constables in any way as a private army. Far from it—they are part

[Mr. Pawsey]

of the police force. Clearly, however, some people feel that a measure of additional law enforcement is both desirable and necessary. An increase in the number of specials under the control of the regular police, and with increased responsibility and accountability to the public, would be preferable to the mushrooming of security companies and vigilante groups.

I do not see specials as coppers on the cheap. They have a different and more supportive role. They do their duty not for money, because there is no money, but because they are genuinely interested in police work. They have a simple and commendable aim—to serve their communities—and it is my argument and belief that they should be encouraged to do so.

10.8 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): I am glad to have the opportunity to respond to this debate on the special constabulary. My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) has long given enthusiastic support to the special constabulary and I warmly welcome his constructive comments. I am also glad to see my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) in his place. I know that he too takes a close interest in the specials, and I shall deal later with the points that he made in his two shrewd interventions.

This debate comes at a time when there are many pressures on the police. It provides a useful chance to focus on the contribution made by the special constabulary to the total policing effort in Britain.

I should like to make it clear at the outset—I echo what my hon. Friends have said—that the Government do not regard the specials as in any sense an alternative to the regular police. They are an additional resource which, if properly used, can allow the great experience and training of the regular officers to be put to the best possible use.

As my hon. Friend pointed out, in 1974 there were 24,000 specials, but for the past 10 years the figures have hovered around 16,000. There are currently 15,500 specials in England and Wales. There is a steady pattern of recruitment, but it is matched by the numbers who leave because of domestic or work commitments—or, I am happy to report, because they decide to join the regular police force.

Mr. Pawsey: Can my hon. Friend give us a rough estimate of the percentage of special constables who transfer to the regular police? If he cannot give me the information now, perhaps inspiration will come to him a little later.

Mr. Lloyd: I can tell my hon. Friend that the proportion is about 10 per cent.—a useful number. If I am wrong I shall let him know at some time after the debate, but I think that that figure is a pretty good guide. The special constabulary is a very productive recruiting pool for police officers.

Our immediate objective is to increase the strength of the specials to 20 per cent. of the regular establishment—about 20,000—and, as my hon. Friend has mentioned, the Government will be launching a national advertising campaign early next year. The campaign will cost £1·3 million, and will run for about three years. It will involve national advertising to increase awareness of the special constabulary, as well as material to support the essential local recruitment initiatives.

However, we are not just recruiting numbers for their own sake. There was a time when the special constabulary was high in numerical strength, but contained too many members who turned out only for occasional ceremonial events. We want a committed, trained special constabulary, which can make an effective contribution to the policing of the areas for which it is responsible.

My hon. Friend spoke of the varied professional policing tasks now being carried out by specials. I applaud those developments. It is, of course, for chief constables to make decisions about the operational deployment of their men, but it seems obvious to me that varied deployment of specials can only be in everyone's interest. Professional policing requires both training and experience, and, if we want specials to provide effective support for the regular police, they must be able to provide that support across a wide range of duties. Patrolling the beat or attending football matches are obvious duties; but traffic duties, responding to major emergencies, neighbourhood watch and so on can all involve special constables. A number of forces operate "takeover days", when specials run a section for a day with responsibility for all aspects of policing.

Mr. Pawsey: My hon. Friend said earlier that the advertising campaign would cost £1·3 million. Am I not right in saying that that cost is substantially greater than the total cost of the specials? I do not intend in any way to disparage what my hon. Friend is doing; indeed, I welcome it. I mention it merely to highlight the value for money that the country receives from its 16,500 special constables. My hon. Friend clearly agrees with me; otherwise, he would not be advancing the admirable case for advertising and attracting more recruits.

Mr. Lloyd: My hon. Friend, with great skill, has seized an opportunity to emphasise the excellent value for money provided by the specials. He is entirely right about that.

All the measures to which I have referred—"takeover days" in particular, but also the other training and activities in which they are involved—develop the skills and confidence of specials, and enable regular police commanders to deploy their regular officers with greater flexibility. Individual specials, of course, may have personal skills—in languages, for instance, or in other professional training—which can be put to good use by their force.

However, there is a caveat. My hon. Friend spoke properly of the importance of training. For specials to be effective, they must be able to provide a professional response to the tasks on which they are deployed and the key to that is proper training and management as my hon. Friend said on several occasions in his speech. A special who is unable to carry out the required duties is no help to the public and, an irritation to his colleagues and could even put others at risk.

Forces are now putting greater effort into training and chief officers share the Government's belief and the belief of my hon. Friend, in the importance of having specials trained to professional standards for the tasks that they are undertaking. We are providing support through a new training package being developed by the central planning and training unit at Harrogate to assist local training.

My hon. Friend asked several questions about training. It is up to chief officers to determine what parts of the package they use and whether that training is carried out. My hon. Friend also asked whether there would be a pass or fail criterion in the training. That is very much a matter for chief officers, but I assure my hon. Friend that any special who proved himself inadequate for duties on a training course would not continue long in the force.

However, training and the other issues should not be considered as separate factors. In September, the Home Office ran a two-day conference to consider proposals for the recruitment campaign and the management and training of those recruited. The conference brought together special commandants, senior regular officers, staff and local authority associations and Home Office officials and others to look in a thorough manner at the way forward for the special constabulary. The conference provided an opportunity for training proposals to be discussed with those aware of the detailed local needs. We hope that it will have given an opportunity for forces to reflect on what they need to do to make the most of their specials in the light of developments. A full report of the conference will be circulated to chief officers very shortly.

In addition to the general matters covered by the conference, the Government are taking a range of practical measures to address specific points. My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth paid proper tribute to those specials injured in the course of their duties. No nationwide statistics are yet available for injuries to specials, although Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary is now asking forces to provide them. In Avon and Somerset last year, 13 specials were assaulted, and 17 were assaulted in Devon and Cornwall. I believe that other forces have similar figures. That reminds us, if anyone still needs convincing, that specials can be as much in the front line as any other police officer. I know that the House will want to join me in expressing sympathy to those who have been injured in the course of their duties.

Mr. Pawsey: My hon. Friend referred to the number of injuries. Is he aware that special constables are not provided with the same secure helmets as are worn by regular police? Specials wear a soft cap, while the regular police have a stiffened and protective form of headgear. Is it not time that we provided specials with the same degree of protection that is afforded to the regular police?

Mr. Lloyd: We are considering many factors concerning the specials and that factor should be added to the list if it is not already in the minds of particular chief constables. I am grateful for that suggestion, and I know that this debate will be read and my hon. Friend's reference noted.

In addition to the general matters covered by the conference, we are considering a range of specific points. My hon. Friend stated that existing regulations do not properly meet the needs of injured officers. He will be glad to hear that we are in the process of amending special constables' regulations as far as they affect sick pay. That will principally link sick pay to the actual loss of earnings of a special rather than limiting it to the earnings of a regular constable if those would be lower.

If a special is injured in the course of his duty, it can only be right that we should ensure that he does not suffer financially. That was accepted by the police advisory board and we have subsequently consulted staff and local authority associations on further technical changes to ensure that our arrangements fit in with current social security regulations. We hope to be laying those regulations before Parliament shortly.

My hon. Friend asked me about meal allowances for specials. They have now been put on exactly the same footing as those for the regular police force.

Any discussion of allowances for specials leads inevitably, as it did during my hon. Friend's speech and the interventions by my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West, to the bounty. That matter was discussed at the 1987 conference, and views have been put to us from many quarters, both for and against. At the last meeting of the police advisory board, no agreement was reached in the face of strongly held views, and we undertook to give it a further thought.

I must say that there are attractions to the idea of paying a bouty in some form as a recognition of the public service and commitment that the specials give the community. It seems to me only proper for that service to be acknowledged, as it is in some other forms of voluntary public service, such as the Territorial Army, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West said. But we recognise the strength of the feelings involved and are particularly sensitive to the views of those specials who feel that any form of payment would damage a proud tradition of voluntary service. My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary will be giving the matter further thought and considering the feasibility of a pilot scheme.

For all that the Government do, though, the key to the contribution of the special constabulary lies at the local level. Effective policing, as we all know, depends on the support of the community for the police, and specials are ordinary members of the community who take their concern for good policing seriously enough to commit their own time and effort to their local force. I cannot praise too highly that public service commitment.

Local police commanders can draw on the local knowledge of their specials; they can deploy them to the front line whether for a major emergency or a pub fight; and they can use them for routine policing tasks to free regular officers for more specialist functions. There is no question of specials being an alternative to regular police officers. They are a complementary body whose support increases the ability of the force to match the professional skills of regular officers with the tasks which need them most.

It is a privilege to be able to use the opportunity of this debate to put on record the Government's appreciation of the dedication and professionalism of the special constabulary. It is a body of men and women of all backgrounds who are united by a common desire to play their part in helping to make their communities safer and better places in which to live. They are unpaid and carry out their duties because they believe in them. That is the real meaning of public service. I am sure that the House will want to join me in paying tribute to the special constabulary for the essential part they play in the policing of this country and to my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth for raising the matter and enabling us to do so.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-two minutes past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 31 October 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Cambodia

1. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about trade with Cambodia.

The Minister for Trade (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): In 1989 our exports were worth £530,000 and our imports £220,000.

Mr. Dalyell: Why does the Minister suppose that British-made mines found their way to Cambodia?

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure the hon. Gentleman that there was no military material in those exports.

Mr. McAllion: As we are dealing with Asia, will the Minister confirm that Government Whips have ordered the Scottish Office Minister with responsibility for trade to return from an important trade mission to Japan to vote against dog registration tonight? Does he agree that this represents a disgraceful order of priorities? The Minister is being asked to assist in defeating dog registration——

Mr. Speaker: Order. What does this have to do with Cambodia?

Mr. McAllion: Asia, Mr. Speaker. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may not like it, but they will have to listen to my supplementary question. Is it not— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am unable to hear what the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question is about while there is so much noise in the Chamber.

Mr. McAllion: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister agree that his colleague's return from Japan represents a disgraceful order of priorities? Dog registration is being elevated to a degree of importance above that of securing important Asian markets for Scottish commerce and industry. Is not it time that trade Ministers slipped the leash of the fanatic at No. 10 and started to put national priorities first?

Mr. Sainsbury: The hon. Gentleman has a hazy knowledge of geography. I do not think that any of his questions arises from Question 1.

Steel Industry

2. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Peter Lilley): I am confident that the United Kingdom steel industry will continue to perform well now that all of it is in the private sector.

Mr. Clarke: Will the Secretary of State use his influence firmly to ensure that there is no dismantling of the strip mill at Ravenscraig until the Scottish Development Agency's report has been received and properly assessed, given the devastating impact of such a decision on the people of west central Scotland?

Mr. Lilley: I entirely endorse what my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has said and done about this. I believe that British Steel has said that it is awaiting the results of the SDA report on the steel industry in Scotland.

Mr. Devlin: Will my right hon. Friend ensure, however, that any decisions about the future plate mill are made for proper commercial reasons? If those reasons show that such a mill should go to Teesside instead of propping up the Scottish steel industry, will not that be the correct decision?

Mr. Lilley: Of course, the location of plant is a matter for British Steel now that it is in the private sector, and it will take such decisions on a commercial basis. I am sure that no hon. Member would wish firms to be forced to locate according to political rather than commercial decisions.

Dr. Reid: How can the Minister stand there and say that he expects the steel industry to improve and prosper when there is an imminent threat to the Clydesdale tube works in Bellshill in my constituency? Is he aware that any such closure at Clydesdale would mean huge job losses and, as it is the only plant in the United Kingdom that produces seamless tubes, a further deterioration of the balance of trade? Would not it be a tragedy if an expanding North sea oil sector were to fuel the steel industries of our competitors at a time when our steel plants are closing? Will not the Minister step in now before the threat becomes a reality and ensure that the Clydesdale tube works is saved?

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has made it clear that we shall do all that we can to help this industry, like other industries in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, to prosper. The Opposition seem to want to fossilise the economy and prevent all change. That is a recipe for turning Scotland and the entire United Kingdom into an industrial museum.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. Friend agree that British Steel's record since privatisation—it has broken all production records—should give the House confidence in the way in which its management goes about its business? Although Governments can advise, they should never deem to instruct managers on how to run their businesses.

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. British Steel and the British steel industry are very successful compared with almost every other steel industry in the world. In the first nine months of this year, our steel exports were up 7 per cent. and imports were down 8 per cent. Productivity has increased threefold over the past decade. That is good news, and it is sad that it is not welcomed by the Opposition.

Mr. Kirkwood: How can the Minister satisfy the House that the Government can plan a sensible industrial and economic strategy when they have been denied essential business and financial details by companies as important as British Steel?

Mr. Lilley: I did not realise that the hon. Gentleman was in favour of state planning.

Mr. Holt: Does my right hon. Friend recall the time when the subsidy to British Steel was about £14 billion or £15 billion—a great deal of money which could have been spent on hospitals, nurses, doctors, old-age pensions, children and the other welfare measures which we are now able to afford because such money is not being poured down the drain by a nationalised British Steel?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. In the decade up to 1985, the total subsidy to British Steel, in present-day money, was £14 billion. It is hard to know where the Opposition expect to get such money, as they have already mortgaged the future with promises to spend on almost everything else. If they return to a state-controlled, state-regulated or nationally owned steel industry, we shall again be back in that loss-making era.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Will the Secretary of State remember that it is not the Secretary of State for Scotland but he, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who is responsible for industry and for steel? Will he therefore meet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the Clydesdale rescue plan so that we can gain a higher share of North sea work? Will he tell him of his view, and that of the Secretary of State for Scotland, that there must be no demolition or asset-stripping at Ravenscraig before there is a discussion on and examination of the Scottish Development Agency's proposals? Will he set up an action team within the Department to consider the prospects for the steel industry, and will he explain to the high-productivity work force at Ravenscraig why, five months after Ministers promised that they would press British Steel to reconsider and review the decision on the strip mill, the Department has done absolutely nothing?

Mr. Lilley: From time to time, I meet the chairman of British Steel, but it is sensible that the Secretary of State for Scotland takes the lead on this issue. I have read the so-called five-point plan for the future of the steel industry which the hon. Gentleman just summarised. Four of its points are contrary to the treaty of Rome, and one is simply the establishment of a committee.

Debt Advice

3. **Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase spending on debt advice work.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): Much of this work is done by local citizens advice bureaux, which are funded by generous Exchequer grant, of which the House will hear shortly this afternoon. The Department of Trade and Industry funds centrally the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland to the tune of £11 million in the current year.

Mr. Martin: I understand that the Minister wished to encourage building societies and other financial institutions to put money into the fund that he set up, but that they have failed to do so. Is not it a cheek that those institutions, which send junk mail to almost every person who has a bank account encouraging them to get into more and more debt, are not prepared to finance the advice given to people who are in serious difficulties? Will the Minister use his good offices to ensure that building societies and banks do more in this respect?

Mr. Redwood: The private sector is already responding to the idea that it should help to finance schemes with local citizens advice bureaux, and the Government welcome that. I have explained that generous Government moneys are being paid through the local authority system to help with that work. Individual Members of Parliament can advise constituents who are in trouble that they should go immediately to the building society that gave them a mortgage and talk through their problem in good time, because often the building society can find a way of easing payments during a period of difficulty for the family. That is the best answer.

Mr. Hill: My hon. Friend is right that citizens advice bureaux do much work in dealing with this difficult matter. Is he aware that citizens advice bureaux in my constituency have perhaps more work than most in respect of credit and that they face difficulties in working within the budget that my hon. Friend outlined?

Mr. Redwood: It is for each local authority to decide the right level of funding for its citizens advice bureaux. Some local authorities are increasing the budget for CABs because they think that they do important work, but that is a matter for local determination. In several parts of the country, there are money advice support units funded by private sector initiative, led by companies ranging from Mercantile Credit through Barclaycard to a consortium working in Greater Manchester, and they, too, are helpful.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Does the Minister realise that more than 2·25 million households are in debt, that we have had a decade of debt and bankruptcies and that the Government have been encouraging spenders, not savers? When will the hon. Gentleman stop being the irresponsible lenders' lackey?

Mr. Redwood: That is complete nonsense, and the hon. Gentleman knows it. The Government have taken many measures to stimulate saving, with the welcome effect that the savings ratio has been increasing. As for serious debt problems, the hon. Gentleman may like to know that in the year to June 1990, the number of repossessions was only one third of 1 per cent. of the total stock of mortgages. That still means individual problems, and I have suggested to the House ways in which they can be resolved through the advice of debt advisers and Members of Parliament acting for their constituents.

World Trade

4. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the United Kingdom's current share of world trade; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Latest estimates of the United Kingdom share of the value of the main manufacturing countries' exports of manufactures was 8·2 per cent. in 1989. The United Kingdom's share has been broadly unchanged since the early 1980s, following decades of decline.

Mr. Thurnham: Bearing in mind the importance of our invisible trade, which at 17 per cent. of the total is more than double that of our nearest competitors, may I ask my right hon. Friend to do his utmost to remove the barriers to invisible trade? I hope that he will have the Opposition's full support, because no doubt their prawn cocktails were largely paid for by the City's invisible trade.

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend makes a telling point. I agree that we must welcome exports of invisibles just as we welcome exports of manufactures and other goods. We are taking action in the single market negotiations to remove barriers to invisible trade as well as visible trade and taking action in the GATT negotiations to extend the agreement to free trade in invisibles. We naturally regret the obstacles put in our way in both negotiations by some of our partners who are not as enthusiastic about free trade as we are.

Mr. Hoyle: Why is the Secretary of State so complacent? Does he realise that British companies are finding it more difficult to export and keep up their share of world trade? Does he realise that we are facing the worst recession since the 1980s, due to the Government's disastrous economic policies? Instead of being his usual spineless self, will he stand up for Britain and tell the Prime Minister and the Chancellor that they are wrong? If not, the rest of British industry will go down the plughole.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is extremely good at standing up for Britain and I endorse her stand. On the trade front, exports in the last quarter were up by 8 per cent. and imports were static compared with a year earlier. That is not a sign of the phenomenon that the hon. Gentleman tried to describe.

Mr. David Martin: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the strength of our world trade relies heavily on the strength of our financial and exchange markets? What would be the effect of a single currency and a single banking system being adopted by the European Economic Community, and liable to be dominated by Germany?

Mr. Lilley: It is clear that it is not necessary, for success in international markets, to be part of a larger monetary zone. One need only think of Switzerland, for example, which is a very successful country even though it has a currency of limited circulation. Likewise, Canada, which has a closely integrated economy and is the biggest trading partner of the United States, feels no necessity to adopt the United States dollar as its currency.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Is the Minister so complacent as to be unaware of the problems faced by millions of people and by exporters in particular? What sense does it make to compound the evils of his high interest rate policy by hitting industry twice over, with cuts in the Department of Trade and Industry budget, a 25 per cent., cut in research and development, a 40 per cent. cut in technology transfer, a 60 per cent. cut in regional enterprise grants and even cuts in export services? Instead of blaming everyone but themselves, why do not the Government accept that this is a recession labelled "Made in Downing street"?

Mr. Lilley: The hon. Gentleman still lives in a dream world and believes that the success of industry is in direct proportion to the amount of Government money that is spent on it. He has only to look at the success of Japan to realise that that is not the case. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry, the Japanese equivalent of the DTI, spends a smaller proportion of Japanese income on supporting industry than we spend here, but it is very successful nevertheless. We should learn from Japan's successes, not from socialist policies of higher spending.

Mr. David Davis: Given the cant and nonsense that we have just heard, will my right hon. Friend tell the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) what has happened in export services since we introduced charging in that sector?

Mr. Lilley: I shall be delighted to do so, and it is most interesting. There was much suggestion that once we introduced charging, demand for the services would decrease, but it has, in fact, increased. By general consent, the services are much better now that they are more professionally provided and professionally used. There has been a great welcome for the improvement in the calibre of export services since they have been charged for. That is welcomed by industry and it will show up in higher export figures in due course.

Manufacturing Output

5. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask sthe Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to boost manufacturing output.

The Minister for Industry (Mr. Douglas Hogg): The most important spur to the significant output growth by British manufacturing industry since 1989 has come from the competitive pressures of more open markets. The Government continue to promote this objective with policies such as privatisation, deregulation, elimination of restrictive practices and international negotiations to reduce trade barriers through the GATT and in the European Community. In addition, my Department continues to operate a range of schemes to improve business performance under the enterprise initiative.

Mr. Cummings: Does the Minister realise that the United Kingdom is teetering on the brink of another recession? Does he further realise that the latest official figures for closures show that there has been an increase of 70 per cent. in winding-up petitions for businesses as compared with the third quarter of last year? In view of those alarming trends, what comfort can the Minister offer to industrialists and the unemployed in Easington?

Mr. Hogg: It is perfectly true that we have been witnessing a slowdown in economic activity. That is a necessary prelude to the reduction of inflationary pressures in the economy. But it must be seen in the proper

context which, to the hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Cummings), is this: unemployment in his constituency has fallen by 21·4 per cent. over the past 18 months, and by 10·8 per cent. over the past 12 months. As to the broader perspective since 1981, output in manufacturing industry has improved by 32 per cent., which contrasts with a fall under Labour between 1974 and 1979.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: One of the biggest manufacturers in Nottingham is Raleigh Industries, which manufactures probably the world's most famous marque in cycles. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agreed to have a look at the correspondence initiated with his predecessor on the impact of Chinese imports into this country and how they affect one of our most efficient manufacturing industries. Will my hon. and learned Friend the Minister undertake to have a serious look at that before it becomes a real problem?

Mr. Hogg: Very few people are more enthusiastic about bicycles than I am. Therefore, I shall ensure that my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade, who is sitting beside me, pays the fullest regard to my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. James Lamond: How can we hope to expand manufacturing industry when firms like Hurley-Moate and Cobden Chadwick in Oldham are falling like ninepins? Is the Minister aware of the comments by Mr. Peter Maybury, a past president of Oldham chamber of commerce and trade, who referred to the Government's lunatic economic policies and mickey-mouse financial structures? When will the woman in Downing street realise that there is a recession on? Instead of complacently shouting and bawling at the Dispatch Box, should not the Minister take a trip to the north-east—as his father did, with his cloth cap on—and see the position of manufacturing industry? He can ask his friends in commerce and industry there how they feel about it.

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman will no doubt be the first person to greet me when I visit the north-east on Thursday. I go there nearly every six weeks, as the hon. Gentleman knows. As he clearly does not know the area, I can tell him that the economy of the north-east is extremely buoyant, the number of jobs is increasing rapidly and the people have very good morale. I suggest he goes there.

Mr. Grylls: Will my hon. and learned Friend make it clear that if there is increased output and productivity in industry, everyone should be happy to see higher wages because those higher wages will have been earned?

Mr. Hogg: Absolutely, but those basic lessons are not understood by the Labour party.

Manufactures

7. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the balance of trade in manufactures with the European Community in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Sainsbury: The United Kingdom trade deficit in manufactured goods with the European Community was £3·1 billion in 1979, and £14·4 billion in 1989.

Mr. Watson: As we have ended a decade under this Government with a deficit, as the Minister said, to the tune of £14·5 billion, and with a manufacturing deficit in excess of £11 billion for the first nine months of this year, when do the Government intend to introduce industrial policies specifically related to training, research and development and export promotion? Those policies are essential to turn round the trade deficit which the Minister so blandly announced.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is surprising that Opposition Members so constantly try to denigrate the performance of British industry. With manufacturing output, manufacturing productivity and manufacturing exports at record levels in 1990, we should commend that achievement.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Does my hon. Friend agree that Britain has been the country most favoured by non-EC countries for inward investment and that that has dramatically improved the chances of performing well in manufacturing during the 1990s? Does he also agree that we have a particular interest in the successful completion of the 1992 programme and in the application of all the directives by every member country?

Mr. Sainsbury: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. There is no doubt that the environment that the Government have created for industry and enterprise is proving attractive not only to those seeking to invest in Europe from outside Europe, but to other Community countries.

Mr. Caborn: Has the Minister had time to read the second report on state support within the European Community, which was produced in July? If he has, will he comment on the fact that in member states, support per person in high-tech industries, in technology transfer and research and development—all within the rules—is 100 per cent. greater in France and 50 per cent. greater in Germany? Why have not the Government supported high-tech industries at least to try to have a level playing field, which major manufacturers have in the rest of Europe?

Mr. Sainsbury: I suppose that it is only to be expected that a Labour party spokesman always looks to the state to provide some form of what he calls support. The most effective support for British industry—any type of British industry—is the provision of a climate in which enterprise is rewarded and recognised.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister consider the Scottish economy and its contribution to export performance? How much consideration did his Department and the Treasury give to the high valuation of the currency in the exchange rate mechanism, which will certainly inhibit exports from places such as Scotland? Would he care to comment on the effect of our exchange rate in the ERM and the prospects for exports?

Mr. Sainsbury: If one examines the central rate against the deutschmark over the past decade, one sees that the entry rate for the ERM was very much along that central rate over an historical period. In addition, if one looks at purchasing power parities, one sees that most analyses show that the entry point was at the lower end of the range.

Mr. Oppenheim: Will my hon. Friend take note of the fact that the Dutch electronics company, Philips, which, over the years, has lobbied extremely successfully for more and more subsidies and protection from the European

Community, at the expense of other industries and consumers, now finds itself in the most tremendous mess? Should not that ring some alarm bells about the simplistic, interventionist prescriptions being proposed by Opposition Members? Is not it time that the Government stopped tamely acquiescing in the failed industrial strategies that have been propagated by the European Community over the past 30 years?

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend draws attention to an interesting point when he refers to Philips. That company's failure to pay sufficient attention to productivity has led to its problems. We should spend our time praising rather than denigrating British industry because productivity in British manufacturing industry is at record levels.

Engineering Output

8. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the level of engineering output.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department regularly receives representations about many areas of industry, including the engineering sector.

Mr. Williams: Will the Minister comment on yesterday's report by the Confederation of British Industry, which predicts that manufacturing investment will fall by 6·7 per cent. this year compared with its level last year? Will he comment also on last month's report by the Engineering Employers Federation, which predicts that, over the next year, output in the engineering industry will fall by 5 per cent? What hope has the Minister to offer the engineering industry as it faces a recession?

Mr. Hogg: The advice that I would give is that those things have to be kept in perspective. One important piece of perspective is the growth of employment in the hon. Gentleman's constituency of Carmarthen. Over the past 18 months, employment there has risen by 24·3 per cent., and over the past 12 months it has risen by 15·5 per cent. I regard that as good news. Taking a broader perspective, in the quarter ended September 1990, output in the engineering industry increased by 3 per cent. compared with the previous 12 months.

Mr. Roger King: Does my hon. and learned Friend accept that this country is now a favoured location for investment by Japanese, United States and many European companies that are involved in engineering and manufacturing processes? Does he further accept that, once they have been set up in this country, companies such as Nissan in the north-east produce goods of such high quality that they are capable of being re-exported back to countries such as Japan?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend makes an important point, and it can be exemplified. Mechanical engineering output has increased by 15 per cent. since 1985, while it fell between 1974 and 1979; electrical and electronic engineering output has increased by 23 per cent. since 1985 while it fell between 1974 and 1979. The plain fact is that this country is the magnet for inward investment in Europe. We receive about 41 per cent. of American inward investment in Europe, and about one third of Japanese investment in Europe. We can be sure that that investment would not be coming in if the Labour party were in power.

Mr. Henderson: May I bring the Minister back to the report from the Engineering Employers Federation? Is the Minister concerned about its prediction that 80,000 jobs will be lost in the industry between mid-1990 and mid-1991? Do the Government accept any responsibility for that disastrous state of affairs? Will they now recognise that there is a need for an active industrial policy, as seen in the successful economies in Germany and Japan? Will the Minister announce a package of emergency measures in the Gracious Speech?

Mr. Hogg: We have an extremely effective industrial policy. That is why we saw output in manufacturing industry increase by 32 per cent. between 1981 and the present; it is why we have seen investment rise by 60 per cent. between 1981 and today; it is why we have seen exports in manufactured goods rise by 55 per cent. since 1981; it is why we have seen profitability at its highest-ever level; and it is why productivity has improved so much. We have an extremely good and successful industrial policy.

Germany

9. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the outcome of his recent discussions in Berlin with his West German counterpart on the opportunities for British firms that wish to compete in the markets of the former German Democratic Republic.

Mr. Lilley: I met my German counterpart, Dr. Haussmann, with a team of business men on both sides. It was a very useful opportunity to learn about the economic opportunities in the former GDR, and to raise with the German side certain problems inhibiting investment. My Department is seeking to increase awareness in the United Kingdom of the business openings in eastern Germany and eastern Europe.

Mr. Knapman: Despite the best endeavours of my right hon. Friend—and, indeed, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary—I should like to know whether any British firms have been able to take stakes in the key industries in East Germany. Have they been able to invest in the banking industry, the insurance industry or the state airline? Will British Gas be able to take a stake in the gas industry, or is the real position in Germany the most protectionist since Chicago in the 1930s?

Mr. Lilley: I believe that one of the companies that accompanied me—Ready Mixed Concrete—has taken a major stake in a German concrete firm since that meeting. My hon. Friend is right, however: we were anxious to ensure that the Treuhandanstalt treated British applications fairly, especially in the sphere of utilities. In that sphere, we have the great advantage of privatised companies, which are able to bid, take part and contribute, and which can therefore bring competition—and a degree of comparative competition—on to the German scene. There was a great deal of interest among the German press and the German business men who were present when I was there, and who were hoping that that would happen. We shall do all in our power to ensure that British firms face a level playing field when they make applications.

Mr. Clelland: How can British manufacturing industry be expected to compete effectively in the former GDR against foreign competitors when 62 per cent. of our industrial work force are unskilled, compared with 38 per

cent. in Germany, 21 per cent. in Italy and 20 per cent. in France? Will the Minister have a word with his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and tell her that it is about time that, instead of continually criticising our European partners, she stopped carping and started learning?

Mr. Lilley: One thing that I learnt from the German business men present was their method of encouraging and financing training among the large number of people whom they take on after school. The trainees effectively financed themselves by accepting pay that was only 40 per cent. of the adult wage. I understand that that practice has largely been banished from British industry because of pressure from British trade unions, but I shall convey the views expressed by the hon. Gentleman when I next meet the unions.

Mr. Ashby: Has my right hon. Friend considered the position of Prescold, which has been taken over by the Germans, who now dominate the market? They closed down the company over here, and all the manufacturing is now taking place in Germany. That is one industry which has gone from this country to Germany.

Mr. Lilley: Happily, that is a rare occurrence. We are now the most favoured location for investment from West German companies and companies elsewhere in the EEC, as we are for countries outside the EEC, which are investing in the EEC to take advantage of the single market. We have received major investments from West German, Japanese, American, French and Italian companies because we provide an environment in which they can prosper. None of that investment would have come here had the Labour party been in power.

Mr. John D. Taylor: In connection with the proposed sale of Interflug, the East German airline, in which both Lufthansa and British Airways have declared an interest, has the Secretary of State made any representations to the German authorities to ensure fair play when considering British Airways' interest, or has he abandoned the matter to the Commission of the European Community?

Mr. Lilley: I made representations at the time and they were well received by the Minister, who recognised the strength of our point.

Small Firms

10. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to assist small and medium-sized firms in developing new products and processes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State plans to launch in early 1991 a new scheme to support small and medium-sized firms to develop new products and processes. The scheme will be called SPUR.

Mr. Nicholson: Despite the present difficulties, does my hon. and learned Friend agree that small and medium-sized firms in the south-west are well placed to take advantage of the single European market? Will he state the proposed level of funding for this splendid new initiative and will he continue to build on it with further initiatives to help innovation?

Mr. Hogg: We have a variety of initiatives in place, most notably SMART—the small firms merit award for research and technology—the consultancy initiative and REG—regional enterprise grant. Those are all familiar terms to some hon. Members but not, it seems, to the Labour party. Investment will be about £30 million over three years.

Mr. John Evans: Will the Minister acknowledge that the finest assistance that could be given to small and medium-sized firms in Britain, and St. Helens in particular, would be a substantial fall in the appalling level of interest rates, which is currently crippling them?

Mr. Hogg: As a matter of fact, the best assistance by far is a profitable industry. The House will like to know that profitability in British industry has increased substantially in the past decade. It is up 1·75 times since 1979, up 2·5 times since 1980 and up 3·5 times since 1981. The House will also like to know that between 1974 and 1979 profitability increased not at all.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Following on from that reply, does my hon. and learned Friend remember that during Labour's last period of Government its response to the lack of output from small companies was to increase employers' national insurance contributions by imposing a national insurance surcharge? Does he recall that during the 1980s we removed it progressively and output increased? Has he made any representations to the Treasury about reducing the current high level of employers' national insurance contributions of 11·5 per cent. to perhaps 5 or 6 per cent., which it was in those days?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend referred to an important point. Under the Labour Government of 1974-79, manufacturing output actually fell. If the House would like to have the figures, they are these. In 1974, output was £109·1 billion. In 1975, it was £106 billion. To be more precise, production of cars between 1974 and 1979 fell by about one third, from just over 1·5 million to just over 1 million. So, Mr. Speaker, you can well understand why we regard the protestations of the Labour party that it is a friend of manufacturing industry as simply absurd.

Dr. Moonie: I was wondering where the continentals got the term "thick bricks" from. How does the Minister propose to aid technology transfer by cutting the budget by 40 per cent?

Mr. Hogg: I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman has not studied the matter carefully. The SPUR scheme, which is the most interest——

Ms. Mowlam: What is it?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) wants to know about the SPUR scheme. Well, I shall let her know about it. It has three elements. The first is to assist firms to pay for consultants, to help with the introduction of advanced manufacturing systems. The second is to assist small firms with product developments that have a novel, technological edge to them. The third is to assist with the provision of technological expertise to deal with short-term problems. I should expect ringing applause from the Opposition, but I know that I shall not get it.

Manufacturing Productivity

11. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the growth of manufacturing productivity in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other G7 countries during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Mr. Lilley: In the 1960s Britain had the slowest rate of growth in manufacturing productivity of any of the seven major industrial countries. In the 1970s we again had the slowest rate of growth in manufacturing productivity of any of those countries. In the 1980s we had the fastest rate of growth in manufacturing productivity of any of those countries.

Dr. Clark: Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating British manufacturing industry on its remarkable achievement? Does he agree that increasing productivity leads to lower unit costs, which lead to increased sales, profits and investment, which is the best way to expand our manufacturing base?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We should congratulate British industry because its manufacturing productivity has increased even faster than that of Japan. Scottish Labour Members make comments about the performance of industry, but we should note that Scottish manufacturing productivity has grown even faster than that of the rest of the United Kingdom. Scotland has outstripped even Japan and I pay tribute to Scottish industry for that. It never receives a word of praise from Scottish Labour Members.

Mr. Eastham: If industrial production was so bad in the 1960s and 1970s and is supposed to be so good now, why do we have the worst balance of payments deficit in our industrial record, of £20 billion?

Mr. Lilley: The hon. Gentleman should realise that a balance of payments deficit normally reflects an excess of demand that is growing even faster than rapid output. If a country spends £520 billion and produces £500 billion worth of output, it has a £20 billion deficit. That reflects not competitiveness, but excess demand. That is why my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has slowed the rate of growth in demand. The deficit is already diminishing and will continue to do so.

Green Policies

12. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the Government have taken to encourage green policies in industry.

Mr. Redwood: In May 1989 my Department launched an environmental programme. It set up an environmental helpline, which has already handled 6,000 queries. In April 1990 an environment unit was set up within the Department and in October 1990 I had the pleasure of launching two schemes—one jointly with the Department of the Environment, the environmental technology innovation scheme, to encourage research in green technology, and the DTI's environmental management options scheme, to spread best practice in green matters. They are positive steps forward and represent a major commitment to encourage British industry to pursue green policies.

Mr. Arnold: May I welcome the establishment of the environment unit and the other measures that my hon. Friend mentioned? What financial support are the Government giving to companies, such as Scotts in my constituency, with their environmental programmes?

Mr. Redwood: The funding for the various schemes amounts to £20 million over three years. We expect British industry to fund most research and development into new products and to promote its work to improve standards on pollution control. We believe in the "polluter pays" principle and that the main role of the Government is to set standards, which the House has been doing through the environmental protection measures.

Ms. Quin: Do not we have much catching up to do in this particular area? Will the Minister confirm that West Germany, for example, spends three times what we spend on environmentally related research and development?

Mr. Redwood: I cannot confirm that particular figure and I do not know where the hon. Lady got it. The British experience is not at all bad by international comparison. The standards that we are setting will be good ones, which many parts of British industry can already meet. There are many problems throughout the continent of Europe and the further east, the more difficult the problems.

Sir Hal Miller: Drawing a veil over the environmental consequences of socialist Governments in eastern Europe, is my hon. Friend aware that engineering firms in the west midlands accept the thrust of Government policy to improve the environment, but are concerned about the capital costs of some of the standards under discussion in the technical committees? What contribution is my hon. Friend's Department making to the consideration of those technical standards, taking into account best available technology not entailing excessive cost? Would it be possible to extend assistance provided by the Industry Acts to meet environmental objectives?

Mr. Redwood: My Department is active in discussions with other Departments in Whitehall on the green initiative, for the reasons that my hon. Friend has described, if not for other reasons. We want sensible standards that industry can meet. The purpose of the exercise is not to drive industry out of business, but to provide a stimulus for better practice and better products.

It is also true that green policies do not always mean higher costs and increased difficulty for business. Often such policies mean controlling waste in a business, better control over stocks, a greater effort to be first right, first time and better practice within business. Such policies can cut costs rather than increase them. Part of my Department's message to business is that green business is good business and that business might find that there are offsetting cost advantages in pursuing such policies, which should be taken into account when running through the capital appraisals.

Iraq

14. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the number of firms affected by the withdrawal of contracts from Iraq.

Mr. Sainsbury: We do not have a complete count of United Kingdom firms affected. The Department of Trade and Industry, the Bank of England and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have dealt with a large volume of inquiries since the beginning of the crisis. The Export Credits Guarantee Department is in contact with most of the firms that insured their contracts and it will be meeting established claims.

Mr. Campbell: Is not a year a long time? If I had asked this question a year ago, Ministers would have been falling over backwards to tell us about all the wonderful contracts that we have with Iraq. Those contracts were operating at a time when Iraq was fighting a war against Iran, so what has changed?

Mr. Sainsbury: If the Department and the ECGD had not provided the normal range of export help to what was a very good market—a market for civilian equipment and civilian exports—we should have been open to criticism. Since 1983, £2·7 billion of new exports have been secured for the United Kingdom in that market. That must have meant a lot of jobs.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that the only way in which we shall have peace in the middle east is to defeat Saddam Hussein? Those who complain about the costs of losing a few contracts fail to recognise the high stakes for which we are playing. They are the sort of people who would have appeased Hitler in the 1930s. The price of appeasement then was war and the price of appeasement today would also be war.

Mr. Sainsbury: I agree that the whole House, or nearly the whole House, is united in the determination to see that Saddam Hussein gains nothing from his invasion of Kuwait and that his withdrawal from it is total and unconditional.

Mr. Flannery: Is not it a fact that a short time ago we were exporting what were called oil pipes to Iraq, and the Government did not seem to know that we were actually exporting long-distance gun barrels? Will the Minister examine his conscience about that, instead of talking so glibly?

Mr. Sainsbury: The hon. Gentleman is well aware, I hope, that that matter is sub judice.

Research and Development

15. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his Department's and Her Majesty's Government's research and development expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product; and what comparable information he has in respect of Japan.

Mr. Lilley: Total Government-funded research and development as a percentage of gross domestic product was 1.0 per cent. in 1988. This was twice the corresponding figure for Japan.

Mr. Moss: As my right hon. Friend is well aware, the Cambridge phenomenon has had important side-effects elsewhere in East Anglia and I hope that those effects will increase in my constituency in the future. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that he is encouraging industry to collaborate with university and polytechnic science and technology departments to establish science parks and other developments?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend makes an important point. The success of science-based industries around Cambridge is due to the close collaboration between industry and the university science base there. We are anxious to encourage that throughout the country and so have encouraged the establishment of science parks around universities—there are now 39 of them and another 19 are planned. I am anxious that we should consider building more around polytechnics and Government research establishments so that they can benefit from similar effects.

Mr. Cousins: Does the Secretary of State accept that the LINK scheme to promote links between industry and higher education, which his Department launched, is in a state of collapse because of the ridiculous red tape and restrictions surrounding the rules of that scheme? That is evidenced by the withdrawal from LINK of Celltech, an important new British high technology company, only this week.

Mr. Lilley: No, I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's premise. We are introducing a new scheme in which it will be much easier for small companies to participate without having to go to the length of collaborating with a range of other companies. An increasing number of applications and programmes are going ahead under the LINK scheme. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that and be pleased to know that he was mistaken.

Mr. Conway: Has industry's funding of research and development decreased or increased during the Government's term of office?

Mr. Lilley: Research and development by private industry, which is most important and valuable, has increased substantially since industry's profitability increased. Over the past five years research and development by business went up by 50 per cent. We have increasingly focused Government support on getting better co-operation between universities and the science base and industry.

Information Technology

16. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the latest estimate of the balance of trade in information technology.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the latest estimates, the United Kingdom had a deficit of £685 million in the manufactured products of the electronics and information technology sector in the first quarter of 1990. Those figures are for hardware only. There are no separate figures for trade in software.

Mr. Jones: Is not that a deplorable gap in a valuable world market? Should not we encourage our own product base in that important sphere? When will we invest in the research and development necessary to do that?

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman has not reflected on those matters. All major OECD countries, with the exception of Japan, have a deficit in information technology. The United Kingdom has a substantial surplus of £900 million in its trade with the rest of the

Community, including France, Germany and Italy. I am sure that the hon Gentleman will be pleased to know that output in electronic and information technology industries in the United Kingdom has increased by 37 per cent. since 1985. Perhaps he should do a little more homework before he asks a question.

Sir Ian Lloyd: What view does my hon. and learned Friend take about the fact that we are now almost completely dependent on Japan for the chemicals used in the manufacture of semiconductors?

Mr. Hogg: Whenever possible, we welcome inward investment in those sectors. I am glad that generally throughout the IT industry there have been substantial improvements in our domestic capacity. I welcome that and attribute it, at least partly, to Government policy.

Mr. Mullin: What will be the effect on our trade in information technology of our entry into the ERM at the ludicrously inflated rate of DM2·95? How long will it be before we have to devalue?

Mr. Hogg: I am sorry for the hon. Gentleman because he is normally a bright fellow who does his homework, but he has not done so today. At present our surplus with West Germany is £470 million, our surplus with France is £557 million and our surplus with Italy is £212 million. I expect that happy trend to continue.

Germany

18. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's trade with Germany.

Mr. Sainsbury: Germany is the United Kingdom's second largest export market. Our visible exports in the first three quarters of this year increased by 19 per cent. to £9·4 billion, compared with the first nine months of 1989. Germany is the United Kingdom's largest supplier and our visible imports increased by 3·4 per cent. in the same period, reaching £15·3 billion.

Mr. Taylor: As last year's figures show that for every pound of goods we sent to Germany, Germany sent us back more than £2 worth, and as the deficit was more than double our deficit with Japan, does not that seem to show either a considerable amount of non-tariff discrimination or that the exchange rate of DM2·95 is wholly artificial? Will the Minister examine that problem and see what can be done about our worst trading partner, not our best?

Mr. Sainsbury: There are clearly considerable opportunities for British companies to increase their exports to Germany. It is our second largest export market and there has been good growth in it. I hesitate to say this to my hon. Friend, but our opportunities to export to that market would be reduced—there would be more obstacles to our trade—were we not both members of the European Community.

Japanese Cars

19. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had in Europe about import ceilings for Japanese cars after 1992.

Mr. Lilley: I attended an informal meeting of Community Trade Ministers and the Commission in September, which discussed that matter. The Commission is proposing a transitional period of continuing restrictions lasting until the late 1990s. The United Kingdom continues to press for early liberalisation. We remain adamant that cars made in the EC by Japanese-owned companies must continue to be allowed unlimited free circulation throughout the Community. I believe that that has now been accepted by other member states and the Commission.

Mr. Mitchell: Has not the Minister got himself and the nation into a trap, because he has not been strong enough or tough enough to get full agreement to the exclusion of Japanese cars made in this country from the Japanese quotas? He is driven, as a result, to want an increase in the Japanese quota; rumour has it that he has been urging an increase from 11 per cent. to 29 per cent. If so, that would decimate jobs in the British motor industry. Why does not he beef himself up to get those cars included as British?

Mr. Lilley: The hon. Gentleman is mistaken. The voluntary restraint agreement 11 per cent. restriction is no longer being fully met simply because Japanese cars are now being produced domestically, so there is less need to import them than in the past. There is therefore no question of imports of Japanese cars being expected to rise to the figure that the hon. Gentleman stated. He is correct, however, to say that there is still opposition from the Italians and to a lesser extent from the French to reaching an agreement on that. He can always apply his own sanctions and abandon his Fiat motor car if he wants.

Local Government Finance

3.31 pm

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Chris Patten): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the local authority financial settlement for England for 1991-92. I apologise for its necessary length.

I announced the Government's broad proposals in July, including an increase of nearly 13 per cent. in the amount of grant and business rates to be paid to local authorities in 1991-92. I have today sent the local authority associations a consultation paper setting out the proposed distribution between authorities. Copies have been sent to authorities, and are also in the Vote Office and Library.

I confirm that we propose to give English local authorities £26·050 billion of aggregate external finance —that is the total of certain specific and special grants, payments from the business rate pool, and revenue support grant.

We have already announced that next year the safety net will be abolished. It will be replaced by an area protection grant which will be paid for by the Exchequer. Four hundred and eighty-five million pounds will be used for this purpose.

Another component of aggregate external finance is the money paid to local authorities from the business rate pool. We propose that the business rate next year should be 38·6 p in the pound, which is an increase in line with the annual increase in the retail prices index to September of 10·9 per cent. The total burden on business will therefore remain broadly the same as it was in 1989-90, allowing for inflation. This is despite the substantial growth in local authority spending since then, and shows the benefit of the uniform business rate for business. Under the previous system, businesses would have paid at least £1 billion more in rates this year. It should be recalled that, between 1979-80 and 1989-90, locally set rate poundages rose by 37·4 per cent. more than inflation—an average of 3·2 per cent. a year on a compound basis.

The consultation paper sets out my forecast of the amount that will be available from the business rate pool to support local authority spending in 1991-92. In making this estimate, known as the distributable amount, I have taken account of the business rates local authorities are expected to collect in 1991-92. I have also taken into account the fact that local authorities are collecting more rates in 1990-91 than will be paid out from the pool during this year, and the distributable amount reflects this as the statute requires. This arrangement means that, taking one year with another, all the income raised from business ratepayers will be passed to local authorities to support their spending.

I propose that revenue support grant will top up the income from the business rate pool and other grants to bring the total to £26·05 billion. The amounts are £13·6 billion of grants, and £12·4 billion from the pool. In addition, the Government will be providing support through the transitional relief and community charge benefit arrangements.

As I said in July, the Government believe that it would be appropriate for local authorities to spend £39 billion next year in providing services. This figure takes account of what local authorities are spending now, the new pressures they face, the scope for economies and savings, and what the country can afford. From this figure is derived a standard spending assessment, or SSA, for each authority.

In January, I invited authorities to put forward any fresh evidence about the way that SSAs should be calculated. We have received many representations suggesting changes that might be made. We have considered those representations most carefully. Many of the suggestions were familiar from last year, and there was no consensus on what changes, if any, should be made. I remain persuaded that the decisions we made last year were broadly correct. I also believe that it is helpful to maintain stability, so that charge payers can make comparisons between what they are asked to pay from one year to another. I have therefore decided that we should retain the broad principles that we adopted last year after a great deal of research. But I do propose some changes and improvements. Details may be found in the consultation paper, but I shall describe three of them.

First, I propose to reduce somewhat the weighting applied to the additional educational needs index used in the assessments for education. I have looked again at the impact of this factor on the cost of providing education. In the case of the primary, secondary and post-16 elements, the weight is fair, and I am proposing no changes. In the case of the under-fives and other education elements, however, I have decided to adjust the weight from 70 to 50 per cent.

Secondly, I propose to double the significance given to the number of tourists in calculating the SSA component for other services. This change will help in particular those areas which receive a substantial number of overnight visitors. Thirdly, I propose to make allowance for supernumerary posts in the police force designated for special protection duties. I know that these changes will be welcomed by a number of hon. Members.

On average, SSAs will increase by 19·4 per cent. over SSAs for 1990-91. There will be variations around that average reflecting the changes that I have announced, and the changes between years in factors such as the numbers on school rolls and the population in each authority.

The settlement proposals give local authorities scope to increase their spending by 7 per cent. in aggregate above this year's budgets. Taxpayers and business ratepayers together will be providing 12·8 per cent more support than this year. The community charge for standard spending will be £380. If authorities are extravagant, or if they are inefficient in collecting community charges, they may have to set charges at levels higher than that, but efficient authorities which spend within their SSAs will be able to set charges significantly lower than the community charge for standard spending. Authorities receiving help for the area protection grant should also have lower charges. Authorities that paid into the safety net this year should ensure that the community charge payers receive the full benefit of the abolition of those payments.

Many people will receive help to meet their charges through community charge benefits and from the transitional relief scheme. This year, the average amount actually paid by charge payers net of reliefs and benefits will be £286 against an average charge of £357, and, given the improvements in the transitional relief scheme and the availability of benefits, it should be little higher next year. One in four charge payers will receive benefits, and up to 11 million people will receive help from the more generous transitional relief scheme operating in 1991-92. Each

couple receiving transitional relief now will receive £52 more relief next year, rather than losing £26 as they would have done without the improvements that I announced in July.

It is important that authorities should make every effort to collect charges. The best authorities have already collected charges from 97 per cent. of people, and across the country nearly 90 per cent. of people have begun paying. We have given authorities the powers that they need to ensure payment. Authorities—both officers and councillors—have a duty to ensure that revenue is collected. If they fail, the majority who do pay will have to pay higher charges. Those who are tempted not to pay are merely expecting other people to pay their bills for them. That is totally unacceptable.

In the first year of the new system, some local authorities used the transition from rates to the community charge as a smokescreen to hide their increases in spending. Spending rose by 13·5 per cent. It went up by a quarter in only two years. I have made it clear that authorities must be prepared to play their part in ensuring that the nearly £3 billion extra we have made available in 1991-92 is passed on to charge payers. I have also made it clear that I am prepared to make full use of my powers to cap authorities' budgets if necessary. This year, I hope that, as I am specifying now the criteria that I have in mind for capping, councils will take the appropriate action to control their spending. Many authorities have specifically asked that I should make an early announcement.

As I told the House in July, I have power to cap in two ways. I can cap a council's excessive budget, or cap excessive increases from one year to the next. In my judgment it is reasonable to allow smaller increases for those authorities whose budgets are well above their SSAs.

My intended criteria are, therefore, that any increase of more than 9 per cent. over the previous year's budget will be considered an excessive increase if it gives rise to a budget over the authority's SSA; any increase of more than 7 per cent. will be considered excessive if it gives rise to a budget over 5 per cent. above the SSA; and any increase of more than 5 per cent. will be considered excessive if it gives rise to a budget over 10 per cent. above the SSA. In addition, I intend that any budget more than 12·5 per cent. above the SSA will be considered excessive.

This year I specified that no authority would be capped if it budgeted only a small amount above the measure of excessiveness I used, but authorities should not assume that I will again adopt a de minimis proviso, or if I do that it will be at the same level as for 1990-91. Authorities spending less than £15 million are exempt from capping. I do not propose to increase that threshold, but I intend to make special provision for the particular circumstances of the inner London boroughs which still bear the cost of inherited overspending by the Inner London education authority, and also for the City of London, where there are different considerations.

These criteria are necessarily provisional. When I come to make my decisions on capping, I will of course take into account all appropriate considerations. I might reach different conclusions. I have placed a paper in the Library and Vote Office setting out my intentions in detail and have sent a copy to local authorities.

The criteria that I have announced today are demanding. Local authorities cannot be exempt from the restraint that is needed—from public and private sectors alike—to achieve the overriding objective of getting inflation down. But I am satisfied that efficient, well-managed authorities can provide effective services within the proposed criteria. Authorities should look very carefully at how they can eliminate any wasteful expenditure and streamline their administration.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are determined to make sure that charge payers benefit in full from any budget reductions arising from charge capping. Following the recent judgments in the Lambeth case, we therefore propose to legislate as soon as possible to secure that objective.

In my statement on 19 July I also announced a number of proposals to improve some of the detailed workings of the new system, to make it simpler and to remove anomalies. We have now completed consultations with local authorities and other interested organisations on these matters. Our conclusions, which I believe will be widely welcomed, have been sent today to local authorities and are also in the Vote Office and Library. We have announced reductions from next year in the standard community charge that can be levied on the owners of unoccupied property in exceptional cases. Among those who benefit will be people who have houses with an empty granny flat; people who have an empty flat over a shop which is difficult to let; people who have homes which are empty because they have gone to care for, or be cared by, someone else; students who pay a reduced personal charge but can face a double charge if they own a home elsewhere; farm owners who have empty cottages which are subject to planning restrictions; people who are having difficulty selling their houses; and people who have suffered from a mortgage repossession.

Finally—and this represents a more generous arrangement than the one I proposed on 19 July—I have decided that all those people such as clergymen, service men and some teachers who occupy a job-related property but who also own a home elsewhere will be subject to a multiplier of only one half of the personal community charge.

We intend to introduce a simplified community charge bill to improve accountability, more generous transitional arrangements for the rating of small businesses where the owner lives over the shop, and a number of other useful administrative improvements. We shall be bringing forward regulations to bring all these changes into effect for the start of 1991-92. We have not yet completed consideration of all the responses to the consultation on the treatment of bed-and-breakfast accommodation, but I expect to be able to make an announcement on that very soon.

My proposals for next year's settlement envisage a realistic increase in local authority spending, backed by an increase in external support which is fair by any standard. We have made a number of improvements in the method of distributing grant, while mantaining stability. Standard spending assessments are increasing by 19·4 per cent. on average, so most authorities should be able to budget at or below their SSAs. And no area will contribute to the safety net. Charges therefore need not be much higher than about £380 anywhere, and should be lower where authorities are efficient or where there is help from the area protection grant. I shall use my charge-capping powers to make sure that the extra resources from national taxation and businesses go to benefit charge payers rather than fuelling excessive spending. Specifically for this year, I have given authorities advance warning of my intended criteria.

[Mr. Chris Patten]

The Government are ensuring that local authorities have the resources which they need. This is a substantial settlement, which must necessarily have its impact on public expenditure settlements elsewhere. It is now for local authorities to respond by setting reasonable budgets and reasonable community charges. Charge payers want, and have a right to expect, good services at a price they can afford.

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): The Secretary of State's statement shows that he is still unable to get off the poll-tax treadmill, and that in attempting to do so he simply succeeded in making matters worse. He has revealed himself as the most centralising Secretary of State and the most damaging to local government of modern times.

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that his total spending assessment was unrealistic when he announced it in July and that it is even more unrealistic now? Why has he not reflected the changes that have occurred since July, all of which have been adverse to the financing of local government? Why, for example, has he not taken account of the fact that inflation is running at 10·9 per cent. and not 7 per cent., on which he based himself? If he is ready to tax businesses to the full extent of the current inflation rate, why will he not recognise that local authorities, too, face that same inflation rate? Why not take account of the increased commitments, many of them of recent origin, such as those imposed only this week by the Environmental Protection Bill? Why not take account of the increased commitments on care in the community and teachers' pay which have materialised since July? Why not recognise that collection rates are much lower than expected in many cases, not because of the fault of local authorities, but, as the Audit Commission will say tomorrow, because of the structure of this inefficient tax?

On the business rate, which has already caused such distress to small businesses in particular, not least in the Secretary of State's constituency, will he confirm that by imposing the full inflation rate of 10·9 per cent. the take for the business rate will increase by no less than 18·4 per cent., compared with an increase in central Government grant of only 1·4 per cent? The business rate will increase from £10·4 billion to £12·4 billion. In other words, business will contribute £2 billion of the extra money that the Secretary of State boasted he had claimed from the Treasury in July. The truth is that on that occasion, as on others, the Secretary of State was turned over by the Treasury, and business will pick up the bill. Will he confirm that, for the forthcoming year, businesses will pay £400 million more than is paid to local government, and that that amount will go straight into Treasury coffers?

Does the Secretary of State accept that, by retaining the broad principles of calculating SSAs, he is acknowledging that his soft words at the beginning of the year to the effect that the calculation was based on an unsatisfactory premise was no more than a piece of flannel designed, as is so much else to do with the poll tax, to avert short-term criticism? Will he also accept that the formula that he has adopted for taking account of the number of tourists is no more than an Eastbourne and Westminster benefit measure—a protection racket which will reduce poll tax bills by £12 per head in Westminster alone?

On the likely size of poll tax bills, why should we pay any more attention to the Secretary of State's figure of £380 than we did when he assured us that this year's bill would average just £278? Why, this year, has he not published a list of indicative poll tax levels for each authority? Dare he not do so?

Do not the draconian rules that the Secretary of State has announced on capping mean that a local authority that increases its budget by less than the rate of inflation —that is, it makes cuts in real terms—could still find itself capped on the basis of an SSA which the Secretary of State concedes is far from being precise? When will the provisional criteria that he has announced become firm? In other words, when will local authorities know exactly where they are? Do not the new rules and the new powers that he intends to take in the wake of the Lambeth judgment mean that every poll tax bill will, in effect, be the Secretary of State's bill? The Government's fingerprints will appear on every poll tax bill that arrives through the letter box next spring.

Why has the Secretary of State left the £15 million threshold as it is without uprating it for inflation, as he has for the business rate? Is not this merely a device to exclude Tory councils from the capping net and to save the Secretary of State from the embarrassment of having to cap those Tory councils? What about Tandridge, spending 30·5 per cent. above its SSA? What about Torbay, spending 84·7 per cent. above its SSA? What about Brentwood, spending 108·5 per cent. above its SSA? Why are they not caught by the capping provisions?

Is not it the truth that this is still a Government and a Secretary of State up to their old tricks, trying to shift the blame for the poll tax from where it belongs, with them, on to those who are already suffering as victims—local authorities, local government independence and those millions of people who must pay the bills and suffer the cuts that this wicked tax has made inevitable?

Mr. Patten: In that welter of hyperbole, I detected two main strands of argument. First, the hon. Gentleman asked me a series of questions about the business rate. I make it clear once again that, thanks to the change to the UBR, business rate payers will pay £1 billion less than they would be paying if we had stuck to the previous system. Manufacturing industry, in which the hon. Gentleman and others affect to have some interest, will as a result of our changes see a real terms fall outside inner London. This year, small shops will pay £10 million less in aggregate in real terms—2 per cent. less—*[Interruption.]* A revaluation was supported by the Labour party and by the Liberal party. It is a revaluation which, quite properly, takes account of what is happening in different parts of the country because of the economic growth of the past decade.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the balance between the contribution from the taxpayer and that from the business rate payer. If he believes that we should cut the contribution from the business rate pool, is he saying that we should either cut provision for local authorities or make the taxpayer pay more? That is the simple alternative. As ever with the Opposition, the question is, where is the beef? They tell us that they want more services and smaller bills for ratepayers and community charge payers. Where will the money come from? They resolutely refuse to answer that question.

The hon. Gentleman, in what I guess I must argue was an uncharacteristic slip, referred to the increase in grant as about 1 per cent. Actually, the increase in grant is about 7·65 per cent.——

Mr. Gould *indicated dissent.*

Mr.Patten: Yes, it is, and that is not including the amount that will go to community charge payers through transitional relief. It does not include the amount that will go to community charge payers through community charge benefit. The hon. Gentleman should look more carefully at those figures.

In another strand of his argument, the hon. Gentleman said that a 19·4 per cent. increase in total standard spending was unrealistic. Where is the shadow Chancellor? It is preposterous to say that a 19·4 per cent. increase is unrealistic. It is a realistic judgment. It takes account of what we think local authorities should reasonably spend next year and it feeds through to SSAs across the country. I do not think that the Opposition will grumble when they see the increases in the SSAs in their authorities.

The hon. Gentleman referred to capping. I shall comment only briefly because I dare say that this will not be our last opportunity to discuss capping. Over the past year, I have been pressed again and again by local authorities to announce well in advance my criteria for capping. Some Labour local authority leaders told me, "If only you had told us the criteria, we should not have had to be capped." I have done them a favour. Now, any authority that is capped will have volunteered for it because we have set out fair and realistic criteria that take account of the relationship between what local authorities spend and what they can reasonably spend. I hope that, now that we have set out those criteria well in advance, local authorities will be able to budget sensibly in the interests of their community charge payers.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the SSA methodology. He accused us of trying to help Conservative authorities through the changes that we have made in respect of tourism. I ought to tell him that among the authorities that will be helped are Camden and Bradford and that, thanks to vigorous representations from two of my hon. Friends, Blackpool and the surrounding areas will also be helped, so the hon. Gentleman is well off the mark.

The hon. Gentleman also referred to collection rates. I am pleased—and I am sure that he must be—that the Audit Commission figures which will be contained in a press release today and in an extensive document to be published tomorrow make it abundantly plain that since August there has been an increase of 30 per cent.—about one third—in the number of those paying. Those figures confirm what other figures have shown: the payment rate is almost 90 per cent. generally and it is 92 per cent. in district council areas. I hope that we can now look to the Opposition Front Bench and to all Opposition Members to denounce those who would be free riders and especially to denounce those Members of Parliament who want their constituents to pay higher community charges so that they can get off scot free.

The hon. Gentleman said that, as a result of the proposals put before the House this afternoon—I note that he said nothing about the announcements later in my speech about the standard community charge, although I shall leave that on one side—community charge bills next spring would have my fingerprints on them. I can only say that I hope that more and more local authority community charge bills will have Conservative fingerprints on them because we know from Trafford, Southend, Hillingdon, Ealing and elsewhere that Conservative-controlled local authorities provide better services at a lower charge. That is true today and it will be increasingly true in the future.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): My right hon. Friend's statement contained many welcome elements. In particular, I would highlight the reduction in the weighting on the educational special needs element of the education budget, which was pressed on him by many local authorities throughout the country. I am pleased that he has responded. Will my right hon. Friend continue to treat with contempt all criticisms of alleged inefficiency and inadequacy of Government budgeting in that sector until and unless the Opposition are prepared to categorise how much and who will pay?

Mr. Patten: On additional educational needs, the result will be a reduction in the percentage from about 24 to 22½ per cent.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Disgraceful.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) knows that the percentage before SSAs was 12 per cent., so she cannot accuse us of savaging that element in the grant distribution formula. My hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) is right in saying that we received a large number of representations on the subject, from a large number of local authorities among other bodies. We were right to make the adjustment that we have announced today.

With regard to efficiency and other matters in local authorities, I notice that the Labour party's latest proposal for replacing the community charge, were Labour—unlikely as it may be—to have an opportunity to do that, would involve the reintroduction of

"the most unjust of all taxes which takes most from those who can afford least."

As Opposition Members will know, those remarks were made by the Leader of the Opposition.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It would help the Chair greatly today if hon. Members asked one question rather than a series of questions. If that happens, I hope that I shall be able to call most of the hon. Members who wish to participate in the debate.

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): While I welcome certain parts of the statement, especially the reference to tourism which I believe stems not from Eastbourne, but from pressure from many tourist areas, does the Secretary of State agree that his statement will be another nail in the coffin of local government finance which he has fully restricted? Will he also comment on the fact that the authorities that will face difficulties will have to make cuts in social services, education buildings and in amenities which are already suffering? Will he also——

Mr. Speaker: Order. In fairness, I asked for one question. I know that the hon. Gentleman leads for his party on this matter, but three questions is overdoing it.

Mr. Fearn: Small businesses all over the country are being affected. They are going to be affected to the tune of 15 to 20 per cent. and not 10·9 per cent.

Mr. Patten: With regard to small businesses, as the hon. Gentleman knows, about 45 per cent. of businesses will be out of transition by next year. About 20 per cent. of businesses, a lot of which are small manufacturing businesses, will actually see falls in cash terms in their business rates. That is three times the proportion of businesses that will see increases at the top end of the range.

Mr. Fearn *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Patten: If the hon. Gentleman disagrees, he can table parliamentary questions about that. However, those figures have emerged from the calculations made by the valuers.

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be pleased to learn that the educational element in the SSAs will be increasing by just over 16 per cent. and that should be enough to continue to provide the quality education that we all want to see.

With regard to the hon. Gentleman's reference to nails in coffins—and at this stage I would not wish to go back to dead birds—we are under an obligation, having made a settlement as substantial as this for local authorities, to do all we can to ensure that that money helps to continue to improve services and to abate increases in the community charge. It would be monstrous if that money saw another splurge in local authority spending. I for one am not going to allow that to happen.

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West): I thank my right hon. Friend most warmly for his commitment to help the rural areas and the environment by concentrating on tourism. The next time he examines the SSAs, will he see whether there is any way in which he could take low administrative costs into account, particularly when he is considering charge capping because so many local authorities, generally Labour, have very high administrative charges which may not be readily apparent and Conservative counties like Devon, which my right hon. Friend kindly visited last week, have very low administrative charges? The good guys should be rewarded and the bad guys' knuckles rapped.

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend has raised a relevant matter. The list published the other day by the Department of Education and Science showing the administrative costs of local education authorities not surprisingly reveals that the highest costs are the responsibility of Labour-controlled local authorities. That should be of considerable interest to parents and community charge payers. We all want to see more money concentrated on those who sit behind desks in schools instead of on those who sit behind desks in offices.

On the overall matter of SSAs, I enjoyed my discussions in Devon the other week with a number of county councillors and county officers. I am sure that my hon. Friend will notice with pleasure the increase in the SSAs affecting local authorities in her constituency.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): Having had three months in which to think about the announcement that he made in July, will the Secretary of State now admit that, if the Government had a single ounce of fairness in dealing with the failure of the poll tax to take account of ability to pay, the £3 billion that he announced in July would have been far better used in giving better poll tax rebates? That would have helped the poorer sections of the community, many of whom cannot afford to pay the poll tax now.

Mr. Patten: If I were to follow the advice of the hon. Gentleman's hon. Friends, I would simply say no, but I shall be a little more extensive. First, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome the huge increase in the SSA affecting his own constituency. Secondly, I am sure that he is extremely pleased that the community charge benefit is a great deal more generous than the benefit available for domestic ratepayers and that we have doubled assistance going through transitional relief principally to those living in low rateable value accommodation.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Does my right hon. Friend now have in place a mechanism for estimating accurately the cost of new duties placed by Departments of central Government on local government? It is absolutely clear this year that it is not yet in place.

Mr. Patten: I believe that we take proper account of additional responsibilities on local authorities, but I want to respond rather more positively than that to my hon. Friend's quite proper question. Over the years there has been a tendency in the House to try to place new responsibilities on local authorities without at the same time willing the money to meet the cost of those responsibilities. We must be much more self-disciplined, therefore, in the responsibilities that we place on local authorities. As long as I am in my present job, I intend to follow that advice.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Following the nationalisation of the business rate, which was opposed by the Labour party, does not it follow that, if under this system £1 billion less is paid by the business rate than under the old system, £1 billion more is paid by hard-pressed poll tax payers?

Mr. Patten: I point out to the hon. Gentleman the substantial increase in support from taxpayers in this settlement—the 7·65 per cent., leaving aside transitional relief. I am interested in whether the hon. Gentleman's point of view is entirely shared by the Opposition Front Bench. Opposition Front-Bench Members seem to say that businesses should pay less. The hon. Gentleman's argument is that businesses should pay more. We have got it about right.

Mr. Robert Banks (Harrogate): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his excellent statement, in particular his announcement about the tourism element of the SSA, which will be hugely welcomed? In future, will he look at ways in which benefits can be positively made to low-spending and efficient authorities?

Mr. Patten: I certainly hope that, when one is dealing with less-efficient authorities, my proposals on charge capping take account of differences between efficient and less-efficient authorities. On my announcement, we do not propose that any authority spending at or below SSA should come within the community charge capping criteria. But that should not encourage some local authorities to believe that they can increase their spending by the percentage increase in SSAs and think that that is behaving prudently. If a local authority has behaved

prudently in the past and spent below SSA, it should continue to behave in that way. Its community charge payers will not thank it if it still manages to keep below SSA but increases its spending by a large amount.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Can the Secretary of State explain how Wandsworth's area protection grant was calculated, and why it is one of the largest in London? Why has Wandsworth got the largest inner London education grant and one of the largest total external support levels in London? Could it be anything to do with the fact that Wandsworth is Tory controlled, and that this statement is bent from start to finish?

Mr. Patten: If the hon. Gentleman had not been so uncharacteristically brief, he might have gone on to ask me why Westminster was paying £75 into the safety net. I am sure that he will know that the amount received by Wandsworth is considerably less than that received by a number of other inner-London boroughs—for example, the borough of Lambeth next door. The hon. Gentleman should perhaps compare the community charges set in those boroughs.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the message from today's statement is that the game is up for Labour authorities, and that they should stop wasting their time creating more and more committees and inventing foreign and defence policies that are irrelevant to local authorities? They should stop giving out jobs for the boys—as has happened in Liverpool, Derbyshire and other areas—and concentrate on providing services with increased efficiency, better value for money and the quality that the consumers—the public—demand.

Mr. Patten: Alas—and I think that it is an "alas" that can be heard loudly from both sides of the House—there are one or two examples of what the Labour party understands by fiscal prudence in local government, which do not provide an adequate lesson for anyone. Indeed, they provide a lesson on how not to behave in public life.

My hon. Friend is entirely right. It would be nice if all Labour local authorities tried to provide decent services at a reasonable price. I believe that the local authority in Dagenham has set a rather low community charge. I hope that all local authorities—Conservative and Labour—will remember their responsibilities to their community charge payers.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): Will the Secretary of State explain to the House, simply and honestly, why—following the selection of the needs of local authorities—the standard spending assessment is so manifestly unfair? Why does the index for the system allocate to Wakefield metropolitan district council's education department 30 per cent. less than it allocates to Barnet, with all its environmental and financial advantages? There must be a simple answer. The House will be aware that Barnet is in the Prime Minister's constituency. Will the Secretary of State tell the people of Wakefield why they have been treated in this way?

Mr. Patten: If the hon. Gentleman had compared his constituency borough with Haringey rather than Barnet, he might have been able to produce some rather more dramatic figures. The SSA for the hon. Gentleman's borough will, I suspect, increase by more than the average that I announced earlier. I hope that that will go some way towards satisfying him.

The methodology used to calculate SSAs and distribute grant is based on a year or more of discussions with local authority associations. It is as fair a system as we could produce, but I am prepared to listen to fresh evidence about it from the hon. Gentleman's local council, or from any others.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): The fact that my right hon. Friend has made this early statement will be welcomed by everyone except those without the faintest idea of what their alternative policy would be. I want to ask my right hon. Friend one specific question: has he any more proposals about the cost-benefit factor, bearing in mind the absurd anomaly—about which I told him earlier—that Oxford benefits from this, whereas Cambridge does not?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend has, for once, thrown me. I am not quite sure that I understand what he meant in relation to cost benefit. Responding as a graduate of Oxford, and putting my prejudices behind me, I can only say that the local authorities in my hon. Friend's constituency will benefit substantially from the increases in SSA that I have proposed. Whether similar increases will be experienced in the constituency, for example, of my namesake, I cannot recall.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Will the Secretary of State give us the answer that he failed to give earlier? Why on earth does Wandsworth deserve £18 protection grant when Islington and Hackney, where the needs are far greater, get nothing whatever?

Mr. Patten: Because of its low rateable values. That is exactly the reason why many constituencies represented by Labour Members are provided with area protection grant. The hon. Gentleman, who knows a good deal about these matters, will have to hunt for a long time and over a lot of ground if he believes that the area protection grant is the main reason for what is happening in Wandsworth. The main reason for the low community charge and the good services in Wandsworth is that it is run by a good Conservative council.

Sir Charles Morrison (Devizes): The new supernumerary payment for police is enormously welcome to several local authorities. Is my right hon. Friend aware, for example, that it will assist the efforts of the newly Conservative-controlled Wiltshire county council to set a community charge of, not £380 or even £379—the level that would have been set if the previous Lib-Lab coalition had remained in power—but about £356?

Mr. Patten: I look forward to being a beneficiary of good Conservative administration in Wiltshire. My hon. Friend made a serious point about police protection. Several local authorities have had to take on a considerable burden—as I know myself—over the past few months and years because of terrorist attacks and other reasons. It is wholly right that we should recognise that in the SSAs.

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): May I return the Secretary of State to the subject of Wandsworth, which fascinates all of us who represent London boroughs? I want to think the best of the

[Ms. Diane Abbott]

Secretary of State. I do not want to think that there has been a squalid fix, so will he explain why Wandsworth has the highest inner London education grant?

Mr. Patten: The SSAs in Wandsworth are a great deal lower than in the hon. Lady's constituency. I very much hope that the constituents of the hon. Lady, of her hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) and those in other London constituencies which at present have Labour local authorities will learn from what is happening in Wandsworth and provide excellent services at a reasonable charge.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Will my right hon. Friend accept that, after 30 years in local government politics and 10 years as chairman of finance, I still find the figures a mystery wrapped in an enigma, as someone greater than any of us said? Next year could he at least produce comparable figures so that those of us who represent people understand what the basic figures mean and what the past means? It does not help anyone in the House not to understand a blind thing that the figures mean. All that we have is one set of initials after another. If we are to take part on a sensible basis in local government finance for our people, can we at least understand the figures, or are we not meant to understand them? As far as I understand it, Birmingham will receive 19 per cent. more. Is that true or not?

Mr. Patten: On comparable figures, one of ——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Are we getting 19 per cent. more?

Mr. Patten: I shall try to answer my hon. Friend, recognising as I do his expertise in these matters. *[Laughter.]* That was meant to be a compliment. As my hon. Friend will know, in the first three or four years of the new system we have had the safety net, the area protection grant, to help some local authorities which we believe were disadvantaged by the shift from Exchequer equalisation. That complicates some of the simplicities which would otherwise be abundantly plain not only to my hon. Friend but even to me. I hope that, as the area protection grant unwinds, comparisons will be even simpler than they are at present. I was not keen on a major overhaul this year because I wanted to make those comparisons easier rather than more difficult. I am glad that my hon. Friend supports me in that.

Although I do not have a slide rule with me to make the precise calculation, I can tell my hon. Friend that Birmingham will get a much bigger SSA.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Why does not the Secretary of State admit that he has fiddled the figures to aid Tory marginals at the next general election? Why is it that, according to the SSA, if the Derbyshire grants had been allocated on the same basis as those for Wandsworth and Westminster, rather than having a poll tax, we would have been giving £308 to every poll tax payer instead of collecting a penny piece? The people of Derbyshire are yearning for the chance to get rid of this lousy Government and their evil tax and to replace the tax in the first year of a Labour Government.

Mr. Patten: If my purpose in making this announcement——

Mr. Skinner: Answer my question.

Mr. Patten: I will do so directly to the hon. Gentleman and with the great regard that the whole House shows him. If my purpose in these figures were to help secure the Conservative party's chances at the next election, I should like the hon. Gentleman to explain why we are making £133 a head available to his constituency through the safety net.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Although I congratulate my right hon. Friend on clearing up several reasonable anomalies which have worried many people, does he realise that the figures as published are not understood by the ordinary charge payer? Would he consider publishing the indicative level estimate of community charge, as he did last year, because that allows the community charge payer to compare what the Government think with what the local authority delivers?

Mr. Patten: I had to publish even more figures last year and, doubtless, run the gauntlet of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: How dare my right hon. Friend say that!

Mr. Patten: I meant my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), and I agree that it is not easy to make that confusion.

My hon. Friend asks for more figures. Last year we had to produce what my Department likes to call exemplifications for all local authorities of what the community charge would have been if the local authority had spent exactly as we wanted. We had to produce those figures because of the safety net and the introduction of the transitional relief scheme. Thank God, those reference points stand and we do not have to publish similar sets of figures again because people tend to regard them as predictions. If I produced figures for local authorities, all the figures would be £380, because that is what the community charge at standard spending should be. Nevertheless, I believe that many local authorities should be able to produce a community charge lower than that.

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): Does the Secretary of State accept that all pretence of increased local accountability has gone from this tax? As central Government have imposed an increasingly tightened straitjacket on local authorities, voters, rather than expressing their views on their local authorities' performance, are likely to use the ballot box to give their verdict on the tax itself.

Mr. Patten: It is unarguable that many local authorities used the introduction of the new system as a smoke screen behind which they brought in much higher increases in spending—after all, the increase in spending this year was 13·5 per cent. That resulted in much higher community charges than anyone on the Conservative Benches would have liked to see—I cannot speak for those on the Opposition Benches. In those circumstances, it is reasonable in the early years of the tax to contemplate using the powers that I am given under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to charge-cap local authorities. The hon. Lady's constituency receives £285 under the safety net and that authority should be able to budget sensibly with such support. I hope that it will learn to do so.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the charge-capping proposals he has announced today will be widely welcomed in the country, simply because they will protect people from high-spending local authorities? They will not protect people from high-spending authorities seeking to spend more money on services, but, in general, from Labour local authorities which have entirely lost control of their spending.

Mr. Patten: That is perfectly correct. No local authority that spends at, or below, SSA will come into the frame for the charge-capping criteria I have announced. I repeat what I said earlier: local authority leaders pressed me to set out the criteria for charge capping for next year before they set their budgets. I have done so and local authorities know precisely where they stand. Therefore, any local authority that comes within the charge-capping criteria when it sets its budget will, in effect, be volunteering to do so.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): Earlier this year, the electorate of the Rotherham metropolitan borough council area reaffirmed their allegiance to the Labour party and the Labour council. That was followed by the Government making that local authority cut £7·9 million from its budget this year. Is not it true that the criteria that the right hon. Gentleman has announced today are nothing more than a message to the people of Rotherham and elsewhere that if they support the Labour party they will lose any accountability regarding the poll tax and that everything will be run from Whitehall from now on?

Mr. Patten: No, that is not the message. The criteria indicate that I am prepared to use the powers given to me statutorily to cap local authority spending. I have also made it clear today that I want the substantial increase in external support to local authorities to be spent not only to help to continue to improve local services, but to abate increases in the community charge.

Mr. Bob Dunn (Dartford): Is the Secretary of State aware that some small district councils in the south-east are suffering pressure on two counts; first, as a result of the loss of business rate income and, secondly, because those local authorities have a small population? On the latter, can my right hon. Friend confirm, either today or in writing, the precise source and year for obtaining population figures used in the calculation of the SSA? Secondly, will he undertake——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is a ration of one question today.

Mr. Patten: I know of my hon. Friend's concern about that and how vigorously he has represented his local authority and constituents on it. The population figures are arrived at in a variety of ways, but basically they are obtained from the numbers on the community charge register and from figures from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. I hope that my hon. Friend's local authority has been in touch with the OPCS, but if I can give him any further assistance on that matter I shall be pleased to do so.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): Will the Secretary of State undertake to meet representatives from the six northern capped authorities to discuss the inadequacies of the SSAs?

Mr. Patten: My right hon. Friend who is now the Secretary of State for Wales and I met representatives of those local authorities earlier in the year, sometimes collectively, sometimes individually. We are always prepared to receive representations from local authorities. We spend a good deal of time between the autumn and spring receiving local authority representatives to discuss a variety of matters. When the hon. Gentleman sees the standard spending assessments for his and other local authorities I do not think that he will be too worried about them.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I warmly welcome the average increase of 19·4 per cent. in standard spending assessments for the next financial year, but would my right hon. Friend say whether he believes that it will adequately make up the undoubted underprovision for Cheshire county council and the responsible and well-run Macclesfield borough council in the current financial year? Does my right hon. Friend think that it is appropriate that local authorities, hard pressed as they are, should assume responsibility for resources for community care that were hitherto funded entirely by the national health service?

Mr. Patten: When my hon. Friend looks at the figures he will discover that the standard spending assessment for his constituency will go up substantially in percentage terms by comparison with others. As my hon. Friend knows, in future his constituents will not have to make the £51 contribution to the safety net that they have been making.

We have made available adequate resources for phasing in the community care proposals, the first year of which will be 1991-92, and we want to ensure that we make adequate provision for future years. One of our considerations when planning phasing was the cost of going ahead, which was exaggerated by some of the local authority associations.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The Secretary of State has left out one set of figures from his poll tax package—the huge number of job losses that will flow from it. Those jobs will involve home helps for the elderly, community care for the disabled and mentally ill and social workers for children at risk. When battered babies die, will the Secretary of State be around to pick up an ounce of responsibility?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman referred to jobs. One important factor is that those who have jobs should be there to do them. He may recall that the Audit Commission recently produced a report on sickness absence in 10 London local authorities, of which six were Labour and the others Liberal Democrat or had no one party in overall control. Of the six worst, it was discovered that if they could reduce sickness absence to the average of Confederation of British Industry members, £26 million and £27 a head on the community charge would be saved.

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): In the coming months, will my right hon. Friend consider publishing a set of statistics to show the number of full-time equivalent staff employed by shire counties as that would give a clear indication of where communinity charge payers' money is being used to pay bureaucrats rather than provide services?

Mr. Patten: I am certainly prepared to consider providing that information. I do not think that we can provide it at present, but it is an extremely good idea and I shall see what we can do about it.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Does not the Secretary of State accept that the problem of central Government is that, during the past 10 years, they have sought to abdicate their responsibilities to local government without giving local authorities the finance to carry out those responsibilities? The Secretary of State has met our local authorities, and from his statement it seems that their words have fallen on stony ground. The Secretary of State made a statement about the average of £380, which my authority would be happy to accept so that it could stop the deterioration in services, including education services. If the Secretary of State is that concerned, he should come to see the damage that he is causing.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman will know that his local authority is receiving £150 from the safety net——

Mr. Skinner: A phoney argument.

Mr. Patten: It certainly is not. I know that many Labour local authorities would very much like to receive support from the safety net.

The hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) has made vigorous representations on behalf of his constituents and I am sure that he will continue to do so, but I do not accept, given the figure for help from the safety net that I have just mentioned, that he is being entirely fair.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): My right hon. Friend stressed the importance of collecting the charge. Is he aware that, in Leeds, many standing orders which were properly submitted and acknowledged many months ago still have not been processed; and that, due to industrial action, even cash payments are being turned away by council staff? In his calculations of the outstanding arrears due on the charge, will he say how much is due to incompetence and mismanagement by Labour authorities?

Mr. Patten: The usual suspects are in the dock; the figures that my hon. Friend mentioned are appalling. The major ingredient in the lower collection figures in some areas has been administrative incompetence, not the activities of the campaign supported by one or two Opposition Members. I very much hope that in the coming months and next year local authorities will make sure that they collect the community charge. In so far as they do not, those who pay lawfully and responsibly will have to face larger bills, and that is intolerable.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): Does the Secretary of State realise that among the 90 per cent. about whom he was boasting who have begun to pay something towards their poll tax there are many elderly people and people on low incomes who cannot pay? They want to stay within the law and they pay what they can, but they cannot meet the full bill. Does he realise that no amount of tinkering with the poll tax will cure that problem or make them accept it? Why does not he abandon it altogether and go back to the rating system which they understood and under which they were able to pay?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman should know that we are spending £2·25 billion on community charge benefit, that next year we shall spend about £500 million on the transitional relief scheme, and that pensions will rise substantially next year. The best way in which Labour councillors and local authorities can help the groups to which the hon. Gentleman referred is by setting a reasonable community charge.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): I thank my right hon. Friend for listening to our pleas to increase the significance of the tourist input and weighting for the elderly, and for calculating that on up-to-date figures, but may I point out that he said in his answer that Wandsworth receives area protection because it has low rateable values? As I told him earlier today, we have in Lancaster 5,106 houses of below £56 rateable value and 4,647 of between £57 and £80 rateable value. That makes a total of 17 per cent. of housing, in addition to which many mobile homes are occupied by elderly people in order to cut their costs. My right hon. Friend has given area protection to Burnley; why has not he given it to Lancaster? Will he change his mind and give it to us forthwith?

Mr. Patten: I am grateful for what my hon. Friend said about tourism. I shall certainly look at the arguments that she puts forward in her second point. She will appreciate that one reason why we increased the transitional relief scheme was precisely to help people living in the sort of accommodation to which she referred. Of course they are people who would be seriously hurt by revaluation and the return to domestic rates which the Labour party supports.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Does the Secretary of State accept that his reputation as the gauleiter of Marsham street is preserved intact by his statement, and that it represents a cut, given the annual rate of inflation of more than 10 per cent., because it is only a 7·65 per cent. increase in central Government support? So it is a continuation of the policy of the past 10 years of cutting central Government support to local authorities which, after all, provide not bureaucratic services but services for the mentally handicapped, in education, in housing and in social services—services which should be sustained and supported, not crimped and attacked, as the Government have done in this statement.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman has reminded us all once again that a joke from him is no laughing matter. He overlooked the fact that we are increasing aggregate external finance by 12·8 per cent. next year—a large increase in support for local authorities. The best thing that could happen to the hon. Gentleman's constituents would be the return in Bradford of a Conservative administration under Councillor Pickles.

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his willingness to continue to review the workings of the community charge, to update and improve it. Is he aware of the tremendous resentment among those who have paid against those who have not paid the community charge? I am advised that the costs of taking the non-payers to court is not covered by their contribution to the legal costs. Will my right hon. Friend consider increasing the contribution to the legal costs of court appearances made by non-payers of the community charge?

Mr. Patten: I shall look at the point. I think that the broad thrust of my hon. Friend's argument is entirely right. There is growing resentment on the part of those who have paid against the small minority who are freeloading. I hope that local authorities will remember that they have the whole of next year to collect any community charge that has not been paid this year. I hope that they will make a sensible distinction between what is uncollectable and what is uncollected, and that what they regard as uncollectable will be as small a percentage as possible.

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): It is all very well for the Secretary of State to talk about meeting local authorities, but precisely what account has he taken of the all-party representations made by Staffordshire county council, which made it clear that the first year we stood to lose £33 million from our budget because of the way in which the SSA was formulated? Will he tell me, now that we will be below the 19 per cent. national average, how he expects Staffordshire county council to afford the extra spending that has been highlighted by the report of its social services department on statutory social services?

Mr. Patten: I imagine that when the hon. Lady looks at the SSA for her district council and sees that it has risen by more than the average she will sing the Government's praises. The figures for local authorities fall either side of 19·4 per cent.—in some cases above it, as in the case of the district council to which she referred, in some cases below it, as in the case of her county council, although only fractionally, I think.

Mr. Stephen Day (Cheadle): Overspending local authorities such as Stockport always complain that they are treated unfavourably compared with their neighbours. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the formula and criteria that apply in determining grants apply equally to all local authorities?

Mr. Patten: Absolutely right: they apply to all local authorities. Opposition Members tend to ignore the substantial contributions made to Labour local authorities, but I am sure that in the course of the debates that may lie ahead we shall have many opportunities to point out those contributions.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): The Secretary of State will expect his statement to receive justifiably careful scrutiny, but will that scrutiny reveal considerable changes in the method of reaching his determination? For example, will there be much less reliance on the outdated figures contained in the 1980-81 census, and will there be an end to the assumption that snow lies on the ground more in Westminster and Wandsworth than in the rest of the country?

Mr. Patten: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's last point. He should look at the figures for places such as Lambeth. When he examines the figures that I have announced and the methodology, he will see that we have made a few adjustments this year. They are all entirely justified. I think that the next census is in 1991 and will have to be taken into account in future distributions.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the long history of overspending by the Labour-Liberal Democrat-controlled Bedfordshire county council, which is presently spending 15 per cent. more than its budget last year. May I take it that, if that is repeated, in 1991-92 the council will be charge-capped? Does he agree that next year the council should put the community charge payer first rather than its big spending programmes?

Mr. Patten: I think that the local authority to which my hon. Friend refers increased its income this year by about 16 per cent. My hon. Friend is entirely right to say that that is unacceptable and that local authorities such as that one and others should budget in future to provide decent services at a price that community charge payers can afford. That is wholly within the bounds of the possible as some local authorities, including some comparable to the one mentioned by my hon. Friend, have proved.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): Surely the central point is that the Tory Government have been cheating on local councils for some time. Over the last 10 years about £10 billion has been cut from local budgets because state funding has been denied to many parts of England and Wales simply on the diktat of the Government. He will find resistance to the poll tax all over the country because many people cannot afford to pay and will not pay. A short time ago——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman should bring his remarks to a close. The statement does not affect Scotland and perhaps I should not have called him.

Mr. Brown: Some 30,000 people were on the streets of London protesting against the poll tax. If that number were multiplied several million times, it would indicate the strength of opinion against the Government, their policies and the poll tax.

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman will recall that some of those who demonstrated recently in London were on anarchist weekend breaks from other European capitals.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Does my right hon. Friend know that the Isle of Wight is the biggest and best attraction in the south for visitors from England? I thank him for the tourist calculaton revision. Can he reassure me that his Department have looked carefully at the arguments set out in the document "An Island Apart" and will he confirm that the SSA calculation takes into account built-up roads? If the Isle of Wight had a universal speed limit, it would automatically get an increase in the standard spending assessment.

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend was one of those who made eloquent representations about changing the SSA methodology and taking proper account of tourism. We listened to him as we listened to others. As I said earlier, of course we shall take account of further representations on the SSA methodology. I am sure that if we implemented all the representations made by my hon. Friend the Isle of Wight would get rather more.

Mr. John Evans (St. Helens, North): The Secretary of State's refusal to improve the social services SSA for St. Helens and the other northern metropolitan authorities is an outrage.Will he give an absolute guarantee that the Government will pick up the entire bill for whatever settlement the teachers receive and that poll tax payers will not be additionally burdened? Will he make it clear to his hon. Friends that St. Helens is a well-run and efficient local authority?

Mr. Patten: When the hon. Gentleman looks at the figures, he will see that there is a substantial increase in the SSA for St. Helens. He may have heard me say earlier that the education element in the SSAs is increasing by 16 per cent. I am sure that he is also aware of the point made extremely strongly in an admirable letter in this morning's edition of *The Independent* from the director of the South Bank polytechnic, a former inspector with Her Majesty's inspectorate. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will accept that there is no mechanistic relationship between the amount spent on education and the quality of that education.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that we would be delighted to have job cuts in Derbyshire in the overflowing publicity department of the county council? We would love to have cuts in the £17 million subsidy, as it will be next year, for school meals in Derbyshire for which the price will not have increased for 10 years. That is where the grants go in Derbyshire. They subsidise baked beans and free council newspapers. If the council carries on like that next year, will my right hon. Friend cap it again?

Mr. Patten: I hope that the leader of Derbyshire county council will pay rather more attention to my hon. Friend's argument than he has done in the past. I also hope that Derbyshire will take account of the criteria that I have announced and will bring in a budget to provide good services at a reasonable cost for Derbyshire charge payers, who have been much put upon in the last few years.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Under the SSA for north-east Derbyshire, 45 per cent. of the bill has to be paid by poll tax payers and less than 15 per cent. comes from various forms of central Government funding. Is not this due to the fiddled nature of the SSA formula? If an area is mixed and has rural and urban provision, it loses on density and sparsity grants. If people move out of the area to work, they also lose. If the area has a mixture of middle and working class people, it fails to meet the social deprivation provisions. That affects Derbyshire as a whole, which is sorely treated by the Minister.

Mr. Patten: No, that is not true. First, the hon. Gentleman's constituency will see a substantial uplift in SSAs. Secondly, we take account of social deprivation. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) has left the Chamber, because, as experts on local authorities in all parts of the House will know, it is difficult to find an adequate way of reflecting some hon. Members' concerns about economic factors in the SSA methodology. We shall continue to look at any fresh evidence that is received on that.

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): I welcome my right hon. Friend's early and clear statement on charge capping. Is he aware that in Norwich there is concern that community charge bills may be elevated as a result of a non-payment campaign? If that happens, will he make sure that the blame is placed firmly on those who took part in that campaign—the Labour-controlled Norwich city council? Will he use his charge-capping powers where appropriate?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend is right once again to draw attention to the chance that we have given local authorities to budget sensibly by setting the criteria on charge capping ahead of the season during which local authorities are starting to construct their budgets. I repeat that, in the light of my statement, local authorities that are capped will themselves have deliberately chosen that course of action.

My hon. Friend mentioned collection. I am sure that every responsible hon. Member believes that everybody should pay his community charge. If, at the end of the year, some community charges are uncollected, local authorities have next year to collect them. However, we must remember that some local authorities, of which Lambeth is one, are still collecting rates from years ago.

Miss Kate Hoey (Vauxhall): In working out his standard assessment charge, has the Secretary of State taken into account the decision made last week by his own Department that there would be an end to the subsidy for private sector leasing for homeless families? Does he realise the repercussions that that will have on people in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, not just in boroughs such as Lambeth, but in many Tory authority areas? Does he appreciate the extra charge that that will place on the poll tax? Will he say more about how he considered the question of homelessness in working out the SSA?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Lady was asking whether I took that into account in setting the level of the figures that I announced earlier. The answer to that question is, yes I did. On homelessness, as the hon. Lady will know, last year we made available, over two years, a package worth £250 million for London and the stress areas. We shall make further announcements about rooflessness and homelessness later next month.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): My right hon. Friend will be pleased to know that the people of Lancashire, in Blackpool, Blackburn, Hindburn, Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale, are grateful for the area protection grant. Will he confirm that, as a consequence of his announcement of total external support, £600 for every community charge payer in Lancashire will go to their local authorities, from Government and industry?

Mr. Patten: Local authorities in Lancashire will be receiving substantial support from Government and business ratepayers. I hope that local authorities in Lancashire, particularly the county council, will recognise that fact and will also recognise their responsibility to set a prudent budget, which is more than Lancashire county council did this year.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): The Secretary of State has made much of the increases in SSAs, but does he not understand that a 19 per cent. increase in an unrealistic SSA does not result in a realistic one? Unless the SSA is allied accurately to what a council needs to spend to maintain its services, the council will be caught by the ridiculous criteria for poll tax capping. That will mean that the city of Newcastle upon Tyne will find it impossible to contain its spending within a 9 per cent. increase, which is what the increase will be, as inflation is running at 10·9 per cent., with the result that there will be severe and painful cuts in services, which will be entirely his responsibility.

Mr. Patten: I am not sure what the hon. Member would regard as an acceptable increase in total standard spending or in SSAs. Let me give him one example of what we are being asked to do. Some local authorities, although not all,

say that, instead of allowing for total standard spending next year of £39 billion, we should have allowed for £41 billion. That would have meant an increase in local authority spending of one third in two years. I think that that is not tolerable, and I doubt whether the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer would regard that as tolerable, certainly not in his Gladstonian mode.

Mr. James Cran (Beverley): Will my right hon. Friend take this opportunity to speak directly to my constituents, who happen to be the paymasters for local government in Humberside, and assure them that his proposals will lead to no repetition next year of what happened last year, whereby Labour-controlled Humberside county council increased its spending by 11·5 per cent. and took about £70 per person more than was necessary? If he cannot do that, will he use the opportunity of the boundary commission report that he has on his desk to give us a permanent solution to overspending in Humberside by abolishing that council?

Mr. Patten: I note my hon. Friend's enthusiasm for the consequences of the Local Government Act 1972. I have my own views on aspects of that legislation. I have today set out clearly and explicitly my firm intentions about the criteria that should be applied to local authority excessive spending next year. I have explained how I intend to use both the powers that are available to me under the Local Government Finance Act 1988. I hope that it will not be necessary to use those powers, but if local authorities try to place on their charge payers a burden that is too substantial, I will not hesitate to use my statutory powers.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): How does the Secretary of State justify the change in weighting affecting the under-fives, which will penalise those authorities such as North Tyneside and Durham, which are Labour authorities, that provide the opportunity for the youngest of children, while at the same time ensuring that authorities such as West Sussex, which provide virtually no opportunity for children under five, will be quids in? He could have saved money. He has chosen instead to make sure that this country stands alone in Europe as the one nation that will not support opportunities for under-fives.

Mr. Patten: I know that, like me, the hon. Lady is extremely interested in this subject. The SSAs for her constituency have gone up by well above the average figure, which I mentioned earlier. As for the overall weighting given to the additional educational needs indicator under the SSAs, we have increased it from 12 to 24 per cent. However, as I said earlier, as a result of an adjustment of 1·5 per cent. it comes back down to 22·5 per cent. next year. I can assure the hon. Lady that I was pressed by local authorities to do a great deal more.

Mrs. Maureen Hicks (Wolverhampton, North-East): My right hon. Friend has dealt with homelessness and education. Does he agree that while there is a ridiculously wasteful situation of 100,000 empty council homes and 2 million empty school desks—a fair share of which are in my local authority—it is right to keep making councils more accountable? I welcome his decision to extend his powers on capping, because the community charge payers have to pick up the bill for the waste.

Mr. Patten: It is true that empty houses and half-empty schools cost community charge payers a great deal of money. We have spoken about Wandsworth a number of times today, and we shall have opportunities to celebrate its successes in the future. One reason why it has managed to do so well is that it has a much better record on issues such as empty houses and schools than other local authorities.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Does the Secretary of State accept that bankruptcies are rising, the economy, especially in the retail sector, is having a hard time, there are more than half a million appeals against business rate revaluations, and that in my city a third of the business ratepayers are in arrears with their payments? Will he guarantee that local authorities will not be thrown into crisis because of a shortfall in the collection of business rates?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman has underestimated the number of appeals. I think that the figure is more like 600,000, although we were expecting about 1 million. He will know that one result of revaluation and the UBR is that businesses, especially manufacturing, and warehousing, outside inner London and certainly in the north have done particularly well. Overall, small shops will be paying 2 per cent. less in real terms than they paid last year. It is true that there are some areas where the retailing sector is going through difficulties. That has much more to do with the necessary measures that we are taking to abate inflation than with the UBR. The hon. Gentleman might remember that business rates are typically about 1 to 2 per cent. of turnover and represent 25 per cent. of occupancy costs in business.

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): My right hon. Friend's statement will be welcomed in the north of England, particularly as the full realisation of the transfer of UBR income from the south to the north shows a real commitment in regional policy to that area. I am pleased that my right hon. Friend has listened also to the many representations made to him. Will he continue to keep under review the anomalous situation whereby, in low rated houses in the north of England, individuals are being unfairly treated by the alteration in their rateable value when it comes to calculating their community charge?

Mr. Patten: It was largely because of representations from my hon. Friend and other hon. Friends in similar constituencies that we concluded that it was necessary to reduce the threshold for the transitional relief scheme from £3 to £2, with the result that we shall be spending about twice as much on the scheme, which will go overwhelmingly to people living in low rateable value accommodation.

My hon. Friend has also called on us on several occasions to extend the transitional relief scheme and not to phase it out as rapidly as we had been proposing, and we responded to that as well. When my hon. Friend's constituents in low rateable value accommodation find themselves as couples receiving £52 more next year than this year, they will have my hon. Friend to thank.

Mr. John P. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan): Is the Secretary of State aware that nothing that he has said this afternoon changes the fact that in my constituency Tom Jones, the international singing star, will be paying exactly the same poll tax as an old-age pensioner who came into

[Mr. John P. Smith]

my surgery on Saturday and broke down in tears because she is on a fixed income of less than £70 a week and cannot afford to pay the poll tax? What is the right hon. Gentleman's honest opinion?

Mr. Patten: First, if Tom Jones is as well-heeled as I imagine he is, he will be paying about 15 times as much as the poorest people in the community if account is taken of his contributions through tax and those through the community charge.

Secondly, I am sure that a single pensioner in the hon. Gentleman's constituency would be horrified at the prospect of once again being faced with a rating system, especially one that was operated after revaluation, and paying the same in rates as four or five wage earners in the property next door.

Sir William Shelton (Streatham): My right hon. Friend may be aware of the damning report produced by the district auditor last month on Lambeth council's finances. He said, among other things, that by May or June of this year about 40,000 community charge bills had not been sent out. The new chief executive has spoken of near catastrophe in the finances and as a result of the corruption of the administrative system. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that should there be a need to cap the community charge of Lambeth next year, despite the fact that Lambeth has the highest total external support of any London borough, he will have the necessary powers in place by next spring?

Mr. Patten: It is my intention to ensure for the future that there is not a scintilla of doubt about local authorities' budgets having to be transferred into a lower level of community charge after capping. It is astonishing that a local authority should be so keen to ensure that whatever happens to its budget its community charge payers will be clobbered. I feel extremely sorry for my hon. Friend's constituents. I am horrified at the activities of a Labour local authority that has consistently governed a borough so irresponsibly for so many years.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Stott.

Several Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): You must call us in alphabetical order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Front-Bench spokesmen do not get quite the same consideration.

Mr. Stott: If the Secretary of State wanted an example of a local authority that managed its affairs well and was responsible, reasonable and non-profligate, does he agree that he would need to look no further than the metropolitan borough of Wigan? The price that we paid for our prudence and efficiency was to be charge-capped by the right hon. Gentleman earlier this year. He arrived at that judgment on the basis of a formula which has been widely attacked by my right hon. and hon. Friends. The formula is fatuous in the extreme and dishonest. When will the right hon. Gentleman and his Ministers listen to the reasonable and moderate men and women who lead our councils, who put to him views that he has already heard about the appalling state of affairs that face authorities that have been poll tax-capped and the iniquitous way in which the SSA formula has affected them? What he has said and outlined this afternoon amounts to no more than tinkering at the edges, without taking into consideration anything that local authorities have told him.

Mr. Patten: Would that it were the case that all those who run our local authorities were moderate and responsible men and women. I concede that in many areas there are authorities that are run by a majority of Labour or Conservative councillors where individuals are acting in the best traditions of public service. Unfortunately, not a million miles away from the hon. Gentleman's constituency, as he will know, there are examples to the contrary.

One of the major representations made by leaders of the several councils which we capped this year was that before they set their budgets in future we should set out without any doubt or qualification our intentions on criteria for charge capping so that they could budget accordingly. That is why I have made my statement as early as I have. I do not believe that the formula that we have announced could possibly be argued by anybody as being defective. The hon. Gentleman's constituency has received, I think, £69 through the safety net, as was its due.

Mr. David Martin (Portsmouth, South): In welcoming the more generous transitional arrangements for small businesses where the owner lives over the shop, may I ask my right hon. Friend to give further guidance about the arrangements for bed-and-breakfast accommodation? It is a matter on which he has received many representations, including those from myself.

Mr. Patten: As my hon. Friend will know, we put out some proposals for consultation earlier in the year. We have received many representations, and these have demonstrated that there is not a consensus. We shall soon be making our announcement on the arrangements that we shall use to try to square the various circles that have been presented to us.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): We know that Scotland was the trailblazer for the poll tax. We know also that the Secretary of State's statements are often trailblazers for those of the Secretary of State for Scotland. I ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to clarify one or two brief points.

Mr. Speaker: One brief point, please.

Mr. Douglas: In paragraph 22, what does the right hon. Gentleman mean by "job-related houses"? Do these houses have to be owned? What occupations is the right hon. Gentleman talking about? Are the police included?

Secondly, will the Secretary of State confirm——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not fair. Everyone else has asked only one question. The hon. Gentleman has no great status in this, as the statement does not affect Scotland.

Mr. Douglas: I have the status of having had a sheriff officer in my house to——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Douglas: With respect, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This statement concerns England.

Mr. Douglas: I know that it is about England. Let me tell right hon. and hon. Members that if they had paid attention to legislation that passes through the House that

will affect Scotland, it would not have been necessary for the Secretary of State to make his statement this afternoon.

As for the balance of local government expenditure, am I right in saying that the Secretary of State now expects a third of local government revenue to come form the poll tax? If the right hon. Gentleman is thinking about yielding to temptation, he should understand that people are not yielding to temptation when it comes to non-payment. Instead they are yielding to the temptation of having to feed their bairns and look after their old, rather than pay a hated tax.

Mr. Patten: Many of the definitions that we shall use for the standard charge are in tax law. If the hon. Gentleman wants more information about that, I should be happy to let him have it.

Mr. Douglas: Will the police be included?

Mr. Patten: Hold on a moment. These are categories that we shall have to consider in relation to existing tax law. I have mentioned some categories and some individuals who will be affected. The hon. Gentleman asked an extensive question and I am trying to answer it.

Secondly, the hon. Gentleman asked about the proportion of local government spending that would be paid for by the community charge. Taking account of contributions for transitional relief and community charge benefit, that which is met by the community charge payer will be just over 25 per cent. There will be variations from one part of the country to another. I think that the hon. Gentleman will find that when he studies the comparisons between Scotland, England and Wales.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the new Conservative-controlled Ealing council will certainly reduce the wickedly wasteful spending of its Labour predecessor, and with it the community charge? Does he know——

Mr. Gould: What about services?

Mr. Greenway: Services will be improved at the same time. Is he aware that business is being attracted back into Ealing because we have a good, sensible Conservative council? Will he ensure that the people of Ealing and its council benefit from the additional business rate that will be generated by business being attracted back to Ealing?

Mr. Patten: I am sure that a Conservative council in Ealing will encourage economic development through several of its activities. I am sure, for example, that it will be able to provide good-quality services at a reasonable cost, which will encourage several commercial sectors, and that it will encourage local residents such as the Leader of the Opposition, who I am sure must be grateful to have such a good local authority.

May I return to a question that I was asked earlier by the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas)? I said that we would be using definitions that are familiar in tax law. *[Interruption.]* Let me continue. I said that we were talking about people such as clergymen, service men and teachers. If a policeman has to live on the job, as it were, but has another home, he will qualify, too.

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): I thank my right hon. Friend for what appear to be substantial increases in the SSAs for North Yorkshire and North Yorkshire districts. As he will know, those increases are based on a target community charge of £380, which is £102 higher than this year's charge. Is not it clear that authorities that set community charges at or about the target for this year will have to spend less than the SSA for next year, or there will be large rises in community charge bills?

Mr. Patten: Yes, that is certainly the case. I very much hope that local authorities will take account of that when considering their responsibilities to their community charge payers.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): Will my right hon. Friend confirm that for constituencies such as mine, which has a low-spending, effective and efficient Conservative-controlled borough council, but which suffers under a high-spending and profligate socialist county council, his new, improved, restyled Bill, when issued next year, will make clear who is responsible for overspending?

Mr. Patten: I very much hope that that will be so. It will make clear what proportion of the bill is the responsibility of the county council.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the stringent criteria that he has set out this afternoon for maximum spending by councils will be particularly welcome to hard-pressed community charge payers in areas such as the Labour and parrot-controlled county of Avon? Does he agree that it is to be hoped that one effect of the criteria that he has announced will be that instead of making just financial adjustments councils will, for the first time, consider their spending levels?

Mr. Patten: I agree with my hon. Friend, not least in relation to Avon, in which I also have an interest.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): More grant for town halls means more taxes. Will my right hon. Friend take an early opportunity to find out from the Opposition's spokesman whether he is in favour of more grant for town halls? I am sure that the shadow Treasury team would like to know. If not, could we not have gone home an hour and a half ago and taken the dog for a walk?

Mr. Patten: The Opposition are opaque on that issue. When the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer is here they are in favour of fiscal prudence, but when their other Front-Bench spokesmen are here they are in favour of spending more money.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): I welcome widely the three changes in tourism grant, education and police, which are part of the submission by Dorset county council and the district councils to my right hon. Friend, but, before the final settlement is reached, will the Government reconsider the cost adjustment factor? The Government say that, in logic, certain counties will have to pay more because of the cost of living in an area, but drawing a line around the south-east and excluding counties such as Dorset, Cambridgeshire, Wiltshire and Avon will cost us much money. Hampshire is receiving an extra 4·5 per cent. That would be another £18 million on our grant, which would take it from £28 million to £46 million. It makes a great deal of difference. Dorset county council overspent its SSA by 4 per cent. It would have been below its SSA if we had had that money last year.

Mr. Patten: At present, we have a satisfactory way of calculating differences in costs only on a regional basis, but I continue to be prepared to consider other suggested formulae.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): My right hon. Friend may be aware that in the past three years Lancashire county council has spent £2,400 million of the public's money but posted efficiency savings of only some £22 million. That is a pathetic performance. The people of the Fylde coast, while welcoming his excellent announcement on tourism and the money that that will bring, will worry that the inefficiency of Lancashire county council will remove the benefits that he has conferred on them. To that end, so that they may judge its efficiency, will he publish figures of best practice in local government so that they can keep a close eye on the robber barons in county hall?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend will know of the part that the Audit Commission plays in encouraging best practice in local government. He has always been interested in greater energy efficiency. The Audit Commission demonstrated not long ago that local authorities could save £100 million a year by best practice in energy efficiency.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on switching his population analysis from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys figures, which unfairly underestimated the population of some boroughs, notably Gravesham, to the numbers on the community charge register, which will favour efficient registering authorities? May I also express my disappointment at the continuing failure to classify the borough of Gravesham as being among the fringe boroughs? It continues to be the only district so close to London that is not classified as a fringe borough.

Mr. Patten: I am afraid that I have not quite done what my hon. Friend thought in the first part of his question that I had done, but I shall nevertheless look into that issue and into the second point that he made and perhaps write to him on both.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): Does my right hon. Friend think that it is fair for councillors to continue to collect allowances that are paid for the community when those councillors do not pay their community charges, or that itinerants who use community services so easily continue to escape their liability?

Mr. Patten: Other people's consciences continually amaze me. I cannot understand how Labour councillors can conceivably collect allowances and refuse to pay their community charge, while expecting other people to pay their charges and taxes to pay for their allowances.

Mr. David Blunkett (Sheffield, Brightside): Has the Secretary of State examined his conscience about the impact of poll tax capping on children in schools, on the elderly receiving social services and on those in need? Will he confirm that if we take the settlement for this year with the one that has been announced this afternoon for next year, we find that the contribution from central Government to local spending has decreased from 38·6 to 35 per cent., and that the amount from the poll tax is predicted to increase from 28·6 to 32·3 per cent.? As a consequence, we see not an increase of 7·6 per cent. in the amount of central Government grant but a revenue support grant increase, year on year, of 1·9 per cent., which is nothing like what has been suggested.

Will the right hon. Gentleman also confirm that, in the major change in the assessment of the other services bloc for tourism, which was welcomed by Conservative Back Benchers as though it were a major change, he took into account the feelings of his constituents in Bath, such as Mr. Troop, who on the "World at One" today, speaking as a business man, said that Thatcherite sustained growth, theme park Britain will not be able to feed or clothe itself in the future? He said that at that rate—I think that he was talking about the national business rate—we will be eating novelties and postcards.

Does the right hon. Gentleman have any comfort for those in hard-pressed industrial areas who want unemployment taken into account in standard spending assessments and want the safety net retained rather than phased out because of the effect on services in the real world where this rate matters, not the postcard world of those in Eastbourne and elsewhere who have praised the Government this afternoon?

Mr. Patten: Mr. Troop is one of my constituents, although not one whose views are shared by the Bath Association of Retailers or the Bath chamber of commerce. I am sure that, in the light of what he apparently said on radio, he will be delighted by the fact that manufacturing industry outside inner London will pay less in rates than under the old system. That seems to me to be precisely the sort of issue that Mr. Troop—who, incidentally, is in retailing—would very much welcome.

On the adjustments that we have made to SSAs, I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is pleased that we have listened to the representations that we received from Sheffield about heavy goods vehicles and have taken them into account in the adjustments.

As for support for local authorities, the most important figure is the AEF figure, which I have given several times—a 12·8 per cent. increase. The hon. Gentleman overlooks the scale of the specific grants and special grants that we are paying. Overall, the increase in grants is 7·65 per cent. I do not expect the hon. Gentleman to blazon that argument, because it does not appear to suit his own. What the hon. Gentleman conveniently ignores in the other figures that he gave is the contribution that we make to community charge payers through the transitional relief scheme, community charge benefits and so on.

On the hon. Gentleman's first point about spending on education, I draw his attention to a letter this morning in *The Independent* by the director of the South Bank polytechnic, pointing out the inspectorate's work in Labour boroughs which spend a great deal of money on education but which were badly letting down their pupils in the past. Thank heavens we are starting to get away from that.

Mr. Speaker: I have been pleased to be able to call every hon. Member who wished to put a question to the Secretary of State because today there have been exceptional circumstances. I now understand that it is not necessary for me to call on the Government Front Bench to move motion No. 2 on the Order Paper. I would not wish my actions this afternoon to be taken as a precedent.

I wish that it were always possible to call all hon. Members who wish to put questions, as I was able to do today. I think that the Secretary of State now deserves a cup of tea.

Points of Order

5.32 pm

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your help and assistance. It is noticeable that for two hours and one minute the Secretary of State for the Environment stood at the Dispatch Box, making a long complex statement and then fielding at length many questions from right hon. and hon. Members on the important matter of the poll tax. May I ask you, Sir, to help right hon. and hon. Members from Wales.

The Secretary of State for Wales has run away from the House. He has made no statement in the House, but in Cardiff he made a complex one. He has not submitted himself to any questioning and has treated Welsh Members with discourtesy. We ask whether you can bring him to the House to answer questions on an important matter. The people of Wales dislike the poll tax and have rejected it in all elections. The Secretary of State for Wales has run away. He has chickened out. He has not seen fit to show that he takes the House seriously.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member knows that that is not within my competence, but I am sure that what he said was heard by the Government Front Bench.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Today's Order Paper contains a motion tabled by the Leader of the House—

"That this House do meet on Thursday 1st November at half-past Nine o'clock."

That motion is for prorogation. I seek information about parliamentary questions. I have asked two questions, requesting information about the proposed west end development scheme in Bradford. The answer—

"it is not our practice, for reasons of commercial confidentiality, to reveal details of development proposals"—

could be interpreted by the Table Office as a blocking answer. Will you confirm, Mr. Speaker, that after prorogation when parliamentary business falls, blocking answers also fall? This means that questions about matters of great concern to the people of Bradford can be tabled after 7 November.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that after prorogation questions can be tabled afresh.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the pleasantries that have been exchanged in the House today in relation to Scotland, may I have some clarification from you about your attitude when a statement is made which could have an effect on all the nations of the United Kingdom? Will you take the view that Scottish Question Time is a uniquely Scottish occasion and that English Back-Bench Tory Members should not transgress it, or will you take the view that this is a United Kingdom Parliament and that if Members keep within order they are entitled to put their questions to any Secretary of State who makes a statement from the Dispatch Box?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member knows the answer without asking the question. He well knows, because I regularly say it, that this is a United Kingdom Parliament. That is why he was called today. When he spoke to me at the Chair, I explained to him that this statement had no direct relevance to Scotland but that I would call him at the end. I did that. The hon. Member then began to ask a

[Mr. Speaker]

question about Scotland, and it was on that point that I pulled him up. This is indeed a United Kingdom Parliament, and I shall continue to act as I have always done in treating all Members equally and fairly.

Vagrancy Acts (Repeals and Amendment)

5.36 pm

Mrs. Llin Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to abolish the crime of vagrancy and to repeal and amend certain statutory provisions in respect of homeless persons; and for other purposes.

The purpose of the Bill is to abolish the Vagrancy Act 1824, which was introduced to deal with specific problems of vagrancy following the Napoleonic wars. We do not need this vagrancy law. It can give a criminal record to homeless people, making it even more difficult for them to climb literally out of the gutter.

The Act makes it a crime to sleep on the street and to beg. It makes it a crime to be homeless or destitute. Until recently, the Vagrancy Act had hardly been used and, indeed, it was abolished in Scotland by the Civil Government (Scotland) Act 1982. In recent years, however, as the number of homeless persons has increased, prosecutions under the Act have started to show a dramatic increase. In 1988, in England and Wales, some 573 people were prosecuted under the Vagrancy Act. In 1989 there were 1,396 prosecutions, according to a survey of only four central London magistrates courts. What happened to those people? In most cases, they were fined if they had any money on them, or imprisoned overnight if they did not, and then they went back out on to the streets, still homeless, still without money, but now with a criminal record. What a waste of police and court time.

All hon. Members know that the number of people, particularly young people, sleeping in shop doorways, under bridges, in cardboard boxes, in graveyards or in any rough shelter they can find has increased dramatically. There are now sleeping on our streets mentally disturbed people discharged from our mental hospitals without support, youngsters barred from making claims under our social security system, people who have left home because of the strains on family life, youngsters who leave home as the answer to abuse and young people who leave care without proper support—many people with a variety of reasons who are vulnerable not only because of their background or age but because they are homeless and penniless, and, because of that, they can acquire a criminal record.

Consider the case of a youngster who leaves home—perhaps no longer able to cope because of the many strains of teenage life. He or she may arrive in London frightened, with little money and nowhere to go, bewildered and lost in the vastness of the city, cold, hungry and not knowing what to do. Such youngsters can turn to petty crime or they can beg. They can sleep on the street or they can break into an unoccupied house for shelter. Whichever choice they make, they are criminals. In having nowhere to sleep but the streets, in being desperately thirsty and hungry and in asking a passer-by for a few shillings, a youngster commits a criminal act and, if caught, can acquire a criminal record, which will put a black mark against any future job opportunities. Where is the sense in that?

Homelessness and being without money are not criminal problems. They are problems with which the House should deal. It is our failing and our lack of a sense of priority that punish the poor and defenceless in our society.

Some people say that the repeal of the Vagrancy Act would encourage people to sleep rough. Have those people ever tried sleeping rough on the streets of our big towns, night after night, in all weathers, alone and vulnerable? I have heard it said that the repeal of the Act would lead to intimidation by beggars and that the police would have no control over that. But alternative laws already exist to cover intimidation. Section 4 of the Public Order Act 1986 covers the use of threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour. The obstruction of free passage of the highway is covered by the Highways Act 1980. Making an unwarranted demand with menaces is covered by section 14 of the Theft Act 1968.

It is being said that unscrupulous people are behaving like latter-day Fagins, using youngsters to beg, and that section 3 of the Vagrancy Act makes it an offence to cause or procure or encourage a child to beg. But that, too, is an offence under section 4 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act states:

"Every person wandering abroad and lodging in any barn or outhouse, or in any deserted or unoccupied building and not giving a good account of himself"—

where an unlawful purpose is involved—

"shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond"

and that

"It shall be lawful for any justice of the peace to commit such offender for any time not exceeding three calendar months."

But being on enclosed premises for an unlawful purpose is already covered by section 7 of the Criminal Law Act 1977. When the homeless and beggars commit real crimes they can be charged with real offences.

In February this year, the Minister of State, Home Office wrote to me:

"It is important to stress, however, that a person may not be prosecuted for sleeping rough unless he or she has previously been directed to a reasonably accessible place of shelter and failed to apply for, or . . . refused accommodation there; or he or she persistently wanders abroad notwithstanding that a place of shelter is reasonably accessible".

The Government admit that the lack of sufficient accommodation available for the homeless is a real problem. It should not be the job of our overworked police force to check that beds are available or that accommodation has been refused. It should not be for our over-full courts to make a judgment on whether homeless people applied or did not apply to get into a hostel before declaring them rogues and vagabonds.

The Minister of State also wrote that sleeping rough or begging are not arrestable offences under section 24 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. If that is the Government's position, why do we need to retain the Vagrancy Act, which clearly states:

"Every person wandering abroad, or placing himself or herself in any public place, street, highway, court or passage, to beg or gather alms shall be deemed an idle and disorderly person within the true intent and meaning of this Act; and it shall be lawful for any justice of the peace to commit each offender for any time not exceeding one calendar month."

The Secretary of State cannot have it both ways. Either the Vagrancy Act is being used to make criminals of homeless and hungry people or it is not. If it is not in use, it should be repealed. If it is being used, the Home Secretary should say quite clearly that the Government consider that it is a criminal offence to be homeless and hungry.

My hon. Friends and I believe that homelessness is a great social problem which only far-reaching policy initiatives can address. Sleeping out and begging are often the result of homlessness. It ought not to be the role of the criminal law to punish those most vulnerable groups in society who have been reduced to a life on the streets.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mrs. Llin Golding, Mr. John P. Smith, Mr. Frank Field, Mr. Peter Archer, Miss Kate Hoey, Mr. Dennis Turner, Mr. Dafydd Wigley, Mr. Tom Cox, Sir Charles Irving, Mr. Barry Sheerman, Mr. Robin Squire and Mr. Dave Nellist.

VAGRANCY ACTS (REPEALS AND AMENDMENT)

Mrs. Llin Golding accordingly presented a Bill to abolish the crime of vagrancy and to repeal and amend certain statutory provisions in respect of homeless persons; and for other purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill No. 211].

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That this House do meet on Thursday 1st November at half-past Nine o'clock.—*[Sir Geoffrey Howe.]*

Noise Abatement and the Environment

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neil Hamilton.]*

5.46 pm

The Minister for the Environment and Countryside (Mr. David Trippier): I am sure that all hon. Members will welcome the opportunity to talk about a form of environmental pollution which, although it cannot be seen, has the capacity, if not controlled, to be an insidious, all-pervading cause of enormous stress.

I am sure that there is not one hon. Member who has not received heart-rending stories from constituents about the invasion of their lives by noise. Indeed, today's debate is most timely as there is no doubt that the profile of noise as a source of major nuisance has been raised over the past few months as a result of the culmination of several major Government initiatives.

First, the Environmental Protection Bill contains a number of improvements in environmental noise control. Secondly, the Government's recently published White Paper on the environment devotes a whole chapter to noise and explains what action is under way and what we plan for the future. Thirdly, the findings and recommendations of the independent noise review working party—set up by the Government at the beginning of this year to look at the adequacy of noise controls—have recently been published.

Let me explain in greater detail. The main aim of part III of the Environmental Protection Bill is to align the regime for dealing with statutory nuisances such as smells and dust with that of the more streamlined system that already exists for dealing with noise nuisance. We did not intend the Bill to be used as a tool to introduce fundamental changes to noise legislation, as we wanted to have the opportunity to consider fully what the noise review working party had to say on the many facets of noise in the environment. However, the opportunity has been taken to make a few worthwhile changes.

Firstly, the maximum penalty that can be incurred by industries, trades or businesses for breaching a nuisance abatement notice will rise from £2,000 to £20,000. Secondly, the definition of statutory nuisance has been widened to include noise that is prejudicial to health and not just a nuisance. Thirdly, the duty of a local authority to investigate complaints has been clarified. Existing legislation already gives local authorities a duty to cause their area to be inspected from time to time to detect any noise nuisance.

Of course, one would expect local authorities to take reasonable steps to investigate complaints made to them about noise and most authorities interpret the existing duty in that way. It has been suggested, however, that the wording of the existing duty is unduly obscure, and the noise review working party has recommended that action should be taken to clarify the duty on local authorities. The Bill therefore makes it clear that local authorities are not only under a duty to inspect their area from time to time to detect statutory nuisances but must take such steps as are reasonably practicable to investigate complaints.

I should now like to refer to the White Paper on the environment and the report of the noise review working party, both of which have just been published.

Sir Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Will the provisions apply to small airfields—a subject on which I have written to the Minister—which give rise to real difficulties? In my constituency, for instance, the flight path to and from an airfield goes right over people's houses.

Mr. Trippier: If my hon. Friend will be patient, I will devote quite a substantial chunk of my speech to that problem.

The two factors to which I had referred before my hon. Friend's intervention are closely related and it may be useful if I explain first the background to the setting up of the noise review working party. The Government announced last December that the review was to take place and last February we announced that it would be taken forward by an independent working party chaired by Mr. James Batho, one-time secretary of the Noise Advisory Council.

The chairman was asked to complete the review in sufficient time so that the recommendations could, as far as practicable, be taken into account by the Government when drafting the White Paper. The working party included representatives of local authorities, research establishments and people with special knowledge of the problems of environmental noise. The Government are most grateful for all the time and hard work that the chairman and the working party members put into that report. At this point, I want to echo the chairman's appreciation of the late Charlie Bayne, who was the secretary to the working party. He tragically died a few days after the group's final meeting. He was held in high regard for his tenacity and application by members of the working party and his colleagues in the Department. I am sure that all hon. Members would want to join me in expressing sympathy to Mr. Bayne's family.

The breadth of expertise and experience represented has resulted in a report that will play a most important part in influencing future development in noise policy. Indeed the noise section of the White Paper owes much to the emerging deliberation of the working party as its work progressed.

Having set the scene, I should now like to talk about existing and proposed new measures for dealing with noise. These comprise the reduction of noise at source; reducing exposure to noise; and the controlling of noise.

Much is being done to reduce noise at source. For example, the Government are constantly seeking ways of reducing noise from road vehicles. Tighter standards have reduced noise levels considerably over the past 10 years and it should be technically possible to reduce noise levels further for both cars and lorries. The Government are pressing for such significant reductions to be introduced across the EEC. The United Kingdom also took a leading role in new tighter EC standards for motor cycles and will follow that with new regulations to control the quality of silencers on the market.

It is important to make sure that vehicles continue to meet noise standards throughout their lifetime. It is already an offence to alter a silencer to make it louder, or to use a vehicle in a way that creates excessive noise. The Government are now examining the practicalities of introducing metered noise testing as part of the annual test and when inspecting vehicles at the road side.

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): In the coming Session it is expected that at least two Bills will deal with

traffic and road legislation. Is it possible that those Bills will contain clauses that will tighten controls, particularly on noisy motor cycles?

Mr. Trippier: It may not be necessary to introduce the regime to which I referred in primary legislation. It may simply be necessary to introduce it by regulation. It may also come about as a result of a European directive. The concern that I expressed, which is clearly shared by my hon. Friend, will be addressed one way or the other.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): As the author of the Motorcycle Noise Act 1987, I am disappointed that my hon. Friend the Minister did not give full credit to that splendid piece of private Member's legislation.

My hon. Friend will remember, painfully perhaps, as will the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) that I bored the Standing Committee on the Environmental Protection Bill with endless attempts to get aircraft and vehicle noise and pollution into that Bill, but I failed. I did not detect much enthusiasm for my amendments among the Opposition Members any more than there was enthusiasm on the Government's part.

With regard to the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart), is my hon. Friend the Minister saying that the Government will not contemplate legislating unless and until there is some Community agreement? Some of us believe that that might take a long time.

Mr. Trippier: I am not saying anything of the sort. My hon. Friend would be wrong to give the House the impression that he was in any way boring in Standing Committee. I clearly remember his superb speeches on this subject. Indeed, I could never forget them. It would be impossible to do that because the principal point that my hon. Friend was seeking to make was repeated on so many occasions. However, we hugely enjoyed the experience.

I do not believe that we have to wait for European legislation. I am simply saying that we may not require primary legislation. The problem could be tackled by regulation. However, we are determined to address the problem.

With regard to aircraft noise, modern jets are much quieter than their earlier counterparts and replacement of older jets by the latest models will continue to bring benefits. Older aircraft that fail to meet current noise requirements are now banned. Moreover, as from 1 November, the Government, together with other European countries, will ban our national airlines from acquiring aircraft that fail the latest requirements.

While not in the same noise league as a jumbo jet, the use of microlight aircraft was generating complaints, but the introduction of controls by the Government since 1984 has resulted in a substantial drop in the number of complaints and those controls seem likely to form the basis of forthcoming international regulations.

With regard to the specific points made earlier by my hon. Friend the Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Sir A. Glyn), we have given a clear commitment in the White Paper to review the powers with respect to small airfields.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Helicopters are extremely noisy. Surely this is the wrong time to consider building a new heliport in the City of London, which would disturb many people throughout London, particularly west of the City, if helicopters, which are particularly noisy and annoying, were to fly to Heathrow hundreds of times a day.

Mr. Trippier: I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the recommendation in the Batho report about helicopters, which the Government have said formally we shall seriously consider. I should obviously welcome any detailed advice or recommendations from my hon. Friend before we decide how to respond to the report.

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): The comments made by the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) were interesting. He must realise that with talk of further extensions at Heathrow airport, even if aircraft noise levels are lower—something we all welcome—more aircraft will fly over residential areas such as my constituency. If that is not the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment and Countryside, it should be considered seriously by the Minister who is responsible for it.

Mr. Trippier: That would come under the responsibility of the Department of the Environment only in terms of the planning of any proposed extensions. The direct responsibility would belong to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr. Anthony Coombs (Wyre Forest): With regard to microlight aircraft, there seems to have been a spate of applications in the midlands, particularly in my constituency, for landing strips, which I suppose could be called airfields, to allow microlights to take off and land. Those applications have been made in country areas and areas of great natural beauty. From the remarks made earlier by my hon. Friend the Minister, do I understand it that detailed guidance from the Department of the Environment on the attitudes that should be taken by planning authorities when deciding whether to grant those applications must wait upon international regulations, or does the DOE intend to give earlier guidance to local authorities—which are at sixes and sevens about the matter—so that there can be greater certainty for applicants and objectors?

Mr. Trippier: Two issues are involved. First, the Department of the Environment was responsible for a code of practice that can be used as guidance, but not in terms of planning applications, which would have to be considered initially by the planning authorities. However, those could certainly come to Ministers on appeal and particularly to the Secretary of State. On the latter point, I should have to reserve comment because of the semi-judicial role in those matters of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The code of practice, which I am told has been received and respected internationally, is an enormous guide and a dramatic step forward. I undertake to send a copy of it to my hon. Friend tomorrow.

I now refer to more down-to-earth noises, as it were. There has been quite a bit of concern expressed about noise from alarms. I wish to make it quite clear that the Government believe that burglar alarms and car alarms should perform better. Although there is a code of practice relating to burglar alarms, it is only advisory.

The Government propose to introduce mandatory controls to require a 20-minute cut-off. Car alarms are permitted to sound for five minutes, but often continue for longer and are prone to go off automatically. We are examining what can be done to improve matters.

[Mr. Trippier]

It is clearly desirable that, as far as possible, noise and people should be kept apart, and clearly the planning system has an important role to play. Planners need to consider the potential noise problems of locating factories, roads, airports and so on near existing houses and of locating new houses near existing noise sources. Government advice to planners on traffic, aircraft and industrial noise already exists but it is to be updated and extended to take account of a wider range of noise sources.

Of course, in a densely populated country such as ours it is not always possible to build, say, a new road without increasing noise levels to those already living in the area. However, the Government are especially concerned to see that all reasonable measures are taken when designing a new road to mitigate the impact on those living nearby.

In addition, noise insulation is available where noise levels remain high, as is compensation for depreciation in the value of houses caused by the use of the new road. The Government also recognise that the proposed widening of existing motorway routes could cause difficulties from increasing noise for those living nearby. As well as seeking design solutions where practical, it has been decided to assess eligibility for insulation as though a new road were being provided. That reflects the sentiment of the noise review working party.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): I trust that, when the legislation is introduced, it will apply to the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland. Does the Minister agree that, when a new road is being built through a residential area, an assessment of noise levels should be made before work is undertaken so that there is no difficulty on the part of owner-occupiers in establishing their entitlement to compensation or a grant for insulation?

Mr. Trippier: I think that I am right in saying that in the abbreviated version of the White Paper, which has only recently been published, there is a photograph of such an investigation taking place and the monitoring of noise levels in an area that is to be considered—I choose my words very carefully—as a new road development. On the hon. Gentleman's first point, I should have thought—again I choose my words carefully—that any forthcoming legislation would apply throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): It is the constituency experience of many hon. Members that in modern schools, rather than older schools, the noise level is so absurd that it is impossible for a teacher to hear himself or herself teach in some of the new classrooms, even if a relatively small amount of noise is being made next door. Do the Government consider that to be a problem? If so, are they prepared to issue any regulations to try to improve the situation?

Mr. Trippier: I am pleased to say that the provisions to which I referred would be necessary and should be extended not only to schools but to hospitals.

Similarly, much can be done to reduce the impact of aircraft noise. One can provide noise insulation for those worst affected. There is a statutory requirement for the principal London airports to provide sound insulation to surrounding homes within a specified boundary—equivalent to the provision for roads. Elsewhere, insulation is discretionary, but all the major airports run similar insulation schemes.

Other measures include establishing noise preferential routes so that aircraft fly over the minimum number of people on take-off, and encouraging quiet landing procedures.

Before leaving aircraft noise, I should like to say a few words about military flying, as it has been the subject of considerable debate during the passage of the Environmental Protection Bill. Military flying, one has to accept, is intrinsically noisy. Pilots have to be trained to fly at low levels because that is what they need to do in operations. We can never be sure when our pilots will be called on to exercise those demanding skills—as the current situation in the middle east has shown—so constant practice is necessary. Simulators are used as much as possible, but, at present, no simulator provides a complete substitute for real flying.

Ways of reducing noise emissions are kept under review, but military aircraft are exceptional and there is no early prospect of transferring quiet engine technology into the military sphere. Nevertheless, the Government are very conscious of the need to do all that they can to reduce the environmental impact of military flying. The amount of flying is kept to a minimum and will continue to be reviewed as the options for change in the light of developments in eastern Europe are worked out. The heights and speeds flown in in training are controlled, and inhabited areas are avoided as far as possible so as to reduce the impact on people on the ground.

Similarly, noise around military airfields is kept as low as possible by prescribing flying circuits to avoid local centres of population and by ensuring that the ground running of engines is carried out under cover, in daylight hours and in the centre of airfields whenever possible. Not all disturbance can be avoided. For example, flightpaths are largely dictated by the fixed alignment of runways, but sound insulation grants are available for the occupants of homes near airfields that meet certain qualifying criteria. Also, offers to purchase are made to those worst affected.

Mr. Adley: I thank the Minister for giving way again. He is always the most courteous and helpful of Ministers. I apologise for interrupting him again.

Has it occurred to him—I am sure that it has—that most of the problems that he has discussed so far emanate from transport, the solution to which and the handling of which are the responsibility of the Department of Transport? Is my hon. Friend aware that one of the reasons why many of us have felt over the years that we have never successfully tackled the problems is that there is a dichotomy between the Department of Transport's responsibility as sponsoring the noisy transport and its apparent responsibility for coping with the problems that it raises? Will my hon. Friend consider designated areas in particular? At the moment, only the main London airports are designated airports. When one has problems anywhere else in the country, one writes to the airport concerned. If it replies, one will be lucky, but it will not do anything. It refers one to the local authority, which refers one to the Civil Aviation Authority, which refers one back to the operating airport. It is most unsatisfactory. Will my hon.

Friend look at the legislation and try to liaise better with the Department of Transport to see whether we could have action on the problem? Nothing ever happens.

Mr. Trippier: I can certainly give my hon. Friend the assurance that he seeks. I shall look at the matter. I must assure him that liaison between my Department and the Department of Transport has never been better. It would be difficult to get a razor blade between the two Departments. There is clear evidence of that in the White Paper.

As a result of the many appeals that my hon. Friend made to me in Committee when we considered the Environmental Protection Bill, he will have been the first to welcome the fact that the Batho committee examined aircraft noise. If I may pay my hon. Friend a personal tribute, he was consistent, assiduous and tenacious in asking for that review committee to study the matter.

Mr. Dalyell: I am not a Fife Member, but in the area of RAF Leuchars there are complaints that, if only the RAF would let the people round about know when terrain-following-equipment flying was likely to take place, life would be that much easier. My next point is blunt and anecdotal. There are complaints from civil pilots that they are not as well informed as they might be about military flying. For regular routes, that is a serious matter. I do not want to be alarmist, but there is a real problem.

Mr. Trippier: All that I can do is give the hon. Gentleman an assurance that I shall draw what he has said to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Let me return from air to surface transport. I know that much concern has been expressed about the potential noise nuisance from possible new railway lines. In response, the Government announced last March the setting up of a committee to recommend a national noise insulation standard for new railway lines. Its remit is to recommend to the Government a standard that relates equitably to the standards set by regulations for new highways.

Sound insulation can and should play a vital role in the tackling of noise within buildings, and in tackling neighbourhood noise in general. Without adequate sound insulation in walls and floors, the transmission of noise between dwellings can lead to serious nuisance, and, in some extreme cases, can affect the health of the occupants. Where sound insulation is especially inadequate, nuisance can be caused even if the activities of the people causing the noise are not unreasonable.

In recognition of that potential problem, the building regulations for England and Wales impose sound insulation requirements on the design and construction of new homes. The Government are currently reviewing those requirements in the light of the responses to a consultation document that was issued in June.

The most significant likely change is the extension of the sound insulation requirements to cover flat conversions. That reflects the concern expressed by the noise review working party. In addition to that major change, the Government propose to improve the technical guidance issued in support of the regulations.

The Control of Pollution Act 1974 gives local authorities powers to set up noise abatement zones. They provide for local authorities to control noise levels in mixed residential and industrial or commercial areas. Their main aim is to control the creeping increase in noise levels resulting from many noise sources that individually do not amount to a nuisance. The Government will be looking into possible ways to simplify the procedures to encourage authorities to use them more.

Where there are local problems—such as neighbourhood noise—the Government believe that a co-operative approach is needed. So we are sponsoring a pilot "quiet neighbourhood" scheme. The key to success will be encouraging residents of an area to co-operate in drawing up a code of conduct and agreeing on reasonable behaviour, perhaps with time restrictions on noisy activities.

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): Let us imagine that, at some time in the near future, my hon. Friend the Minister extends royal Lancastrian hospitality to me and invites me up to his constituency. Let us further suppose that he gets a little excited during the evening, the music becomes rather loud and eventually—and unusually—his neighbours complain.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): He has not got any neighbours.

Mr. Squire: He may not have any after I have been there.

Let us suppose that, despite several entreaties, my hon. Friend does not turn the noise down. As he knows, there is nothing that the police can do, and little—beyond monitoring—that the environmental health officer can do. If, by contrast, the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell)—who is even more charming—were to invite me to his stately pad and—unusually—we created an excessive din, the Scottish police would have direct responsibility and could take immediate action. In his discussions with the relevant Minister at the Home Office, will my hon. Friend please consider carefully before introducing legislation? Will he find out whether England and Wales can enjoy the protection and the guarantee of urgent action that has already been granted in Scotland?

Mr. Trippier: I give my hon. Friend that assurance. Indeed, I go further and say that there is a recommendation about that in the Batho report. The Government have already undertaken to examine the matter carefully, and I think that we shall. I am aware of the problem, because constituents have drawn it to my attention in my surgeries.

Mr. Beggs: In my constituency, most of the complaints about noise concern people who operate ghetto blasters until all hours of the morning. As we are spending so much time and thought on the need to reduce the noise from vehicles, aircraft and so on, is not it time that we put some control on the amount of noise that can be emitted from wirelesses, record players and the like?

Mr. Trippier: I am very sympathetic to the hon. Gentleman's point; it is an extension of what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire). If we are to respond positively to the Batho report, we need to concentrate on that.

We all need to be reminded from time to time to consider the amount of noise that we make. The Government give financial support to a number of bodies concerned with noise prevention. For example, the National Society for Clean Air produces teaching packs on noise for use in schools, thus encouraging an awareness of

[Mr. Trippier]

noise from an early age. Making a new generation conscious of the effects of noise could have a directly beneficial effect in years to come.

Of course, noise policy needs to be underpinned by research, and the Government carry out, or sponsor, a great deal. Trends in noise levels, the development of quieter road surface materials and investigation of low-frequency noise are just a few of the aspects being examined.

We all recognise that a great deal of the noise around us is the result of what most people would regard as legitimate activities.

Mr. Dalyell: We need to say more in the House about the trends of noise. When I first came here, we could normally hear a pin drop during Prime Minister's Question Time. However, we now get a bawling match every Tuesday and Thursday. Before we become too self-satisfied, perhaps we should register—without being priggish about it—that we do not set a great example.

Mr. Trippier: The hon. Gentleman has absolutely ruined the punch line of my speech, and I shall never forgive him for that as long as I draw breath. Someone had to say that we do not exactly set a superb example to the rest of the nation; I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman got in first.

The examples that I was——

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Trippier: Oh, dear God.

Mr. Jessel: This is a serious matter. My hon. Friend, in reply to an intervention, has referred extensively to neighbourhood noise and amplified music. However, the Batho report shows that there are almost as many complaints about noise from dogs, which he has not mentioned at all. Dogs should receive far more attention in the House.

Mr. Trippier: I hoped that I should not even have to mention dogs today. I thought that I had been relieved of that enormous responsibility, but once again I have been proved wrong.

I am sympathetic, but it will be extremely difficult to frame the legislation whereby we clamp or clam up dogs in some way. We shall attempt to undertake the exercise; that is as much as I can say at this stage.

Mr. John Carlisle: This is my first and last intervention, because I know that my hon. Friend wants to finish, but it should go on the record that the problem in Luton is not dogs but cockerels. A practice is creeping into my constituency: cockerels are kept in urban areas, causing the utmost nuisance to residents when they start singing —as they do—between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning. If my hon. Friend is framing legislation, will he please include cockerels?

Mr. Trippier: The way of tackling the problem suggested by my hon. Friend stretches my credulity to the utmost. If he comes up with a suggestion that he would like to develop into a crusade, however, I have no doubt that the nation will be eternally grateful to him. It could play a significant part in his seeking re-election.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): I wonder whether I can briefly be of technical assistance to the Minister. The matter was debated on Radio 4 many months ago. If its perch is moved a little higher, the cockerel cannot throw its head in the air and make that alarming noise that wakes everyone up.

Mr. Trippier: From the strength and fervour of the earlier intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), it seems that there is probably not a perch high enough to conquer the problem with which he seeks to deal.

I insist on getting through another page before allowing another intervention. The examples that I was giving are lorries delivering goods to the local supermarket; the aeroplane taking us on holidays or taking a business man to an important meeting; and the quarry that provides raw materials to construct the very buildings in which we live and work.

While we must make every effort to ensure that such activities are carried out as quietly as possible, I suspect that the majority of people will have a greater readiness to tolerate a degree of noise if at least something positive results. For example, it may be impossible to carry out a manufacturing process without making some noise, but to a small town a factory may well represent many jobs and be an important factor in the local economy. On the other hand, it is surely the case that people will be far less tolerant of what they perceive as wholly unnecessary and inconsiderate noise. It is the very fact that much noise is considered as unnecessary that makes it more stressful to others.

Examples of that easily spring to mind, some of which have been mentioned. They include the unnecessary volume issuing from hi-fi equipment; the inconsiderate viewing of television late at night with the volume too high; the do-it-yourself enthusiast who carries out noisy work during unsocial hours, thus depriving his neighbour of much-needed sleep for the heavy day ahead; and the inconsiderate motorist who wakes up his neighbours in the morning. We all accept that some people have to get into work very early—but is it necessary to rev the engine as if one were in the pits at Brands Hatch?

While the Government's commitment to tackle all forms of noise remains undiminished—I have given that undertaking several times in response to interventions—Government action can do only so much. Action by individuals and community groups—particularly on neighbourhood noise—is also needed to help to cure many of the current problems through greater consideration for neighbours. I hope that as the matter is debated in the House, which does not set a superb example to the rest of the nation, all hon. Members will recognise that every individual in the land has a responsibility to ensure that unnecessary noise is avoided.

6.21 pm

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): I am sorry that the Minister will not be here for the final paragraph of my speech. I should tell the House that he has already warned me that he will not be here for the end of my speech, for reasons that I fully accept. If he had stayed, he would have heard me, too, refer to the problems of noise from dogs and noise in this very House.

In a week in which environmental issues have dominated the business of the House, it is right that the

final debate of the Session should be yet another environmental debate, this time on noise. Noise can be a problem, whether it be neighbourhood noise, noisy neighbours, loud music, parties, barking dogs, burglar alarms, car radios—the list is endless. It may be noise from traffic. Noise from unloaded heavy goods vehicles and lorries clattering over badly maintained roads is particularly bad. It may be aircraft noise, unacceptably high levels of noise at work, or noise tolerated by those of us who live near to factories with machinery that constantly drones on through the night without respite. Often there is no adequate legislation to control such noise. We have already heard from my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) about voice pollution—perhaps the latest version of noise to make the headlines. It includes persistent background noise in open-plan offices where the next person may talk so loudly on the telephone, or type so loudly—they cannot help that—that one cannot concentrate or hear oneself think.

The standards of sound insulation in schools and hospitals have been referred to. Sometimes everyone can hear what everyone else is doing. Background noise, particularly at television and radio stations, can also be a problem. I have had representations from the staff who operate the BBC local radio service in Stoke-on-Trent.

All those different types of noise need abating, and abating quickly. People desperately need more peace and quiet. The anti-social actions of those whose noise causes health hazards—for health hazards they are—to others cannot be tolerated. The Government must deal with noise no differently from the way in which they deal with other forms of nuisance and environmental pollution. That is why the Government's failure to integrate fully noise abatement of all types into the Environmental Protection Bill is inexcusable. As we heard from the Minister, the Bill brings some welcome improvements. Local authorities' basic duty to investigate noise complaints has been clarified and we welcome that. We also welcome the increase in fines from £2,000 to £20,000, to which the Minister referred. Of course, that is welcome. But a Government who really cared about environmental protection would not have stood for a half-hearted measure on noise. They would have had the foresight to get their working party on noise off the ground soon enough to make sure that the recently published findings of the Batho noise review working party were available in good time to be integrated fully into the only piece of environmental legislation that we are likely to have this side of a general election.

None the less, we welcome the proposals in the Batho report. Despite what we heard from the Minister about the White Paper, the report is much firmer in tone and more detailed in its proposals for improving noise control than the White Paper on the environment. Will the Minister or the Under-Secretary who replies say precisely what resources will be available to local authorities to enable them to implement in full the Batho recommendations?

We warmly welcome the proposal that local authorities should take all reasonable steps to investigate complaints about neighbourhood noise. Such noise is intolerable. Certainly councils should keep offices open to deal with noise complaints at weekends and in the evenings. This afternoon the Secretary of State made an announcement about the new formula for the standard spending assessment. We heard how little he has taken into account basic environmental services. Therefore, I wonder how local councils will find the money to employ the environmental health officers to provide a service at weekends and in the evenings.

There is the prospect of further capping, whether we know the rules in advance or not and whether, as the Secretary of State suggested, councils could in effect volunteer for capping. None of what we heard explained where the money would come from to pay for the improvements. It seems that the extra duties will not be self-financing, so where does that leave noise in the priority rating for the formula used to arrive at the SSA for a local authority and consequently the amount of expenditure that it can afford?

Mr. John Carlisle: Perhaps the hon. Lady is a little pessimistic about the new legislation outlined by the Minister. She will be aware that, like her, I represent an urban constituency with exactly the same problems. Hopefully, when fines and penalties are imposed on offenders the terrible problems will begin to be corrected. Therefore, the number of officers required—I agree that at present it is considerable—by definition will fall as noise is dealt with. It is up to everyone to ensure that the legislation works and that fines discourage people from having noisy parties.

Ms. Walley: That was a useful intervention. It showed that we must take into account long term as well as short term considerations. However, it is no good having plans to deal with the problem in the long term when some money has been generated if there is no way of dealing with the problem in the short term. Does the Under-Secretary have any idea of the costs and the work involved in dealing with noise from weekend parties, which is the main source of complaints? In case he does not know, I shall tell him what is involved. A proper service must take full account of the findings of the detailed report of the London strategic policy unit on the operation of weekend noise services. That report found that there were wide variations between local authorities. The hon. Gentleman's intervention suggests that that must be taken into account. We do not want differing noise standards; we want standard implementation. It is important that the Under-Secretary is aware of the code of practice that environmental health officers helped to draw up in 1988.

If a weekend service is to be provided, it is necessary to train people to do the job, which costs money. Officers must often work in pairs for safety reasons. The complainant must be interviewed and the procedure must be followed up by issuing a warning letter. If there is a second incident, that must be followed up by a statutory notice, again involving costs. If there is a third incident, a prosecution notice must be issued. If a proper weekend service were provided, it could cost as much as £60,000 to £65,000 a year on top of all the other environmental health costs of local authorities.

Mrs. Maureen Hicks (Wolverhampton, North-East): Does the hon. Lady agree that if a party is taking place, no matter how many environmental health officers there are, they do not have the power to end it? Does she agree that it is not just a question of the number of officers but that the matter goes well beyond that?

Ms. Walley: The hon. Lady is right and she should make those representations to the Under-Secretary of State. If there is a noisy party, it does not matter how many

[Ms. Walley]

officers there are if none is on the end of an emergency telephone line at 5 am or midnight on a Friday or a Saturday night to deal with the complaint then and to follow it up subsequently. My point is that after dealing with the initial complaint there is a tremendous amount of follow-up work. As hon. Members will be aware, it is not part of the normal contract of an environmental health officer to work extra hours at the weekend or to work night shifts on Friday and Saturday nights. Immediately we are talking about contractual overtime commitments and overtime pay for staff.

Many late-night parties occur in inner-city estates which have a distinct shortage of amenity and community facilities. Does the Under-Secretary of State agree that there should be sound-proofed facilities to provide suitable venues for late-night parties? I see him smiling, but if more community facilities were provided it would meet the needs of people to find a place to go for social entertainment.

Earlier in the debate there was a useful intervention about the different practices in Scotland. Under Scottish legislation equipment causing the noise offence can be confiscated. I should welcome it if the Government took on board the proposals in our alternative White Paper which make provision for that.

How will the Government implement the working party's recommendations on noise abatement zones so that they can be used far more effectively? If the proposed neighbourhood watch scheme pilot project is a success—I noted that the Minister said that there would be only one —are there proposals for a comprehensive system throughout the country or are we to see a wide variation in standards? Which areas has the Under-Secretary of State chosen for the pilot project?

Clearly, the proposals to revise the planning and noise circular 10/73 and to amend the related legislation are given a high priority in the Batho report and could make a big difference. Precisely when will the Minister introduce them? When he considers the changes, will he take into account not only the paper prepared by the Building Research Establishment, but the commendable report produced by Labour-controlled Norwich city council's environmental health department which is entitled "Guidance Notes on the Sound Insulation of Party Walls and Party Floors in Converted Dwellings"? It is one of many examples of good practice from Labour-controlled councils.

Norwich is concerned about the growing problems of noise disturbance to neighbouring property which frequently arise when terraced or semi-detached dwellings are subdivided. I am well aware of the council's anxiety because it mentioned that to me in great detail when I visited the city earlier this year. Sound sound insulation should be fully incorporated in planning conditions. Does the Minister agree that he should now take urgent steps to introduce better standards of home insulation sooner rather than later?

Despite what the Minister has said about steps to deal with noise pollution caused by transportation, the Government's credibility is exhausted. There is a complete lack of a comprehensive transport policy, which is typical of the Government's ad hoc approach to policy making. Energy saving automatically includes noise reduction implications. All the threads need to be pulled together before noise pollution can be satisfactorily tackled. It is all very well for the Minister to say that one could not get a razor blade between him and the Secretary of State for Transport, but how far have the Government gone to put across these tighter standards on noise to the Department of Transport? Does the Minister intend to redefine "premises" under section 105(1) of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 to include the highway? Noise from traffic is estimated to be the most widespread source of noise nuisance. It must be tackled by developing quieter vehicles, road and traffic management, comprehensive planning and measures to compensate those who are adversely affected. Obviously that has staffing implications.

There should be measures and compensation available to deal with excess noise. At present there is no coherent system covering the various modes of transport. There must be a common measure—a standard form of assessment. Compensation across the board should be made a fundamental right. There must be an extension of rights to cover problems caused by the increase in traffic creating noise nuisance. Existing regulations detail no grants or compensation if a road is changed into a major thoroughfare. When the Channel tunnel opens up the railways to increased freight traffic, especially at night, those who live near existing lines will not be entitled to help.

I understand that the Department of Transport has a working party looking at the implications of rail traffic on new lines, but existing lines are not included. Perhaps the Minister could liaise with his counterpart in the Department of Transport to ensure that full consideration is given to that problem.

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): The hon. Lady has talked at some length about grants, compensation and so on. Has she costed them and, if so, what figure has she come up with?

Ms. Walley: The hon. Gentleman rightly draws attention to those issues which need to be addressed. At this stage it is important to consider the proposals and how far the "polluter pays" principle can be taken on board.

We welcome the Government's decision, albeit a delayed one, to include aircraft in the terms of reference of the noise working party. The Minister referred to his announcement halfway through proceedings on the Environmental Protection Bill to extend the working party's terms of reference. Nevertheless, not enough has been done to bring together the issues for which the Department of the Environment and the Department of Transport have overlapping responsibility.

Aircraft noise, particularly for those who live near airfields, is an extreme nuisance. The Government still do not seem to have accepted the detail of aircraft noise pollution recommendations and I await with interest the provisions of the planning Bill which is expected to be announced in the Queen's Speech.

I could not agree more about the problems associated with undesignated airfields. Small airfields must be covered by proposals acting against nuisance. There is a particular problem with existing legislation in that ground activities are excluded from existing controls. Although

large airfields cope with the noise generated by ground testing and engine maintenance, the same is not true of small airfields.

As we have already heard, even in built-up areas there is an increasing problem with helicopters. Planning permission is not needed for some landing sites.

Mr. Jessel: The hon. Lady questioned the credibility of the Government regarding aircraft noise. I should remind her that the Government have done far more than any other Government to control aircraft noise, particularly at Heathrow. They stopped the fifth terminal at Heathrow, as well as the Heathrow to Gatwick helicopter link, and sharply curtailed the number of night flights at Heathrow. The previous Labour Government did practically nothing to control aircraft noise. I bet that the hon. Lady cannot think of anything positive that they did.

Ms. Walley: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman, but I have no intention of making this debate on noise a slanging match between hon. Members on either side of the Chamber.

It is most important for the Government to find ways to deal with the many issues related to helicopter noise as there is no doubt that greater controls are necessary. Reference was made to that in the Batho report, and the Government must tell us how they intend to introduce such controls.

I share the Minister's concern about the problems created by military aircraft, which I am sure we are all aware are increasing in many constituencies. We agree with the Government that the noise generated by military aircraft must be kept under review and that something should be done to abate at least some of it.

It is also important to consider the problem of noise in the workplace. I am aware that that topic was conveniently excluded from the review on the ground that separate controls exist. Why do not the Government recognise that they cannot deal with noise abatement effectively unless they act across the board? The Government have already extended the terms of reference of the working party to include aircraft noise and they should similarly extend them to include noise in the workplace. The Government should ensure that minimum criteria and standards are applied to the Departments of Employment and Trade and Industry. Those criteria should also have some bearing on the work of the Health and Safety Executive.

The plain truth is that noise regulations to protect the hearing of industrial workers are being ignored, despite the fact that 1·7 million people are exposed to noise levels that put them at risk of suffering permanent deafness. Why is it that only 0·5 per cent. of the notices served under health and safety at work regulations in 1988-89 concerned noise even though 1,515 sufferers won occupational disease awards because of deafness? The resources of the Health and Safety Executive are inadequate to deal with the problem. Does the Minister agree with the head of the noise at work unit at Sandy Brown Associates that the improved regulations which came into force in January have not had much effect? That was not the intention behind the European directive.

This is deaf awareness week, and, in this week of all weeks, does the Under-Secretary agree with trade unions, including the General Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union and the Transport and General Workers Union, that there should be a requirement on employers to offer hearing tests to employees working in noisy surroundings? What advice is the Minister willing to give to ministerial colleagues on noise at source? Does he accept that there are no common procedures in the national health service for carrying out hearing tests? Has he any idea of the length of the waiting lists of those seeking treatment from an ear, nose and throat specialist?

The statistics show that, in 1975, there were 6,325 complaints about noise. In 1987, the figure had increased sharply to 59,132. No number of statistics can reveal the amount of suffering and irritation caused to those who must put up with unacceptable noise levels. The Government could have done far more to give wider powers and greater resources to enable local authorities and industry to reduce noise at source and to take enforcement action when needed. The Government should consider re-establishing the now disbanded Noise Advisory Council. In that context I pay tribute to the Batho working party for its report. That working party was set up in the wake of the Noise Advisory Council.

We need a national strategy capable of addressing all forms of noise, a strategy which will, by example, encourage people to be considerate about the noise they make.

We heard something earlier about barking dogs and I do not know whether the Government acknowledge that they still have a problem on their hands concerning dog registration—certainly some of us were expecting a vote about that tonight. The Government had better be warned because a survey conducted by the Building Research Establishment found that amplified music was the cause of 34 per cent. of complaints, but 33 per cent. of complaints related to dogs.

The Government should take note that we and the long-suffering public are every bit as determined to press for overdue action on noise abatement as we are to take necessary action against irresponsible dog owners.

6.45 pm

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling): I welcome the fact that the Government have allocated a full day to this debate. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) that the Government have taken far more care and have followed a far more coherent and effective policy on noise than any of their predecessors.

I want to discuss railway noise in the light of the fact that the opening of the channel tunnel is less than three years away. I am not seeking to be hostile about the channel tunnel project, and I recognise the imperitive need for sensible rail use of that important national infrastructure. I am concerned, however, because the present legislation on compensation for noise and on noise insulation will, without doubt, be glaringly anomalous and unfair from the moment that the channel tunnel opens in 1993.

I can best illustrate my argument by referring to how the present legislation affects my constituency. Two existing railway lines in my constituency and one other proposed line will serve the channel tunnel. The southernmost line, the Tonbridge and Paddock Wood line, is one of the two designated rail routes that will lead to the channel tunnel. Once the tunnel is open and until the new line is built, that line will carry the major proportion of through international passenger and freight traffic. Once the tunnel opens, the tranquillity enjoyed by those people

[Sir John Stanley]

who, unfortunately, live in close proximity to that track will be severely curtailed. Rail traffic noise will especially increase during sleeping hours.

On the freight traffic alone it is forecast that one international through freight train will pass Tonbridge station every 20 minutes between 10 pm and 6 am, seven days a week. Those trains will travel at 75 mph, will be approximately half a mile in length and will take half a minute to pass a given point. Those who live in the houses that back on to Tonbridge station face precious few night rail movements at present, but such is the forecast increase in noise levels.

Because legislation does not permit compensation or noise insulation to be obtained as a result of the intensification of an existing use without new work being carried out, as defined under the Land Compensation Act 1961, the people involved will have no compensation, even though the value of their homes will certainly depreciate hugely. The value of their homes will probably have depreciated already, but those people will have no statutory entitlement to noise insulation either.

A few miles to the north is the second designated route to the channel tunnel, the Maidstone East line. British Rail has already introduced a Bill—the British Railways (No. 3) Bill—into another place to give itself powers to construct a number of new passing loops along the line to accommodate channel tunnel traffic. One of the loops is in Borough Green in my constituency. It is a good illustration of the absurdity and unfairness of the present statutory position, because those houses immediately adjacent to the new loops that are to be constructed will be eligible for compensation and statutory noise insulation under the Land Compensation Act. However, a few yards further on, where the loop converges with the existing line, similarly placed houses suffering identical noise pollution will have no statutory entitlement either to compensation or noise insulation.

It will be appreciated that my constituency is totally criss-crossed by rail routes to the channel tunnel, between which there is also a major road. A few miles to the north of the second route is the path of the new rail link as designated under present proposals. For the purposes of the Land Compensation Act, that is new work, so any house along that section will be entitled to compensation and noise insulation as a result of noise pollution.

Therefore, within a section of very few miles, there is one proposed line along which everybody will get compensation for, and noise insulation against, noise disturbance if they are eligible, another line where only those living on a loop will be entitled to compensation and a third line where no one will receive anything. That is clearly absurd and, more importantly, it is seriously unfair and inequitable for a number of individuals.

No doubt the issue of precedents has already been raised with Ministers, both in the Department of the Environment and, more directly, in the Department of Transport, which is closely considering the issue. No doubt it will be said by those given responsibility for advising Ministers that if they concede the precedent of giving compensation and noise insulation for noise disturbance because of the intensification of existing use, they will have to grant them for every intensification of an existing use. I do not accept that argument and I earnestly hope that Ministers will not either. Setting such a precedent would not lead to the granting of that concession in all circumstances, because this is a totally unique position.

There is only one channel tunnel and only two designated rail routes to it. To the best of my knowledge, a completely new huge source of rail traffic, with all its noise implications, has never been discharged on to existing rail routes that have been lightly used, particularly at night, in this country. Therefore, it is right to look at the circumstances and not be mesmerised by a specious argument about precedent.

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): I correct my right hon. Friend on one point. The circumstances are not unique. Exactly the same sort of thing happened in Ipswich when the Ipswich-Felixstowe railway line, originally just a passenger line to a seaside town, became the conduit for massive freight trains from Felixstowe to Ipswich. Those trains caused considerable upset, disturbance and unhappiness to a significant number of people living nearby. Therefore, I correct my right hon. Friend on that point but I sympathise with and support his argument.

Sir John Stanley: I thank my hon. Friend for giving me his local background. We cannot change the past but if, in future, there should be a similar scale of sudden noise disturbance from a new source of railway traffic onto an existing route, it would be entirely justified and equitable to adopt a similar policy to that which I hope will be used in relation to the existing lines which, it is proposed, channel tunnel traffic should use.

Ministers are exercised about the issue of precedent—I know of one direct precedent for giving both compensation and noise insulation for the intensification of an existing use. I know about it because I was the Minister responsible for putting it into effect. I was well assisted by my hon. Friend, then Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, now happily strategically placed as the Minister of State, Department of Transport. Exactly the same issue was raised when Tornado aircraft were deployed to RAF Leeming, which was an ongoing operational RAF air station being used for flying. There was no doubt that the deployment of Tornado aircraft would dramatically damage the environment and cause intrusive noise pollution in the immediate flight path of RAF Leeming. We decided that the right course was to pay compensation for the depreciation in value of, and buy out at their full market value, the houses that had effectively become valueless and, where necessary, give noise pollution protection.

I stress that a precedent has been created in the Ministry of Defence for dealing with precisely the same circumstances. My constituents face the railway equivalent of a Tornado deployment. It will create a reasonable parallel in railway terms when the channel tunnel opens to through passenger and freight traffic in 1993.

The merits of the case are that, for many years, certainly since the Land Compensation Act was passed, we have accepted that it is only fair and reasonable that when the value of someone's main asset, invariably the home, is seriously diminished because of a major piece of national infrastructure, the individual should not suffer a crippling loss because something needed by the nation as a whole has to be built. That is the position with the channel tunnel and of those people with homes alongside existing

designated rail routes. It cannot be right, in equity or morality, for the value of homes to be slashed by half or two thirds or possibly even made valueless because the nation wants the channel tunnel and wants it to be used for through rail traffic, as it should be.

A real moral obligation is involved and I am glad that the Secretary of State and the Minister of State, Department of Transport have recognised that, to the extent that they are considering whether compensation and noise insulation can be granted for the intensification of railway use created by the channel tunnel project. I hope that the Minister will draw my remarks to their attention and that, when the Government announce their conclusion at the end of the year, it will be a positive one, because that is the only conclusion that would be fair and reasonable in the circumstances for the relatively small number of people who are affected.

7.1 pm

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): We have been treated to two speeches by Front-Bench spokesmen which were reasonable and constructive and which will lead to major improvements in legislation in the next Session. It is a shame that my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) was interrupted by a contribution that seemed a repetition of the sort of meaningless mantras of accusation and counter-accusation which so often fill this place and are themselves an example of noise pollution.

Mr. Jessel: If the hon. Gentleman happens to be referring to my intervention, I must point out that I was picking up the point made by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley), who questioned the credibility of the Government in dealing with noise, including aircraft noise. I merely pointed out the excellent record of the Government, which had not been an echo of what went before under the Labour Government. That was a legitimate point to make.

Mr. Flynn: I thank the hon. Gentleman for illustrating my point so well again.

My hon. Friend the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) referred to the Dalek-like braying at Question Time. It has its positive aspects, however. I know that one of my colleagues who represents a Welsh constituency was grateful for the habit. He purchased a sound tape of an Adjournment debate that he had had at 4 am one day and took it home to his mother, who listened to it admiringly, not realising that he was addressing yards of empty leather. She called in the neighbours and told them to listen to it: "When the Prime Minister and the others speak, there is a lot of talking and laughing going on; but when my son speaks you can hear a pin drop."

We have long underestimated the damage that noise inflicts when it bombards our ear drums. My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North mentioned industrial noise. Many years ago I worked in a nail factory on the docks in Cardiff, where we were bombarded by deafening noise from dozens of nail-making machines. That was a terrible experience. The noise was so intense that the only way to communicate was to shout at the top of one's voice within a few inches of someone's eardrum. Thousands of people who worked in that factory are now permanently disabled as a result.

We now have the answers. There is no excuse left, but, sad to say, there are still irresponsible employers who allow bad conditions to persist. Some people, too, have little respect for or knowledge about their health and continue to work in damaging conditions.

We have an extraordinary threshold of tolerance of noise. When wartime evacuees went from places such as Liverpool or London to Welsh villages they could not sleep because they were disturbed by the intensity of the silence. It very much depends on the level of background noise to which we are used. It puzzles many of my generation that we have bred a generation of young people who seem to need an endless drip-feed of pop music—who cannot function unless their heads are continually enveloped in a cloud of noise.

But it is sporadic, unforeseen and uncontrolled noise that perturbs us. I refer to formidable and all-pervading intrusive noise nuisance which, when it enters our homes and gardens, trespasses on our peace and violates the private space that we all need around us. I refer to traffic noise, noise from neighbours, noise from night clubs which pour out their megadecibels just when children are going to sleep. Then there is the endless, repetitive barking of dogs and heavy metal music coming from the gardens of neighbours, fracturing our peace and obliterating the sound of bird song. A particularly irritating source of noise is quite new. It comes from the yuppy in the train thundering fatuous messages in a megaphone voice to his secretary on his mobile phone.

Motor bikes are a problem in my constituency, which is ringed by beautiful hills. They are a great nuisance on the roads, but they are excruciating in the countryside, especially when they cavort on the tops of hills, where the macho status of the rider seems to be measured by the number of excess decibels that he can blast out. I remember when transistor radios first arrived to assault our ears. Some poor tormented soul was driven to invent a retaliatory device that he could carry in his pocket and which, when pressed, would turn off the sound of any transistor in earshot.

I know that we are likely to hear many practical suggestions as a result of the Batho report and the coming legislation, but I should have thought it within our wonderful technical power to devise a battery of anti-noise weapons—for example one that could cross the lines of a mobile phone. I have given up hope of breeding a species of dog with an off-switch or volume control, but dogs have been bred in all sorts of mutated forms, some of them damaging to the dogs themselves. The irritant factor consists in the fact that the smaller the dog, the more piercing and worrying its bark. Perhaps we could look to the dog breeders to breed dogs that make less irritating noise.

I should like a zapping device for burglar alarms to silence them, or a device to change the bedlam of heavy metal to the sounds of Pavarotti. Unfortunately, however, one person's Pavarotti is another person's pain in the ear.

I doubt whether burglar alarms are of any use at all. I have twice experienced burglar alarms going out of control. One erupted into deafening life because there was a break of a few seconds in the electricity supply. That sent out a pulse that caused the thing to ring. I tried everything to silence it—first switching off the electric switch at the mains, which did no good; then dismantling the box inside the house and taking out the battery in it, which did no good either. Then I dismantled the wiring inside the box:

[Mr. Flynn]

still no peace. One of the dogs joined in the cacophony because it could stand the noise no longer. In the end the only way to silence the alarm was to get a ladder and go up to the box outside, dismantle it and take out the battery.

I had a similar experience a few weeks ago before returning from the recess. Again, a cut in the electricity supply where I live set off a flashing light on top of the building. We could not turn it off for two whole days. The cacophony on the previous occasion lasted for hours and we live in Newport within 200 yards of the main police station, but not a soul took any notice of the noise, least of all the police. It is doubtful whether burglar alarms have any beneficial——

Mr. Summerson: May I recommend a good way of dealing with burglar alarms? All the hon. Gentleman needs to do is to obtain a spade, and a good job can be made of slicing the alarm off the wall with one upward sweep of the spade.

Mr. Flynn: I am grateful for that advice, but I should need a spade with a rather long handle as my flat is about 60 ft off the ground—but I shall remember that and keep one handy.

The message sent out by burglar alarms that are out of control is one of invitation to the burglar. As no one takes any notice of them they act as an invitation to theft, not as a deterrent.

Car alarms seem to have a life of there own. They screech into life for no apparent reason and seem to be out of control. The Minister suggested a five-minute burst but 20 seconds should be the maximum.

It is disappointing that the Government are not acceding to the advice offered by the Select Committee on Defence. I say that in a typical non-party spirit. Low-flying aircraft greatly disturb people in many parts of Wales that are otherwise tranquil. They are a terrible nuisance and the tearing, screeching noise comes on suddenly and is greatly upsetting. I am sure that the Select Committee on Defence had taken all the defence implications into account when it advised that the RAF should abandon low flying down to 100 ft. I understand from reports in this morning's press that the Government do not intend to accept that recommendation.

I hope that the debate and the reeommendations will give rise to reforms and new regulations that we shall all be able to welcome. We look forward to the time when there will be peace. Fiat pax. Bydded tawelwch. Let there be peace.

7.11 pm

Mrs. Maureen Hicks (Wolverhampton, North-East): We are not often afforded the luxury of a whole evening's debate on an issue that is dear to the hearts of my constituents. I intend to take full advantage of the opportunity to draw attention to a problem that we have had to live with for many years. It is the problem of serious noise pollution and it was referred to by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) who spoke about noisy parties and blues parties. I am worried about the level of expectation that the debate will arouse among my constituents and among those who live in inner-city areas. They will be delighted at our opportunity to debate noise but if nothing comes from it there will be tremendous disappointment.

In the past 12 months we have had many debates on the environment. We have debated the Environmental Protection Bill and before us is the working party review on noise. We have had a White Paper and no doubt there is another environment Bill in the pipeline. Such high priority by the Government is welcome. In the past 12 months there has been ample scope to legislate in areas that are most crucial to improving the quality of life of our constituents. Such issues are also a Government priority, as we have proved.

In order to make progress on problems resulting from noise pollution, Departments will have to work more closely together. Earlier we heard about the need for Environment Ministers to work more closely with Transport Ministers. I am keen to see the Home Office working closely with the Department of the Environment. Although many of the issues that I shall raise do not directly affect the Department of the Environment, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will take them on board and deliver them carefully and in a committed way to his colleagues in the Home Office.

The absence of a recommendation in the working party report to make deliberate, sustained and excessive noise a criminal offence worries me. In spite of all the debate over past months, we are in danger of failing yet again to tackle one of the most serious issues undermining the quality of life in inner cities and causing untold anguish to residents who have to live with our failure to legislate effectively.

Noise pollution caused by blues parties and noisy parties, often held in semi-detached houses in residential areas, has proved dreadful. More often than not such parties are held in council properties. The problem is far from new. Blues parties have been with us for about 30 years, especially in urban areas such as London, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Manchester. I could add to that list. Successive Governments have merely tampered with the issue and have consistently failed to bring forward specific legislation giving the police or another body the authority to take immediate action to stop noisy parties.

The latest figures at my disposal for the west midlands relate to 1988. They record 4,412 incidents with a noisy party classification. I regret to say that 773 of those incidents took place in Wolverhampton. The local authority at that time issued 40 noise notices. Already between January and September this year 36 notices have been served under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. As I have said, the problem is not peculiar to Wolverhampton and the west midlands. I would resist any attempt, such as that made by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North, to set up a recognised formal location in which such parties could be held. I know that my constituents who live with this problem would resist such a proposal at all costs.

Why did the Government act so swiftly to legislate to deal with the relatively new problem of acid parties? The parties are held in rural areas and more often than not they are not held in residential homes but out in the wilds in warehouses or similar places. We strengthened the law in that respect but disappointed my constituents by not acting more rigorously to improve the quality of life of our inner-city residents by acting on noisy parties.

In January 1990, the Department of the Environment wrote to my local council. Hon. Members who know me

well will know that I do not often agree with that Labour-controlled council. However, we are at one on the problem of noisy parties. The DOE letter stated:

"Although the Environmental Protection Bill does present an opportunity to consolidate into a single code the various definitions of statutory nuisance—including noise—it was never the intention that the Bill be used at all to introduce major changes to noise legislation. Whilst I appreciate that you will be disappointed that there will be no more new noise provisions in the Bill the Government believes that a thorough review to identify what further measures are necessary is, on balance, preferable to suggesting clauses that would not have been subjected to a reasonably wide consultation."

My retort to that is, "And so say all of us."

With bated breath, and after many years of waiting for action, we awaited the conclusions of the working party which are now before us. I turned to the chapters on noise, especially neighbourhood and entertainment noise, because problems about those matters fill my mail bag. When I read those chapters my heart sank. It was a little bit like reading the guide to the noise complaints procedure. I was given that guide and told to show it to my constituents. I have no doubt that it contains much good information, but if I gave it to my constituents as an answer to the problem of noise they would laugh at me and say, "That is the theory but please deal with the practice." Time and again, a great deal of theory has been proved not to work in practice. With the greatest of respect, while I believe that the working party did its best to be constructive, I must point out to it that we have been there, we have seen it and we have done it. Its proposals give little hope of a solution to our problems.

We have looked at neighbourhood noise watch. The environmental health officers have looked at night time patrols and weekend patrols. We have set up working parties involving the police and environmental health officers, and they have all worked to ensure that they know the guidelines and the law. However, the problem is how to produce a solution from what is available. I could fill the Chamber with Wolverhampton constituents who could testify from first-hand experience that even if the law were amended by the proposals of the working party, that would not increase the powers of those responsible for putting an end to the blues and noisy parties when they are in full flight.

Mr. John Carlisle: Does Wolverhampton have the same problem that we have in Luton, with blues parties in which large numbers of people participate? In many cases, when the police are called, there are either insufficient numbers of police to cope with the problem or the police are frightened to go in to break up the parties because of the ensuing mayhem. In some cases, the police will be accused of stopping people enjoying themselves. We have now reached the dangerous situation where police almost back off in fear of life and limb from these parties, let alone of the backlash that results.

Mrs. Hicks: Police cannot gain access in many cases, and if they choose a sensitive moment to go in, they have to have a reason for doing so.

It is time that the House listened to the people who suffer. Working parties are good. They provide the theory, but we need constructive action based on that foundation. I have the example of Mr. John White, an 81-year-old heart attack and stroke victim who lives in a Wolverhampton block of flats where a blues party took place this year. Most of the residents in the block are elderly, so perhaps the housing manager is wrong for allowing a mix of young and old in a block of high-rise flats, but that is another point.

Mr. White lives below the flat where the party went on for three days and nights solidly. He said:

"I felt like committing suicide, the noise was so loud—I wanted to go up there but I was too scared."

At the age of 81, he was quite right not to tackle 200 or 300 people, but he needs someone to do it for him.

I know how I feel about noise in flats. I have a humble little abode in London, to which I return late at night. The only good thing about this place sitting until the early hours is that if I get home at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, I have only to endure a couple of hours of the noisy record player below me, which goes off at about 3 o'clock. As I lie there, willing it to end, I think of that man and others like him who have to endure not one hour or one record but 200 or 300 people, amplified music and so on, for 71 hours. It is hard for us to imagine such a situation.

People living in a semi-detached house can watch 200 or 300 people pouring into the next-door house for days on end. They can watch the hot dog stall arrive outside to set up business. Meanwhile, the neighbours try to get children to sleep. They endure the associated problems of prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse and so on. When the party finally ends, they are left with the debris and the glass.

Mr. David Evans (Welwyn Hatfield): Do not forget the football hooligans.

Mrs. Hicks: I agree with my hon. Friend. The people who have to deal with the parties have to watch the fights in the street, people urinating, car loads coming and going. They wonder why someone is not doing something about this.

I have to report the frustration of the residents, the police, the local authority enforcement officers and the local Member of Parliament—me—who is asked why something is not being done about the problem. The problem is that when these people phone the police, they are told that the police have no right of entry. Often, they are in a disturbed and angry state, and they believe, as my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) hinted, that the police are looking for excuses not to intervene. That is dangerous because, more often than not, that is not the case. I have a lot of dealings with police in my town and they point out to me that they are not permitted to go into a house.

When there are complaints about noisy parties, the only solution is to go through all the rigmarole of getting an environmental health officer to serve an abatement notice, but that does not mean that the party will stop immediately. The notice says that the noise should stop within 30 minutes, and if it does not, the prosecution can proceed and the case will go to the courts two or three months later. Meanwhile, the party goes on for two or three days and the enforcement officer and the police cannot go in.

There is often a problem in indentifying the person holding the party. In many incidents, people have borrowed keys claiming that they want to rent a property, taken a copy of the keys and then held a party in that property. Unfortunately, my local council has so many empty properties that it is easy for parties to be held in this

[Mrs. Hicks]

way. It does not seem to matter that there is no electricity because people install generators in the steet. They have an answer to everything.

A leading policeman in Wolverhampton said something about this in October 1987—that far back—and I quote him because it is often said that the police do not want more powers and this shows that they do. He said:

"Blues parties are the greatest potential source of serious disorder that we have got in this borough. We are defeated in terms of noisy parties—the law doesn't provide any answer. It is the worst problem we've got."

Wolverhampton council and the police have worked closely to overcome the problem and to look for solutions, but they do not have the power to stop the noise immediately. How can the Government say, hand on heart, that controls on neighbourhood noise are already sufficiently tough?

Earlier in the year I received a letter from a member of my party who wrote to me complaining of this problem and asking me to check whether the police were simply looking for excuses. I received a reply from the Home Office which said:

"I understand that one of Mrs. Hicks' constituents had written to say that they had complained to the police about noise from a neighbour's house, only to be told that the police had no powers to put a stop to it.

We can confirm that this is correct. The police have no statutory powers of entry where the problem is simply one of noise."

The use of "simply" is surely an understatement. The letter continues:

"Sometimes, provided the person making the complaint has already asked his neighbour to desist and has been ignored, the police will ask a householder to keep the noise down."

They have no power to enforce that request. The police say, "Please turn the music down," but the party continues. The letter adds:

"in practice the majority of people will comply."

We have heard something about cloud cuckoo land recently, and I suggest that the letter is another example of that. It continues:

"The only recourse open to your constituent under statute is through the Control of Pollution Act 1974."

It seems that at that stage there is an invitation to go round in circles yet again. The letter adds:

"If the noise does not stop"—

obviously, we are not talking of one isolated party—

"the complainant can, with the support of two other people, approach the local authority for a noise abatement notice. If subsequent to this the noise still continues then the person responsible for it can be prosecuted."

We are back to square one.

After a thorough study of the practicalities of the problem, I am convinced that the police need the authority to enter premises. I shall be grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister if he takes up that message. The police should be able to enter premises and effectively stop the party. If necessary, they should be able to arrest the organisers and remove the offending audio equipment, drink, generators and other items. The police should have the power to request party organisers to abate the noise. If the request is ignored, the police should have the power to enter the premises by force, if necessary, and stop the party there and then.

These powers may appear to many to be draconian. Two or three years ago, even the police in my constituency would have argued that they were not needed. It is for legislators, however, to include conditions with police powers and to provide safeguards. It may be considered that local authority representatives and environmental health officers are present when the police go to premises where parties of the sort that I have described are taking place. As they all work closely together to curb the problem, there is no reason why local authority representatives and EHOs should not be present when a request is made to a party organiser to stop the activity. I am sure that after one or two closures the message would begin to reach home. The organisers might then adopt a more co-operative approach than at present.

At the moment, party organisers are laughing at us. They are getting away with murder, as it were, and they know it. Those who organise blues parties—often on a semi-commercial basis—are often awkward and uncooperative. They have no regard for the welfare and well-being of those living around the premises which are being used for the party. Often they are strangers to the area.

Are we on the side of the offenders or on the side of the general public? I say to those who argue that we should not give powers to the police that they are on the side of offenders.

Another letter from the Department of the Environment to the local council of January 1990 stated:

"The Government need to be satisfied that existing powers are inadequate before contemplating giving the police the power of entry to seize equipment they request."

I believe that I have the evidence—this is true of many other hon. Members who represent urban areas—to fill a book. I shall endeavour to satisfy the Government of my case. If we continue to ignore the views of all those who are confronted by the problem, including EHOs, the police and residents, we could be accused of turning a blind eye to a real problem.

We have fulfilled many commitments to improve the quality of life in our cities. I was so proud when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made that improvement a priority in June 1987. Unfortunately, we still have to solve the problem of noise, but I live in hope. I feel that we have not fully understood the problem. I am sure that it is not a matter of our wishing to do nothing about it. Some of the letters that I have received confirm that that is so. As I have said, I live in hope, and I am sure that the same can be said of many of my constituents, who have asked me to raise this issue in the House for many years. I am sure that the Government will listen.

We have time to make amends in a future environment Bill and also in a future criminal justice Bill. If we do not legislate, what realistic remedy would the Government suggest, if it is accepted that the present mechanism does not work? We have already lost far too many opportunities. I remind the Department of the Environment of a promise that was made in December 1989 when the announcement was made that the Government were to review noise laws. It said:

"Together with other Government Departments we shall take whatever action is necessary to strengthen the law in relation to noise nuisance generally."

I implore my hon. Friend the Minister not to waste the opportunity that is still open to him and the Department to do something to reduce the problem and to improve the quality of life of inner-city residents.

7.35 pm

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): It is a great pleasure to take up the remarks of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks). I am sure that her comments will be echoed. Indeed, I intend to speak about the very problem to which she referred. Whatever part of the country we represent, I am sure that the nuisance that she has outlined has been suffered by many of our constituents. The hon. Lady obviously lives in her constituency, as I live in mine, and we know at first hand the suffering of many of our constituents.

There are many obvious and important aspects of noise pollution, but I wish to direct my remarks to that of loud music. Blues parties take place in my constituency in south London, but I have more in mind the problem of loud music that is played in residential areas and not necessarily at a party. I am sure that such music is often played by those who enjoy it. It is questionable, however, whether it is enjoyable when it starts to be played early in the evening and continues for hour after hour, night after night. I am talking about extremely loud music. The problem has existed in my constituency for many years.

The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East outlined her involvement with various organisations that come within the ambit of the police or the local authority. Over the years, I have had the same involvement. I wonder whether the Minister, and previous Ministers, fully understand the suffering of ordinary families throughout the country.

In a residential area in my constituency, a man tried politely and peacefully to reduce the level at which extremely loud music was being played night after night. I understand that he said, "Could you please turn the music down?" or, "Could you play your music until 11 or 12 at night and then stop doing so?" My constituent was told in no certain terms to get lost. We all know the sort of language that is associated with such statements. He was told also that if he did not get lost there would be means by which he would soon be parked along with his complaint. He told me about this, and I took up the matter with the then junior Minister at the Department of the Environment, the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), who is now the Minister for Health. The hon. Lady was extremely courteous. She wrote to me saying that she could well understand the problem which faced my constituent in this instance, and which was shared by many others throughout the country. Sadly, what she wrote brought no help to my constituent.

When the noise recommenced, my constituent did what I think all of us in this place would consider to be the proper procedure. Sometimes, we parliamentarians feel that we have a better understanding of the law than many of those whom we represent, but my constituent did the right thing and went to the police. As the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East said, there are many who feel that police powers are inadequate, and I agree with her to some extent. There are grounds for saying that the police should be given more powers.

When my constituent told the police what was happening, they said that they would respond. After a while they went to the house where the music was playing so loudly. They knocked on the door and asked for the volume to be turned down, and it was. About half an hour later the volume of the music was increased, and again my constituent contacted the police. Again, the police attended, the same request was made and the same action was taken. The music was turned down, but half an hour later it was turned up again. My constituent went to the police again, who said "We understand what you are going through, but we do not have the manpower to keep sending one or two officers to the person whom you and we have identified as making the noise."

I have discussed this problem repeatedly with chief superintendents in my borough. They say, "We are fully aware of this. We are inundated with complaints in the spring and summer, but such are the pressures of work that we no longer are available or willing to become involved in this problem."

My constituent explained his problem to the environmental health officer of Wandsworth borough council. My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) spoke of her experience and said that local authorities, irrespective of whether they are Conservative or Labour-controlled, are genuinely concerned about noise problems in their areas. However, as she said, resources are a problem and authorities either do not have sufficient environmental health officers or they are not available at the time of night when they need to hear what the noise levels are. People are told by authorities, "We are sorry, but we do not employ officers after a certain time at night."

Having been to the police and the local authority, my constituent found that he was getting nowhere. He came to see me, and I took up his case with the then junior environment Minister. My constituent—I am sure that we can all understand this—had reached the stage of feeling utter despair. He followed what he assumed were the correct procedures, but he got nowhere.

My constituent was told by the environmental health officer in Wandsworth—and he meant this in good faith—to take a tape recording of the noise, which he did. He then took it to the council, only to be told by another officer, "You were given the wrong information because such evidence is not acceptable in court." The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East mentioned problems lasting weeks and weeks in her constituency. We can all speak of the noise problems that our constituents face week after week, but my constituent's problem lasted about three months.

My constituent then took out a civil action and won. He came to see me and told me of the suffering that his family had experienced. His wife, sadly, became so depressed because of this ongoing problem that her doctor sent her to St. George's hospital, Tooting, for treatment. As my constituent saw it, that was caused by the lack of action by the police and the local authority.

The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East made a splendid speech on this important issue. She asked when we will get action, which is what we are seeking. I am sure that Ministers will say, "It is perhaps a small problem in some areas, but do not let us go overboard." Hon. Members know that it is a major problem in many parts of the country.

Sadly, for many years, my constituency has been notorious for prostitution and kerb crawling. Over the years, I have made speeches in the House, asked questions, met my local police, held public meetings and brought delegations of constituents to the House to meet Home Office Ministers. I can go back to when the noble Lord Whitelaw was Home Secretary and when Sir Leon Brittan was a Home Office Minister. They replied, "We

[Mr. Tom Cox]

understand the problems that your constituents face; we shall do something," but they would never tell me when that would happen. It was about 15 years before the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Dame J. Fookes) introduced a private Member's Bill giving greater power to the police to prevent kerb crawling. That took years and years of action, not only by me but by other hon. Members, of whom I think the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) was one, because I know that Luton has suffered from this problem, as have many other towns. When will we get action?

The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East spoke of giving the police greater authority. I would not be hostile to that, but every hon. Member would want to know exactly what those powers would be. We need much greater control over noise. I do not think that any of our constituents can be in any doubt when music is being played loudly, and, by golly, they cannot be in any doubt when it is being played excessively loudly.

We all know about the Prime Minister's view of Wandsworth annd its wonderful poll tax.

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): Deception.

Mr. Cox: My hon. Friend says, "Deception," and, by golly, there has been deception. We in Wandsworth are facing massive cuts in all the essential services. Many of the voluntary services are being faced either with total or substantial cuts. What hope is there of getting more environmental officers or that they will be on duty when they should be?

This has been an interesting, good debate. As the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East said, people outside, who will read reports of this debate or will perhaps hear excerpts on the radio, will say "Thank goodness someone in Parliament has been talking about the problem", but they will then expect action. I mentioned the problems that other hon. Members and I faced in trying to curb prostitution in our areas. That may have been a difficult problem, but it was never as difficult as we were led to believe. However, our constituents are right to expect some urgent action by the Government on the problem of loud music. The hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) intervened to make that very point.

The question is, when will the Government listen to what hon. Members have said, irrespective of their party? As Harry Truman said, the buck stops here. The buck on this vital issue stops with the Minister. I hope that he will give hope not only to hon. Members but especially to the people we represent.

7.50 pm

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): I am delighted to follow the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox). He may recall that some 11 years ago he followed my maiden speech and made nice noises about it. His excellent contribution followed the speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks). The problems about which they spoke echo those that we face in my constituency of Luton, so I shall be able to be more brief than I should otherwise have been.

I should like to draw the attention of the House to two noise matters, the first of which concerns car noise and motor traffic. This country's major motorway goes through the middle of my constituency. The White Paper on roads states that that road is to be upgraded to four lanes within a short time. We welcome that and, as one who represents a car manufacturing town, I should welcome an improvement in Britain's road infrastructure.

I should like to make a point to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State because of the cosy relationship that he now enjoys with his colleagues in the Department of Transport. The owners of the houses that will be affected by the road widening in my constituency and nearby look to the Government for assistance to alleviate the terrible nuisance from which they now suffer and which will be increased when the new highway is built. In the past, compensation was given on the rates. Local authorities cannot now make rate reductions because there is a personal tax.

It is interesting that the Department of Transport is talking about additional compensation for those who will suffer increased nuisance and noise because of the new motorway. I hope that it will continue to put money and research into building new banks and fences. What has been done with some new motorways is creditable. I hope that the Department will take note of the enormous nuisance that the new road will cause to many constituents.

My next point, which has been brought well to the fore by my fellow urban Members, concerns noisy parties. The hon. Member for Tooting and my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East spoke about the frustration that they cause. There is a lack of adequate safeguards to deal with the terrible nuisance that they cause to old people and those who work night shifts and sleep while others play, as happens in our great manufacturing areas.

I should like to highlight one point which, although somewhat sensitive, must be paraded. A large number of people in Luton originated from the Caribbean. The young men and women have a habit of playing their music more loudly than normal and of playing music which, because of the thumping of the bass from drums or guitars, is much more of a noise nuisance than other music. The police are unable, and sometimes unwilling, to censure those causing that nuisance because of the delicate, and understandable, issue of race relations in the town. Race relations in the town are excellent.

The culture of some of the people who originated in the Caribbean islands is alien to many people who live in urban areas. What may be acceptable in a Caribbean town, with the long nights and the lapping seas, is not acceptable in the middle of Luton when people are trying to get to sleep because they have to get up the next morning and work in the local factories.

I offer a suggestion to the House and the police. Most of the people from those ethnic origins are members of various organisations and their ties are strong. I pay tribute to the leaders of those communities who try where they can to be good neighbours and to control the nuisances that some of their youngsters cause. Rather than throw more resources at the problem—which the hon. Member for Tooting half hinted at—we should try to strengthen community relationships and persuade the leaders of those communities that it is unneighbourly for young men and women to behave as they do.

Inevitably, some racial disharmony exists when 200 to 300 of those youths and girls converge not just on a semi-detached house—as described by my hon. Friend the

Member for Wolverhampton, North-East—but on the 10th storey of a tower block. There are several such blocks in my constituency and those gatherings cause even more nuisance to the hundreds of people who live in them. It is up to local communities to try to control their own people and to be a little more co-operative with the police.

This is a problem and a scourge. There is no doubt that, to some extent, we have almost been frightened to tackle it. After two long, hot summers, the problem has developed to such an extent that people are talking about having to leave districts where they have lived for years. Three-day parties are not unusual in my constituency, especially over bank holiday weekends. These people hold these parties without any regard for their near neighbours or their neighours for many miles around.

Hon. Members who respresent urban constituencies are pleading with the Government to deal with that problem, which will not go away. Much as I admire the idea of a pilot quiet neighbourhood scheme, I fear that it will be yet another fudge in some areas where the worst problems occur. The issue is extremely serious and it is distressing for my constituents to have their lives disrupted in that way. I hope that the optimism that may have been generated by the fact that we are discussing this subject will spill out to the Department of the Environment and particularly the Home Office and that some corrective punishment and corrective legislation is proposed so that nuisance goes away for ever.

7.58 pm

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): I welcome the debate and the choice of the environment as the subject for the last debate of this Session. Only in a place like this could we hear, as we did in the more sensible contribution of the hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle), about the singing cockerels in Luton; about the blues parties in Wolverhampton; and about mutated dogs in Newport. Perhaps later—I am afraid that I shall not be able to stay for the end of the debate—we will hear about hysterical iguanas from Ipswich. Had our proceedings not been televised, I would expect Miss Esther Rantzen to walk in and put us all on her show on Sunday.

I have a story about noisy pigeons. Shortly after I was elected, a local lady, Mrs. Murray, came to visit me at my surgery. She lived not in my constituency but in the county and therefore, according to parliamentary etiquette, I was not able to take up her case. She complained because her next-door neighbour had 100 pigeons in his pigeon loft. They would coo and make noises that prevented her and her husband from sleeping at night. I sent her to her own Member of Parliament, a Conservative Member whose name I shall not give as he is retiring at the next election. His solution was that Mr. and Mrs. Murray should get a licence, go to the local shops and purchase a gun and shoot the pigeons. I thought that that was rather a dramatic way of dealing with the problem. Although we all have amusing tales, these are major problems for those who have to put up with nuisance from noise.

The hon. Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel), whom I have known for many years—he was already a Member of Parliament when I went to school in Twickenham 20 or so years ago—referred to the Labour Government's record on aircraft noise. He said that it was the present Government's policy to prevent the expansion of Heathrow airport and that they had stopped the development of terminal 5. He will recall—as I do, because I was the prospective parliamentary candidate for neighbouring Richmond and my sister was the prospective candidate for Twickenham—the terminal was stopped because of the efforts of a residents' campaign involving all the political parties. The hon. Gentleman led the campaign in his constituency, but the other parties joined in the protest. That is why the Government turned down terminal 5.

The hon. Gentleman was wong to say that no major expansion of Heathrow has occurred under this Government. I have a note from the Library saying that the inspectors' report on terminal 4, published in December 1979, was accepted by John Nott, a Conservative Minister, on 17 December 1979. The hon. Gentleman's suggestion that it was this Government who stopped the expansion of Heathrow airport is not borne out by the facts.

Mr. Jessel: What I actually said will appear in *Hansard* tomorrow. I betted that the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) could not name anything that the Labour Government had done to restrict aircraft noise at Heathrow, and I named three of this Government's actions—in respect of terminal 5, the Heathrow-Gatwick helicopter link and the curtailment of night flights.

Mr. Vaz: *Hansard* will also show that the hon. Gentleman has his facts wrong. It was under a Conservative Government that terminal 4 was agreed to.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) was right to say that this debate is important. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks) was wrong to praise the Prime Minister's action. She said that, in 1987, the Prime Minister appeared on the scene like a green goddess and adopted the environment as the subject of a major policy shift for the 1990s. The green goddess has turned to green gunge and the Prime Minister and the Government have done little, if anything, to protect and preserve our local environment.

My constituency falls within the Leicester district council area. We are proud of Leicester city council's record and we claim to have a better record than any other city in the country.

Mrs. Hicks: I was not talking about the Prime Minister's achievements on green issues, the environment and inner cities. I was referring to her important achievements in housing, education and law and order and about what has been done to improve the quality of life of those who live in tower blocks, some of whom hold the blues parties to which I referred.

Mr. Vaz: I thank the hon. Lady for correcting me. She is right in thinking that there are no results that she could have praised in terms of the Government's policies on environmental issues.

As I said, we like to think of Leicester as the green capital of Europe. The city council, under its chief environmental health officer, Michael Cooke, and its director of planning, John Dean, has put together an environmental strategy, which was published in 1983, long before it was fashionable to be involved with environmental issues.

[Mr. Vaz]

The issues that I want to raise are concerned not with parties but with the development of industrial policy in our inner-city areas and our outer estates. My three examples all involve residential areas where the development of local industries has resulted in a great deal of noise. I should like planning departments and environmental health departments to act in closer concert in their work on this matter. I know that some local authorities have a policy whereby planning forms part of the environmental health brief. That is a constructive and proper way to deal with these matters. The environmental health departments of local councils ought to have a veto in planning matters as they affect the environment.

All the cases to which I shall refer involve the outer areas of my constituency. The first involves the activities of a firm called Neal Brothers, which has operated in the Charnwood area of my constituency for many years. Without planning consent, that firm constructed a vehicular access which not only caused a great deal of noise but affected the entertainment of almost every person who lived in the Prestwold road area. A local constituency campaign was launched by Mrs. Naylor, of 95 Prestwold road, who complained about the activities of the firm. Because of the way in which planning legislation operates at present, the planning and environmental health departments could not take effective action, even though they seemed to respond quickly to the complaints of local residents and the three local councillors. I hope that the planning Bill that is to be published next week will enable local authorities to take much more effective action on the breach of planning controls.

My second example concerns the Coleman road area of my constituency. Mr. and Mrs. Rossington, of Crown Hills avenue, launched a campaign against a local development by a small manufacturing firm in the Temple road complex. I turned up at the complex at midnight with officers from the planning department to hear for myself the effects of that development. Unfortunately, because we had publicised our visit, the firm closed down early. Those involved must have known that we should be bringing with us representatives of the local press and various items of equipment to monitor the firm's activities. Since then the activities have been resumed and the noise nuisance and the nuisance from the lights surrounding the car park have been described by local residents as intolerable.

My third example of inner-city industrial chaos comes from the Oak street area of my constituency, where Mr. and Mrs. B. Jenney—local people—launched a campaign to prevent a local construction firm, Paul John Construction, from seeking to vary the conditions of planning control and work for 24 hours. In her letter to the local authority Mrs. Jenney wrote:

"our home is only 10 feet from the property for the whole length of our house, so we get vibration and noise in every room, with no quiet area. The houses are very old and the vibration is very bad when heavy equipment is being brought in and out of the property in question. This is causing a lot of concern re the foundations of our home."

The Jenneys went on to explain that they could not possibly live in the house because of the noise generated by the firm.

Similar problems afflict the semi-residential, semi-industrial, West Humberstone area of my constituency. People really are fed up with the fact that the local planning department does not have the necessary powers to curtail the activities of developers.

We know that a planning Bill is coming and we know that the Government have said broadly tonight that they will introduce measures to abate noise nuisance at a local level. However, words are cheap. The Opposition expect action to be taken now, not just because of the examples that we have raised, but because of the example referred to by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, North-East of the 81-year-old gentleman in her constituency who has a noise problem. People of that age may not live long enough to see the results if we do not act soon. I hope that urgent action will be taken to enable people to live peacefully in their homes.

8.10 pm

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): I hope that the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) will forgive me if I defer for a few minutes my reply to some of his points. I want first to mention the fact that the secretary of the working party which produced the Batho report entitled "Report of the Noise Review Working Party 1990" was a constituent of mine, Charlie Bayne, who died in July. Some years ago he suffered a serious accident which left him paralysed. My hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside has already paid tribute to Mr. Bayne and my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House did so last Thursday. In his foreword to the report, Mr. Batho states:

"The Working Party wishes to place on record their appreciation or the work done by our Secretary Charlie Bayne who died a few days after our final meeting. He earned the respect of us all for his great tenacity and application."

Although Mr. Batho and others made major contributions to that report, the report can be seen partly as an achievement of Charlie Bayne.

The Batho report is excellent. It is the first major report on noise since the Control of Pollution Act 1974. It contains a large number of proposals, some of which are being implemented already, as my hon. Friend the Minister said earlier. Many of the proposals deserve the concentrated attention of the Government and of Parliament.

Noise affects many of our constituents. At the outset, the report states:

"Noise has the capacity to irritate, annoy, interrupt sleep, increase stress, disrupt concentration and even to damage one's health."

That last point about health was borne out in a study carried out in the mid-1970s by a consultant psychiatrist at the West Middlesex hospital close to my constituency who found a correlation between aircraft noise and mental illness.

Complaints about noise have doubled in the past 10 years and it is a serious matter. The word "noise" is derived from the Latin word "nausea" which is generally used to refer to a loud or disturbing sound. The policy consortium on airports stated:

"In reality, noise has the capability to do much more than irritate or annoy. It can seriously disturb concentration, interrupt sleep and cause stress."

Noise is a danger to health. Of course there are pleasurable noises like the cooing of pigeons to which the hon. Member for Leicester, East referred a few moments ago.

Pleasurable noises also include classical music and Army bands, which make one of the finest noises which is a great tradition and one of the glories of the British nation.

Many of the noises that disturb people have already been referred to by hon. Members and they are listed in the documents before us. They include the noise of aircraft, helicopters, trains, lorries, industry, including the construction industry, sport, entertainment, and recreation, noisy parties, amplified music, dogs, burglar alarms and car alarms.

As living standards rise, people tend to worry less about where the next meal is coming from and—*[Interruption.]* There is a little noise going on at the Table. *[Interruption.]* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is rather a lot of noise going on at the Table. As we are debating noise, I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) will desist from making so much noise in the vicinity of the Table, thus diverting your attention, and the attention of the Clerk and the Whip from what I am saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): That is quite right.

Mr. Jessel: I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The improvement in living standards over the past 10 years taken as a whole, although the trend has not been completely even, has meant that as people worry less about where the next meal is coming from, they are more concerned about the quality of their surroundings, including the amount of noise. That is to be expected and the problem must be dealt with.

The greatest source of noise which annoys our constituents is neighbourhood noise. That fact emerged from the working party report. Paragraph 1 of chapter 3 in the report refers to the Building Research Establishment's inquiry which, in a sample of 14,000 responses, suggests that 14 per cent. of the adult population were bothered by neighbourhood noise, compared with 11 per cent. who are bothered by road traffic noise and 7 per cent. by aircraft noise. That would be a stratified random sample covering the whole country. That fact that aircraft noise is third on that list in no way implies that it is not very serious in the communities that are affected by it. A much higher proportion than 7 per cent. of the people would be bothered by aircraft noise in areas where such noise is concentrated.

In England and Wales, neighbourhood noise is the most annoying source of the nuisance. The 14 per cent. of people bothered by such noise is broken down further in the report which shows that amplified music is responsible for 34 per cent. of complaints and dogs for 33 per cent. Those two categories are far and away ahead of any other form of neighbourhood noise. After those two come domestic activities—whatever that may mean—at 9 per cent., voices at 6 per cent., DIY activities at 5 per cent., car repairs at 3 per cent. and other sources of neighbourhood noise, constituting 10 per cent. taken together.

The difference between the 34 per cent. for amplified music and the 33 per cent. for dogs is not statistically significant. However, we have discussed amplified music this evening much more than we have discussed dogs. I do not know why that has happened, because there is no significant statistical difference between the figure for amplified music and that for dogs in the sample of 14,000. Indeed, the two can be taken as level pegging with regard to the number of complaints that they have generated.

Undoubtedly, the sound of dogs barking is very annoying to some people. It is a disjointed, tiresome noise —sometimes high-pitched. It must be regarded as a serious form of pollution. It would not be much helped by dog registration.

The Minister of State suggested the introduction of a pilot scheme for the abatement of neighbourhood noise in which he would seek the co-operation of the whole local community. I hope that, when that is suggested to the first neighbourhood to take it on, it will be invited to place not only amplified music but the sound of dogs barking high on its list of priorities for co-operation in the local communities because of the high rating given to both nuisances in the sample in the report.

I happen to enjoy Sunday morning gardening. I potter around as quietly as I can in my garden, pruning or whatever. My next door neighbour has six dogs, one of which is a Jack Russell, which has sharp ears. However quietly I carry out my pruning, it triggers a spate of barking by that Jack Russell, which I happen to find annoying. Conversely, I have to burn my wood because the local rubbish collection service will not collect garden prunings and clippings. One cannot use wood and prunings for compost, and I cannot get rid of it. If I burn the wood I can be prosecuted for pollution, although it is a perfectly healthy country smell which no one minds very much, yet if my neighbour disturbs me with dogs barking, there is nothing at the moment that can be done about it. That seems to be nonsense, and I hope that the Government will direct their attention to it.

I share the view of hon. Members on both sides of the House that amplified music is an appalling din. Whether it comes from late-night parties, acid house parties, blue parties or just young people who like their amplifiers tuned up as loudly as possible, it is grossly inconsiderate behaviour to blare out hyped-up music often late at night with a total lack of regard for the effect upon neighbours. I hope that that matter will feature largely in any action that the Government decide to take. I hope that the suggestion by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) that the Government look at Scottish law on this matter, including the confiscation of equipment, will be acted upon.

Our constituents want something to be done. They know that the report has been published. They do not expect an immediate decision on it next week, but they want something done within the next six to 12 months. I hope that the Government will introduce legislation and/or take some action to see what can be done about that terrible form of nuisance which afflicts large numbers of people.

Piped music, whether in restaurants or shops, is very annoying and degrading. In restaurants, it is unflattering to clients because it presupposes that they are incapable of making conversation with each other during the meal and that they have to have piped music to occupy their ears. It is an evil thing and I hope that something can be done to suppress it. Likewise, with transistor radios and car radios. Last week I was stuck in a traffic jam and there was a yuppy with an open car stuck next to me. He had his car radio turned on very loudly. I leaned out of my window

[Mr. Jessel]

across to him, and said, "Would you please turn down that noise?" and he automatically did. Then he realised that he did not have to do it, and he turned it up again.

The Government should consider within their purview the suppression of noises from loud car radios as well as domestic radios, transistors, and other audio equipment in the street or in areas in which people live.

I now refer to transport noise. No one who has not lived under the flight path close to one of our major airports should take a cavalier attitude to the many thousands of people who do. This matter affects the constituents of hon. Members on both sides of the House. My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley), my right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe), my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Feltham and Heston (Mr. Ground), my hon. Friends the Members for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith), for Esher (Mr. Taylor), for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire), for Windsor and Maidenhead (Sir A. Glyn), for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) and others around Heathrow, not to mention those around Gatwick, have been active in the matter, as has the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox).

Aircraft noise is a major social evil in communities that are affected by it. It is not just a cause for cranks and nuts. It affects ordinary, sensible people. It spoils their enjoyment of their homes and gardens and interferes with the work of offices, schools, hospitals and churches. As I have said, it makes some people ill. We have to do more about it.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) implied that the Government had no credibility in dealing with the problem of aircraft noise. She was kind enough to allow me to intervene, and I pointed out that the Conservative Government had stopped the fifth terminal, stopped the Heathrow-Gatwick helicopter link when the M25 motorway was completed, and sharply curtailed the number of night flights at Heathrow. That was done by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) some years ago. His decision was endorsed and repeated by successive Secretaries of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson), the present Secretary of State.

The hon. Member for Leicester, East pointed out—it was perfectly true—that the incoming Conservative Government in 1979 approved the construction of the fourth terminal at Heathrow. But that was already well included in the governmental pipeline by the time the change of power in June 1979 took place. On 22 February 1978 Lord Balfour of Inchyre asked Her Majesty's Government

"when it is expected that the public inquiry into the proposed construction of a fourth terminal building at Heathrow Airport will commence".

Lord Oram, a Minister in the then Labour Government in February 1978 replied:

"the public inquiry is expected to begin at the end of May,"—

back in 1978—

"but it is not possible to say how long it will last. Assuming approval of the fourth terminal project, it would be for the British Airports Authority to decide when building should commence."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 22 February 1978; Vol. 389, c. 157.]

Following that, on 19 July 1978 the Earl of Cork asked Her Majesty's Government

"by what date, if a fourth terminal should be constructed at Heathrow, all four terminals at that airport may be expected to be fully . . . operational."

Lord Winterbottom, on behalf of the Labour Government replied:

"Subject to the outcome of the public inquiry, the British Airports Authority expect that the fourth terminal might be opened in 1983".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 19 July 1978; Vol. 395, c. 315.]

In other words, there was a clear intention in the governmental pipeline for that approval and for the opening of the fourth terminal to take place as far back as 1978. I was merely making the point that I had challenged the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North to name one thing that the Labour Government had done to contain the problem of aircraft noise at Heathrow. So far she has not done so; perhaps she will be able to say something about it when she winds up the debate for the Opposition.

We in the House must maintain a constant lobby to protect our constituents from aircraft noise. Only through Parliament and Government can people be protected. It is not the lobbies, the residents' associations or the petitioners who make the decisions on such matters; it is the Government who do so, and who respond to pressure and representations from hon. Members.

Without the Government, and the steps that they have already taken—and may intend to take in the future—to protect people from aircraft noise, the citizen cannot receive such protection. Under the Civil Aviation Act 1949, which was consolidated in the Civil Aviation Act 1982, the citizen cannot sue for nuisance in respect of aircraft noise. That is made clear in chapter 4 of the report by the noise review working party. Paragraph 4.25 states:

"Any consideration of the problems caused by aircraft noise has to begin with a look at the present statutory position. Unlike other forms of traffic noise, that which is caused by an aircraft is, so long as the Rules of the Air and Air Traffic Control Regulations and normal aviation practice have been observed, protected from action in respect of trespass or nuisance by ss. 76 and 77 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982".

The citizen living on the flight path cannot do other than rely on the democratic processes of Parliament and Government.

Let me point out to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, who is to reply to the debate, that that places on Governments a special duty to listen to hon. Members whose constituencies are close to airports. They have done so in the past, and I hope that they will make a point of continuing to do so.

I well remember the time when six hon. Members, including me, called on my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury in his room. That was in 1984, when he was Secretary of State for Transport. He was largely responsible for the planning decision on the fifth terminal, because the Secretary of State for the Environment—Lord Jenkin of Roding—was precluded from making the decision: he had an interest in it, because he happened to live near Stansted. The key part of the decision, therefore, emanated from the Secretary of State for Transport.

When we went to see my right hon. Friend, we urged him strongly not to grant planning permission for the fifth terminal. He decided to refuse planning permission, contrary to the advice of his planning inspector at the

public inquiry. Accordingly, he refused permission on planning grounds—because he gave weight to the planning aspects of the facts as they were put before him, which related to the peace and quiet and the health of people living around Heathrow airport.

I would very much like a complete ban on all night flights. As I have said, they have been dramatically curtailed by the Government; but I believe that, unless there is an emergency—I make an exception for those—there should be no night flights at all from airports in populated areas between 11 pm and 7 am. I consider that the present night hours of 11.30 pm to 6.30 am for a limited number of flights are too short.

I am glad that the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has decided to attend the debate, because he once lived in Twickenham, and is therefore familiar with the problems of aircraft noise. Let me say to him—if I can have his attention for a moment—that all concerned should be warmly congratulated on the expansion of Manchester airport, which comes within the Duchy of Lancaster. The airport has doubled its traffic in the past six or seven years. That has proved enormously useful to people living within reach of it. It also constitutes a boost for employment in the north-west, and the increasing number of scheduled flights helps to some extent—albeit rather a limited extent—to offload traffic from the several London airports.

Helicopters, however, make a most unpleasant whirring, high-pitched noise which is completely uncivilised. I hope that planning permission is refused for a heliport in the City of London—by Cannon Street station, on a platform over the Thames. I refer my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to my Adjournment debate on the subject on 24 May. It is entirely unreasonable to disturb thousands upon thousands of people on the ground just so that a few people can make money, and a few others can save half an hour each. We would be disturbed in the Palace of Westminster, and our Standing and Select Committees, whose rooms overlook the river—which would comprise part of the track of the flight path—would all be disrupted by the noise of helicopters flying between the City and Heathrow. Our work in the Library would also be disturbed.

There is no comparable city-centre helicopter airport anywhere in Europe. The only remotely comparable one is at Issy, a suburb of Paris which is as far from the centre of Paris as Battersea heliport is from the centre of London.

Those who want to travel in helicopters to save themselves half an hour are not always those whose time is so valuable that it is essential to save half an hour: in fact, I do not believe that anyone's time is as valuable as that. Most of those people are business men. I happen to know quite a lot of business men—a number of tycoons and millionaires. They are not people who need to dash about like scalded rabbits saving every second; most are rather quiet and ponderous people who consider matters quite carefully. Those who agitate for a heliport are not the important, top-flight business men whose time is enormously valuable, but the mark 2 business men who want to brag to their wives, or possibly to their children, that they have been up in a helicopter. There is very little more to it than that. I hope that the proposal for a heliport near the City will be shot down, and shot down hard.

So far, we have not had much discussion about motor cycle noise. There was a reference to silencers for cars; I hope that the Government will consider improving silencers for motor cycles, which make a most annoying noise, disturbing large numbers of people.

Burglar alarms on houses go on and on, causing annoyance out of all proportion to their use. It ought to be compulsory to fit them with time switches so that they go off after 15 or 20 minutes: that is quite sufficient time for neighbours, the police or even dogs to be alerted.

I believe that noise is a terrible nuisance for large numbers of people. I welcome this debate, the report of the working party and the extensive references to noise in the environment White Paper published by the Secretary of State a few weeks ago. I hope that all this heralds action by the Government in the near future, and I hope to hear more about it later tonight.

8.39 pm

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): I apologise to my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside in his absence that I was not here for his opening remarks. I was detained in my office.

I welcome the Government's proposals. They go some way at least to meeting people's legitimate concerns, particularly on noise. I hope that we shall all be able to build on them. The idea of a pilot quiet neighbourhood scheme is excellent, although I have reservations about how it is to be enforced, especially as those who continually cause a nuisance are normally rather unpleasant and selfish people.

We heard from the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) how a constituent of his was almost driven mad and to despair by a noisy neighbour. We all have examples of such people in our constituencies. I have several examples from my constituency.

Last summer—that long, hot summer—many people in Pearl road were almost driven mad by the activities of one family. It is extraordinary that just one family can upset the residents of an entire street. Pearl road is normally a quiet, residential street. A family came in from outside to a house which, I believe, was taken by a neighbouring local authority. I suspect that it was a problem family to begin with and that the neighbouring authority thought that it had found a good way of getting rid of the problem. We had endless trouble all through last summer because of the selfish activities of that family. I am happy to say that they have gone now, and good riddance.

Unfortunately, my constituents in that road are now suffering again through the activities of a firm that works on motor cycles. It operates late into the night, sometimes until 1 am or 2 am. Motor cycles are delivered at night and people work on them, start them and rev them in the small hours of the morning with complete disregard for the fact that they are working right in the middle of a residential area. They simply do not seem to care about the other people who live there, who have their own jobs to go to and need a decent night's sleep.

Another incident took place in Morgan avenue in my constituency where, again, the activities of just one family caused a nuisance. There were young children, but they are now grown up and are young men. One of them has a motor car, which he has converted into virtually a mobile ghetto blaster. He has installed speakers all round his car. He is in the habit of arriving at his house, sometimes at 3 o'clock in the morning with music belting out all over the

[Mr. Hugo Summerson]

street. People have come to see me about it, but there is little that I can do at present. We simply do not have the powers to deal with such problems.

I am sorry to reel off a list of complaints, but I do it deliberately to bring home to us all how much people in our constituencies are suffering. Another road in my constituency, Leucha road, is inhabited almost entirely by elderly people. In one or two cases a person had died or moved out and the council has moved in young people who have young people's habits. Young and old people's habits often do not work well together. Those young people get up to what young people get up to. No one complains about that except in the context of an elderly neighbourhood. The elderly people object strongly to being woken up perhaps at midnight by noise, racket and laughing. A simple event such as a car turning up, the doors banging and people shouting at midnight is objectionable to people who probably have been in bed for a couple of hours already.

Still on the subject of noise, members of Central parade residents association in Hoe street have been much disturbed by building work in the bank underneath. Much of the work seems to have been carried out without proper consultation of the residents and consideration of their interests.

Burglar alarms and car alarms have already been mentioned. I introduced a ten-minute Bill on such alarms. I had a good response from the British Security Industry Association, which does not like to see the industry brought into disrepute by burglar alarms ringing all weekend, disturbing an entire neighbourhood. Again, I am delighted that the Government have made proposals on the problem.

I should like to reinforce what has been said about limiting—possibly physically—the amount of noise that a radio, television or music centre can make. We all know instances of thoroughly selfish people who simply do not care about the effect that playing their music has on other people at perhaps 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the morning with the volume turned up as loud as possible.

I should not object in the slightest if the music were, say a wonderful Bruckner symphony. I should object strongly to rap music being played at 110 decibels. But that is not the point. As has already been said, the point is that one man's like is another man's dislike. We must all learn to live together and we tend to live cheek by jowl. We should all have regard to the effect that our activities may have on our neighbours.

Flat conversions have been mentioned. I am a chartered surveyor and before I was elected I practised as a surveyor. Various authorities used to make it a condition of planning permission to convert a house into flats that suitable sound insulation be placed between the floors. But often that sound insulation consisted merely of a layer of rock wool, or something similar, which was wholly inadequate. Part of the problem is that the structure of many such houses was not originally designed with the possibility in mind that the house might be converted into separate living units. That is a great problem. It might be solved by making the building regulations far more stringent and enforcing planning conditions on conversions.

From the town I want to turn briefly to the countryside. I have a country background, although I represent an urban constituency. I wish to draw the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister to horrible things now opening up in the countryside called byways open to all traffic, or BOATs for short. The trouble with BOATs is that anyone using any form of wheeled motorised transport can use them. Once quiet country paths are now used by people on motor bikes or those four-wheel drive machines. As long as at some time the path was used by wheeled traffic—it may have been used by ox carts in medieval times or by Boadicea and her chariot—it can be used by wheeled traffic today. Many country people strongly resent the intrusion into the countryside of those motor bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles. The matter needs to be examined. The vehicles shatter the peace and quiet of the countryside and upset the people who live there. People feel that an unpleasant manifestation of urban habits has come into their midst.

Police powers have been mentioned. That is the way forward. It is absolutely essential that police be given the powers to deal with noise, particularly at night when people are disturbed by noisy parties or whatever. Most people are reasonable and if a party goes on until 11 pm or midnight they will not object, but say, "Fair enough." The problem is when that happens night after night and weekend after weekend. Sometimes a party goes on throughout an entire weekend. The police need to have the power to go to the place where the noise is coming from and to say, "Stop it now or arrests will be made." Noise nuisance should be made a criminal offence.

Guy Fawkes night will shortly be upon us. Already we have heard the first whizzes and bangs, and already I have had the first letters of complaint from my constituents. My plea is that people be considerate in their use of fireworks and think of others in the area, especially old people, cats and dogs that are terrified by the noises. I ask people to enjoy their Guy Fawkes night, but to think of the effects of fireworks on people and animals.

8.50 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): The hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) referred to the suffering that noise nuisance causes ordinary people. He was right to put it so strongly. Suffering is indeed caused. For ordinary families with anti-social neighbours noise nuisance is frequently not just a matter of disturbance, upset and inconvenience. It goes well beyond that. In all too many cases it is a matter of real suffering.

There are two main categories of neighbourhood noise nuisance. The first is late-night parties, which can destroy the night's rest for an entire street. A wild, unrestrained party with amplified music with a heavy beat blasting out into the night constitutes social hooliganism on a massive scale. It is essential that the law provides an effective and speedy means of dealing with such parties. It is not just a matter of dealing with them in the courts several months later. It is a matter of dealing with them speedily and effectively then and there, putting an end to the nuisance that very night.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks) identified with precision the weakness in the law. If the noise is great, if one can get hold of an environmental health officer and bring him to the scene of the party and if that officer is prepared to serve an

abatement notice, fine. It may be that the nuisance will stop and the party will come to an end. The weakness in the law lies in what happens when the abatement notice is not complied with and the party continues. Although a summons may be issued and two months later a fine—I am afraid all too often a derisory fine—may be levied in the magistrates court, the residents' entitlement to peace, sleep and quiet enjoyment of their properties is lost for that night. That weakness in the law could and should be remedied at an early stage.

The second type of neighbourhood noise is on a rather lower scale and is inflicted by anti-social neighbours on individual families. It is not nearly so obvious as the late-night party variety. The banging of doors, shouting, fighting, dogs being allowed to bark late into the night without any attempt to restrain them, the playing of loud music and banging on walls—general loutish and anti-social behaviour—does not affect the whole street, but makes life a misery for the individual families who are affected. That nuisance is much more difficult to deal with precisely because it affects only one or perhaps two familes, whereas late-night parties affect and affront the whole street.

The nuisance from late-night parties is obvious, and usually there are plenty of witnesses. It is a different matter with lower-level noise nuisance, but such noise nuisance is just as intensely stressful to those directly affected. How is it best dealt with? The key is a responsive and sympathetic attitude to complainants by local authorities—housing departments and environmental health departments alike—the police and the courts.

Earlier this year in Ipswich the chairmen of two local residents' associations took an initiative for which they deserve great credit. Mrs. Patricia Young-Al Salih of the Triangle Residents Association and Lewis Brown of the Whitton Residents Association called a meeting to which they invited representatives of the police, the housing department and the environmental health department, the leader of the council and the Member of Parliament. It achieved two objects. It was useful in bringing home to the local authority and the police both the strength of feeling that action should be taken to deal with late-night parties and lower-level neighbourhood noise nuisance, and also in stressing how important it was to receive complaints sympathetically.

One must realise that it is harder for an individual family to make a complaint against a neighbour than it is if there is a big group of complainants. It is much more invidious. People naturally do not like to make a complaint against their neighbours, as they fear that it could make matters worse. They may be afraid of intimidation and verbal and even physical violence.

If people complain and their complaint is reasonable and sensible, it is essential that local authorities and the police respond sympathetically. Once it gets around that local authorities and the police are prepared to respond sympathetically and to take a firm line against anti-social neighbours, there is much less likelihood of such anti-social behaviour. The main cause of such behaviour is the fact that it is often allowed to go unpunished and unrestrained. If local authorities, the police and local residents' associations make it clear through publicity on local radio, television and the newspapers that they are prepared to take a firm line and to press matters to a conclusion in the courts, that in itself is a substantial and effective deterrent to anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance.

It is not just a matter of a more sympathetic approach by local authorities or of filling the gaps in legislation where they exist, important though that is. What is also essential is the more effective and efficient use by local authorities and housing associations of the existing powers available to them. There should be a much greater readiness to use injunctions as a means of restraining neighbourhood noise. Judges are often reluctant to grant possession orders and it often takes a long time to obtain them. The great merit of an injunction is that one can apply for and obtain it speedily. One can go to the courts on the day after the anti-social behaviour in question and obtain an injunction simply by establishing a reasonable prima facie case.

Because injunctions do not themselves carry the terrible punishment contained in a possession order, judges are, by and large, much more willing to grant them. Should an injunction that has been granted by a judge be breached, it becomes not just a matter between neighbours or a local authority or housing association and tenant; it is a contempt of court and the court has an array of powers to deal with such a breach.

Mr. Summerson: I am not a lawyer, but I am extremely interested in what my hon. Friend said about injunctions. Can my hon. Friend tell me what sort of evidence a court would require before an injunction was granted? Once it has been granted, how long can an injunction run?

Mr. Irvine: On the assumption that there is a clause in the tenancy agreement between the anti-social tenant and the local authority or housing association that forbids excessive noise, anti-social behaviour and disruption of one kind or another, the court has the power to grant an injunction if prima facie that clause has been breached. Even when there is no contractual relationship—for example, if a family's enjoyment of its property is adversely affected by a neighbour's noise—there is a remedy at common law in nuisance. An individual can get an injunction in support of the common law remedy of nuisance.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): But at what cost?

Mr. Irvine: My hon. Friend asks, "At what cost?" That is a fair point. By and large, when problems occur on housing association estates and council estates, it is better for the association or the council to take action to keep the tenant who is indulging in anti-social behaviour to the strict conditions of his or her lease. The problem is that some councils and housing associations are unwilling to act. There should be a much greater readiness to grant legal aid, if necessary on an emergency basis, to a tenant who is unable to finance the necessary action to restrain a neighbour.

My hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) touched on another matter of which local authorities and housing associations should take much more account. A great deal of nuisance, upset and distress could be prevented by the sensitive and sensible allocation of tenancies. It is asking for trouble to put young people into a block of flats where the tenants are, in the main, elderly or infirm. That is asking for trouble, but all too often it is done. My remarks have mainly addressed the

[Mr. Irvine]

problem of neighbourhood noise, which affects a substantial number of people and causes much distress and suffering.

I shall now take up some of the points made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley), who represents a constituency that stands to be adversely affected by the regular movement at night of high-speed freight trains coming through from the channel tunnel. I have a similar constituency problem. Just down river from Ipswich is the great port of Felixstowe, which 25 years ago was a very small port and mainly a seaside town. It was connected to Ipswich and the main railway line by a single-track, old-fashioned railway, originally built to take seaside holidaymakers down to the beaches.

During the past 25 years, Felixstowe has expanded as a port to a phenomenal extent and is now the largest container port in the United Kingdom, with a 24-hour operation. During the night, massive freight trains, usually drawn by two diesel engines and often a mile or a mile and a half in length, make their way along that line which is, for the greater part, still only single track. The vibration from these trains has caused damage to property and the noise has caused considerable upset and disturbed the night's sleep of numerous residents in Ipswich who live close to the line.

To British Rail's credit, under pressure it agreed to make improvements. It imposed specially low speed limits because it was found that, when a 20 mph speed limit was effectively enforced, it reduced not only the noise but the vibration.

Earlier this year, along an important segment of the line where people were being badly affected by noise, British Rail re-laid the ballast, making it much deeper. In particular, British Rail laid continuous welded track along a key section of the line, resulting in a considerable improvement. But there is still, for all that, considerable noise, which is why I listened sympathetically to the representations made earlier by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling and why I ask the Minister to take careful note of his arguments.

9.11 pm

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): I shall not detain the House for long. Almost every speaker I have listened to in this most interesting debate has touched on the same subject. The core of the problem is that there is no law against unpleasant neighbours—it matters not whether they be in rural villages, urban areas, or the inner cities, or whether they are ethnic neighbours. I listened with great interest and some dismay to my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) who sought to make an ethnic point rather than commenting on the real problem, which is that of neighbourhood noise in general.

The police with whom we all deal day by day share with us two or three recurring and intractable problems. The most intractable is that caused by unpleasant and unneighbourly neighbours. I doubt whether there is an hon. Member who does not receive at least half a dozen —many hon. Members receive far more—complaints a year from neighbours about neighbours.

I listened with great care to my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) who commented on the inadvisability of putting young people in flats predominantly designated for the elderly. As a wry aside I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson), "Yes, because the children would not get any sleep." That was said only half cynically because a pleasant young couple with a young baby in my constituency are having their lives made extremely difficult by an elderly neighbour who does not like them or their baby and who takes delight in turning up the television far too loudly. The House must get to grips with this difficult problem because there are not yet enough powers on the statute book to handle it.

Not many weeks ago the Department published a wonderful book—£24·50, and cheap at the price—entitled "The Common Inheritance". I do not mean to be mocking when I call it a wonderful book. It contains an environmental strategy of which the House and the country should be proud, but, as with most strategies, there are weaknesses in it.

One of the saddest paragraphs in this otherwise mainly magnificent volume is paragraph 16.38. I apologise for having been kept by constituency business from part of this debate, and if the paragraph has been quoted before I can only say that perhaps repetition will do no harm. The paragraph reads:

> "The Government is not persuaded that it would be right to make noise nuisance an immediate criminal offence".

I understand that thinking; it is a draconian step to bring the criminal law into this sort of arena. But unfortunately the paragraph continues:

> "or to give the police further powers to control noise. Noise nuisance is often complex and subjective".

The paragraph continues:

> "While noise can be very annoying, criminalisation is a very heavy stick to take to it."

So it would appear that we are not going to do a great deal about the problem. Paragraph 16.41 states:

> "Local authorities have powers to serve noise abatement notices and prosecute if necessary. If this does not resolve the problem they can take further court proceedings. The current maximum penalty for non-compliance with an abatement notice is £2,000."

When can the Minister last recall a penalty of even 2,000p being impoced for such an offence? The average environmental health officer is far too busy generally—I would not say too busy tracing stray unlicensed dogs—to get to grips with such problems. In Margate in my constituency, he does not have the time or the staff to investigate vastly over-occupied houses. With the best will in the world he certainly does not have the time, energy or people to monitor the sort of day-to-day complaint that is received by every hon. Member.

If the environmental health officer had the resources, how would he get his evidence? He does his best. When I write on behalf of a constituent, he sends that constituent or me a form for the constituent to complete. He asks the person to keep a note of the date and time of every occurrence of nuisance so that a pattern can be built up and, in time, the council can send somebody round to see the neighbour. Usually within five minutes of a council officer leaving, one neighbour is banging on the other neighbour's door threatening to thump him for complaining to the council.

I said that this was an intractable problem and I do not pretend to have any answers—never mind all the answers. This is not a partisan issue because every constituency suffers from it and the House has to address it. Unpleasant

neighbours make other people's lives a misery. We are not talking just about the young or about members of the ethnic community playing ghetto blasters.

My daughter is 18 and occasionally plays music over the room in which I work. She sometimes plays it rather more loudly than I would like. It will not surprise anyone to know that I have the same altercations with her that most parents have with their children. If such circumstances arise in my domestic environment and, I suspect, in the domestic environments of most hon. Members, it is not entirely surprising that it happens in every street and in every town and village.

There comes a time when nuisance becomes pervasive, excessive and sometimes deliberate. Sometimes the constant revving of motor bikes late at night is done deliberately to annoy a neighbour. At times the constant loud playing of the television or record player is deliberate in order to make other people's lives a misery. At that point, the environmental health officer or the police or both working together should have the powers they need to go in and do something about it.

In my time in the House I have had many complaints but I cannot think of one that has been satisfactorily resolved other than by moving one person, usually the innocent party, out of his home. Invariably, the new neighbour is complaining in less than six months that he is suffering from the same nuisance.

I urge the Minister to take another long, hard look at the problem, and especially at the one weak paragraph in this otherwise proud document "The Common Inheritance" to see whether there is any way of giving the police and the environmental health officers greater power.

I did not come to the Chamber to talk about neighbourhood nuisance at all. I wanted to raise another issue affecting a relatively small number of people nationwide. However, to those people the issue has great importance. It may surprise the House to know that the issue is agricultural nuisance.

I invite the House to picture a scene early on a Sunday midsummer's morning in a Kentish village. Dawn is breaking, so it is perhaps only half-past three. The first bird song is beginning to come across an otherwise still audio horizon. The village is asleep and nothing moves. Suddenly, in the midst of this peace, comes the crash of a gun, and then another and another. There is one every three minutes and only when the church bells start to drown out the noise and the ambient noise takes over can people ignore the guns. These guns are the audible bird scarers used by some fruit farmers.

I live in a rural community and have experienced this, as have a significant number of people living in similar agricultural communities. As with so many other agricultural practices, it is unfortunately the inconsiderate few who cause the problems for the many. Those living in rural areas—particularly those who live, as I do, surrounded by fruit—and who have the benefit of them, understand that birds attack soft fruit, top fruit and young vegetables such as cabbages and peas when they have just been planted. A flock of pigeons, for example, can have a devastating effect on a newly planted field of young vegetables. I have seen farmers in tears as a result of such devastation. Therefore, I do not question the need to use, on occasion, some mechanism or device to scare away birds.

A considerable amount of research has gone into this. As a result of the growth in the problem, an organisation with the unlikely name of BANG—Birdscarers Anti-Nuisance Group—was formed. It quickly established a sizable nationwide membership consisting of people who discovered that they had a common cause for complaint. That was five or six years ago, and, sadly, these people still have cause for complaint because, with the best will in the world, not a lot has been done.

We have useful meetings with extremely courteous members of the Minister's staff. The civil servants whom the members of BANG have met have been considerate, sympathetic and attentive. We have been waiting for a byelaw or code, which has had the longest gestation period of any document for which I have ever waited. We have seen drafts of this code and we have been invited to comment on it. I hope and believe that members of this organisation have commented intelligently, responsibly and fairly. They have taken no direct action, despite considerable provocation. The organisation has discouraged people from doing what they are most minded to do, which is to go out and take a sledgehammer to the devices.

While we should like to find an entirely separate solution to the problem of bird strikes on fruit and vegetables, and to obviate the need for the use of audible bird scarers, I for one—I do not speak for everybody, because some would like an outright and immediate ban—accept that there are occasions when brief use of audible bird scarers may be justified. However, some farmers overlook what has become known as the dinner gong effect. I have watched pigeons sitting on a telegraph wire waiting for the first gun to go off and then flying towards it because that tells them where the food is. These birds are not stupid. A bird scarer works effectively for about three days. After that, the dinner gong effect comes into play and birds fly towards it, rather than away from it, and they get used to it.

But that in itself is not the problem. The problem is that the code of practice provides that the bird scarer should be used once every 15 minutes. That sounds all right—one bang every 15 minutes within reasonable hours from, for example, 6 am rather than 3.30 am, first light, until not too late at night, say up to 10 pm. It must be realised, however, that that is once every 15 minutes for each machine. If there are three guns in a cherry orchard and each one is firing once every 15 minutes, my miserable mathematics tells me that a gun will fire once every five minutes. If there are another three guns in the next field and a further three in the field next to that, which is owned by another farmer, the effect is rather like that which I described when I began my speech. It is something akin to the battle of the Somme.

I have described a problem which is small in the sense that it does not effect many people, but for those whom it does affect, like those who are affected by the sort of noise nuisance that we have been discussing throughout the evening, it is an extremely serious problem which makes life intolerable.

I know that my hon. Friend the Minister is sympathetic to the complaint that I have highlighted. I know that he and the civil servants in the Department care and that they want to find a solution. I must say, however, that, as with other problems, the time for research and consultation is over. We need a code of practice that takes full account of the number of machines within a given area as well as times and frequency of use. We need also a model byelaw to back it up. Without that, the environmental health officer, never mind the police, will stand not the remotest chance of controlling not the responsible many, who use

[Mr. Roger Gale]

the machines properly, but the irresponsible few. Those few, like the other causers of disturbance of whom we have heard, make others' lives a misery. I look to my hon. Friend the Minister for some comfort for those who I know are concerned. I hope that he will be able to offer it to me this evening.

9.28 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I apologise to the House for not being here for the earlier part of the debate. I wish to make only two brief points as it would not be fair in the circumstances to seek to make a longer contribution. I have not heard the speeches of the Minister and the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) or those of other colleagues. I wish to speak only about neighbour nuisance and vehicle noise.

Neighbour nuisance is a great and intractable problem and is often worse for the victim than for the Member. On some occasions I have been both the victim and the Member. There is a specific problem for tenants—as a matter of law, it is not faced by those who are landlords. If there is a complaint by one tenant about another who is next door or in the same block, a barrier against the taking of action is that the complainant will often find that it is necessary to give evidence in court in due course. He may feel inhibited by the expectation of a threat being meted out by the person against whom he is complaining. An obvious example is that of elderly single people complaining about younger and much more physically active and able people. We have all had such circumstances brought to our attention.

When a landlord is required contractually to provide quiet enjoyment for a tenant, would it not be possible to oblige the landlord to ensure that that requirement is met even if it is not the fault of the landlord that quiet enjoyment there is not? If, for example, a landlord—be it a local council, a housing association or a private owner—owns several properties in the same area and one tenant is causing a breach of the quiet enjoyment to the tenant next door or across the way, it should be possible to have a statutory device whereby, on sufficient complaint in writing by the aggrieved tenant and supported if necessary by the police or an environmental health officer, the landlord can take action as a breach of tenancy without leaving it to the other tenant to take action. Tenants would thereby know that if they broke the terms of reasonable neighbourliness, there was some prospect of them being prosecuted and if necessary—I say this conscious of the implications—losing their tenancy.

That requires simply that we adequately resource environmental health departments to ensure that there are enough officers to monitor the problem. The reality is that there are few such officers. In my borough, on only one night a week can people call on the environmental health department, which has a couple of officers who volunteer to be on duty. Sufficient civil or uniformed policing is not available.

I entirely endorse the sentiments of the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine). Local authorities should be much more intelligent in their allocation policy than they often are. They allocate properties in the same area to people of totally different life styles. Placing families who have young children next to pensioner families is asking for trouble. A more sensitive allocation policy prevents many avoidable disturbances.

On transport, I want to register what seem to be the major complaints. The first very rarely affects a constituency such as Southwark and Bermondsey but it affects much of rural Britain: the extraordinary noise and frightening effect of low-flying aircraft. I stayed with my family in Herefordshire in the summer. Everybody jumped out of their skin as, one after another, low-flying aircraft flew over. My hon. Friends who represent constituencies in the north, Berwick-upon-Tweed and the Borders regularly complain about low flying. It is a blessed nuisance and it must be mitigated and minimised as much as possible.

The second complaint is much more of an urban problem, about which a public inquiry is being held in the City of London—helicopter noise. I have a simple view: in any built-up area it is not possible to have helicopters without adverse environmental impact. I have never known helicopters to be welcome additions to the transport scene in urban areas. The presumption should be strongly and regularly against them.

I ask the Minister to relay to his colleagues in the Department of Transport the point that track, whether it be underground or railway, should increasingly be the most modern technology available—rubberised track, which allows the softest transport of trains. We debated that in the context of the Jubilee line extension. It is possible to have much quieter track, which must be used on all railway developments.

Whatever other complaints we may have about the roads, the one that causes most aggravation is motor cycle noise. I do not know why so many people who ride motor bikes get away with making so much noise so often. It is perhaps because they go so quickly and one cannot take the registration number and report them, but of all the types of traffic noise, we must be much tougher on licensing, inspecting, checking and, if necessary, prosecuting those who ride motor bikes. They not only frighten people but add enormously to the noise of traffic, and a few people can make life hell for many. If they were caught more often, or prevented in the first place, life would be much better and we should have a much quieter existence.

9.34 pm

Ms. Walley: With the leave of the House, Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak again.

Virtually every contribution has borne out the importance of the Government tackling the problems of noise. The Opposition have no doubt that the Noise Advisory Council is badly needed once again. Apart from anything else, the findings of the Batho working party have demonstrated that the Government should take action. They should not say, "Wasn't it an interesting debate? Don't we all understand the problems of noise even better?" They should set out in the Queen's Speech new legislation that takes on board the many important issues raised this evening. That is a job for the Under-Secretary of State in conjunction with every one of his colleagues in the Department of Transport—the debate has shown that noise is a dominant problem in transport-related issues—the Home Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and every other Department.

The Under-Secretary should not be content with introducing legislation, although the Queen's Speech will be the litmus test of the Government's commitment to dealing with noise. Other things can be done that do not depend on new legislation. I should like the Under-Secretary, after the debate, to let me know what new regulations, statutory instruments and other forms of action will deal with the many problems about which we have heard.

Stoke-on-Trent district council has made representations to me about the issue raised by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and told me how harassed and intimidated tenants are by the prospect of having to make a court appearance to substantiate their allegations about an environmental health problem which should be dealt with by the local authority. It all comes down to resources and introducing a spirit of community so that people want to be more tolerant and are encouraged to be more concerned about others and about the effect of their behaviour on others.

Much has been said about environmental health officers. The Institution of Environmental Health Officers made a substantial contribution to the Batho report. That contribution must be matched by the Under-Secretary recognising that resources are needed. As I said in my opening remarks, the earlier debate on standard spending assessments showed that that had not been recognised. It must now happen. I urge the Under-Secretary to give us some idea whether he will consult as widely as possible with not only the Institution of Environmental Health Officers but the local authority associations which will be involved in implementing the proposals about which we have heard so much.

9.38 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): The fact that we have had a debate on noise and had so many varied contributions from so many hon. Members shows that noise is very much on the environmental agenda.

The number of complaints from the public about noise nuisance has been rising for some time. This is due not so much to the fact that equipment and vehicles are noisier —often, the reverse is the case, although there are more aircraft and cars—as to the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel). People are now more demanding. Now that they have more disposable income and more leisure time, they are less inclined to put up with excessive noise. That is right and proper. This is very much a quality of life issue and it is wholly right that the Government should respond and draw up a package of measures to deal with this difficult subject.

No hon. Member has sought to over-simplify the problem. It is not just that many Departments of State are involved, although a glance at the last page of our noise review working party report shows that six Departments contributed to the review. The complexity of the subject also arises from the fact that judgments about noise are very subjective. Excessive noise is not just about decibel levels but about pitch, tone, timing and duration. That is one reason why the working party concluded that our approach of tackling the problem under the statutory nuisances provisions was right, and that an attempt to criminalise noise would probably fail.

It is a tribute to the noise review working party that it anticipated almost all the points raised in this debate. It did not have complete answers to all the problems but it pointed the way, if not to immediate action, at least to further study. Not all the recommendations are fit for immediate legislation and some of them do not require primary legislation anyway. They concern matters such as building regulations, which can be put into effect without legislation. Other issues are to be pursued through planning guidance notes or negotiations with our European partners. Many of the items that cause noise —cars and other vehicles as well as aircraft—are internationally traded and it therefore makes sense to pursue noise abatement measures in an international context.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley) drew attention to the need for resources, and in her introductory remarks, at any rate, she was rather dismissive of the noise chapter in the White Paper. She must surely agree that the fact that a whole chapter has been devoted to noise is an achievement in itself. I cannot help but draw a comparison between that and the paucity of comment on noise in the Labour party's document "An Earthly Chance", in which noise rates only half a column.

The hon. Lady complained that our White Paper lacked specific recommendations. That is an unfair charge, especially as I cannot help noting the wording of the noise section in the Labour party's document, which is full of phrases such as "We shall consider whether" and "We will look at strengthening" and "We will encourage manufacturers". I do not necessarily criticise the Labour party on that score, because these are difficult subjects and it is not always possible to be especially assertive, but it ill behoves the hon. Lady to criticise the Government in similar terms.

Ms. Walley: Does the Minister accept that the chapter in the White Paper is not enough if it is not backed up by legislation in the Queen's Speech next week? After all, it is the Government who have the responsibility to do something about noise.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: In his introductory speech, my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside set out the Government's commitments. However, the working party review report is available for public consultation. It would not be proper to rush into early legislation on some of the issues that require extensive consultation, not least with the environmental health departments which are in the front line in the struggle to contain excessive noise.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North made much of the fact that more money—or more resources as it always seems to called these days—is necessary to tackle the problem at local authority level. Westminster council is one of the best councils at responding to complaints about noise nuisance. It maintains a 24-hour response and it manages that with one of the lowest community charges in the country. It is not simply a question of spending more money; it is a question of according the problem the right priority.

The hon. Lady also referred to quiet neighbourhood schemes and she gave the idea a cautious welcome. I am not entirely sure that that idea is the complete solution to the problem. However, I believe that it will help. We are

[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory]

funding a pilot scheme in London and the details will be announced shortly. It builds very much on the voluntary approach to noise control.

Not everyone emitting excessive noise does so deliberately to disturb his or her neighbours. If people in an area or a street could get together voluntarily and agree among themselves perhaps to give each other notice of a late-night party or to agree not to cut the grass on a Sunday or play the bagpipes after 10 pm, that would be good. It is possible for people to agree among themselves and avoid the need for outside statutory interference.

However, there are other forms of noise nuisance in which inescapably the Government must involve themselves more closely. My right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) spoke with predictable authority about railway noise and in particular about the problem facing his constituents who may be experiencing more noise on existing lines as a consequence of the channel tunnel and the London rail link.

Clearly my right hon. Friend is aware that that issue is being taken seriously by the Department of Transport, which is considering closely the noise implications of the channel tunnel scheme for those living in Kent. My right hon. Friend would agree that there is a difference between those faced, perhaps unexpectedly, with a new railway line and those who live alongside an existing railway line on which traffic may have increased. After all, they bought their houses and moved to the area in the knowledge that the railway line was there. However, I do not dissent from my right hon. Friend's view that a noise nuisance, however caused, is serious and that is why I am pleased that the Department of Transport is considering that aspect of the problem.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling also referred to the sources of rail noise. It is important that the construction and use of trains and rolling stock are now being addressed from a noise point of view in a European context. We already have the Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations and if we can produce something similar for railways and rolling stock, that would help reduce noise at source.

In that context, although no hon. Member raised this issue tonight, I believe that the idea of environmental labelling of consumer products generally might well take into account the potential in some items for noise emissions. When we get round to awarding environmental labels throughout the European Community, if one is considering things such as do-it-yourself equipment, the award of a label should take into account whether the equipment is noisy or whether some effort has been made in its design to moderate or suppress noise.

No one who heard my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks) or the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) can fail to have been impressed by what their constituents go through in respect of neighbourhood noise—in particular, the specific problem of blues parties. The question whether such parties are a form of public entertainment is before the courts. Therefore, I cannot comment on that matter. However, I can draw attention to the passages in the noise working party report that deal with that issue.

The noise abatement notice procedure works reasonably well when there is a persistent and repeated source of noise. In those cases, it should be possible for the environmental health officers concerned to conclude that there is a noise nuisance and to issue a noise abatement notice. If that notice is ignored, a criminal offence may have been committed, and a magistrates court can fine those concerned up to a maximum of £2,000. In the case of noise nuisance from commercial or industrial premises the fine is being increased to £20,000.

I concede that special difficulties arise when noise nuisance may move about from house to house. That is one of the features of pay parties. It is not always known in advance which houses or premises will be used. Therefore, it is often impossible for environmental health officers to serve a noise abatement notice in time, or indeed even when the event is in progress.

The Batho working party has recommended that we examine the possibility of strict liability or of making it an offence to permit one's property to be used in a way that leads to the emission of excessive noise. We shall certainly look closely at that, but I repeat that the Batho working party and, so far, our own deliberations have concluded that it is not realistic or right to make noise nuisance a criminal offence in itself. The working party said that any attempt to define noise would eventually have to fall back on the concept of whether the noise concerned is a nuisance. If it is a nuisance, it is best dealt with by the fairly well-tried and tested procedures under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as I think I am entitled to call it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham mentioned a number of issues, including dogs. I did not think that it would be possible for me to get through today without debating dogs in some form or another. My hon. Friend quite rightly said that the registration of dogs does not make them bark any less loudly, although I remind him that barking dogs are subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act and therefore fall to be controlled under the statutory nuisance provisions.

I also agree with my hon. Friend about piped music, which I regard as an abomination. However, naturally the thrust of his remarks concerned transport noise, and especially the noise from aircraft. Again, he speaks with great authority. It chiefly falls to another Department to respond to his comments, and I undertake to draw them to the attention of the Minister for Public Transport.

My hon. Friend the Member for Twickenham also mentioned motor cycles, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson). Officials in my Department are shortly to meet representatives of a group of interested organisations that have prepared a draft code for off-the-road motor cycle sports. That may not be terribly relevant to Twickenham, but it is important in more rural areas. The general question of motor cycle noise is a classic instance of noise emitted by an internationally traded commodity. I can confirm that Britain is in the forefront of efforts being made in the European Community further to reduce and restrict noise from motor cycles and motor cycle silencers at source.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) spoke with great legal knowledge about abatement notices. He asked whether excessive noise could be made a criminal offence; I believe that I have already dealt with that point. He also emphasised the key role of environmental health departments. That was also

recognised by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), who concluded that they are usually too busy. I suppose that the same could also be said about the police, who are also stretched. It all comes back to priorities. In the Environmental Protection Act 1990 we have laid a duty on environmental health departments to respond to all reasonable complaints, and I hope that they will take that issue seriously.

As I expected, my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North raised the question of audible bird scarers. I am grateful for the constructive way in which he has contributed to the deliberations within my own Department about the working out of a code of practice. Coming, as I do, from a rural area, I recognise that bird scarers can be nuisance. My hon. Friend very fairly recognised that farmers do sometimes rely on them, but the Government are responding to that acknowledged difficulty by drawing up a code of practice. Two drafts have been prepared for consultation, and, after all the preliminary work and consultation has concluded, we intend to publish it. My hon. Friend will know that it does not itself have statutory force, but it is taken into account by courts in determining whether a source of noise amounts to statutory nuisance. This system of codes of practice gained the endorsement of the Batho working party.

I hope that I have managed to cover most of the points that have been raised. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) made a telling point about tenancy law; I believe that, if local authority tenancy agreements require that no noise be caused, failure to comply can already lead to eviction without the liability to rehouse falling on the local authority concerned. However, I shall read his remarks in *Hansard* to see whether we have anything further to learn.

I thank all the hon. Members who have contributed to the debate, and if I may, I will take their remarks into account in the general consultation procedure that we are undertaking following publication of the Batho working party review.

The Lords Commissioner to the Treasury (Mr. Irvine Patnick): I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION

Ordered,

That Mr. William Hague be discharged from the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and Mr. Tony Durant be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Mr. Colin Wallace

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

9.59 pm

Sir Michael Marshall (Arundel): I am grateful to you for the chance to catch your eye at this hour, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the support that I have received from my hon. Friends, although how long it will remain with me remains to be seen. I recognise in particular the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence, who has taken a keen interest in the affairs of Mr. Colin Wallace and the Calcutt report.

I welcome both the Calcutt report and the Government's acceptance of its findings. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, who has had a long involvement in the matter, will remember that some of us submitted voluminous evidence on unfair dismissal, which was referred to as enforced resignation. He will know that the volume of files that had to be submitted over an eight-year period in my case was substantial. I pay tribute to Mr. David Calcutt QC for the way in which he approached his task.

It being Ten o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Sir Michael Marshall: In many ways it was a model study of this procedure. I am anxious to explore some aspects of both his conclusions and the Government's acceptance of them.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister and to Mr. Calcutt for their courtesy in advising me during the recess of the imminent publication of the report. I felt that it was right to bring the matter back to the House at the earliest possible opportunity.

My hon. Friend wrote to me on 13 September 1990. In that letter he referred to the terms of reference of the Calcutt inquiry, which I need not repeat, but its essential point was on the hearing of the Civil Service Appeal Board on 17 October 1975. In that letter my hon. Friend went on to accept Mr. Calcutt's views. It is interesting that he accepted those views, which in a sense drew on a widening of the terms of reference originally laid down. Mr. Calcutt was right to view the matter as he did.

To refer to the points put forward by Mr. Calcutt, it was clear that before the hearing of the CSAB on 17 October 1975 MOD officials nobbled—no other word fits the bill—the chairman of the board. That, in Mr. Calcutt's words

"probably affected the outcome of the appeal."

My hon. Friend has said that he cannot reveal the nature of that communication but he has emphasised in writing and has repeated that it had nothing to do with Kincora boys' home or Clockwork Orange, the so-called dirty tricks campaign affecting leading politicians on both sides of St. George's channel in the Clockwork Orange exercise.

It was made plain that the full range of Mr. Wallace's work was not known to the CSAB at the time of the hearing and, therefore, neither the dismissal nor the alternative of enforced resignation was reasonable for what was described as an isolated incident of disclosure of a classified document.

[Sir Michael Marshall]

Mr. Calcutt recommended that compensation should be based on the sum that would have been appropriate if the calculation had been made in 1975. The figure was to be amended to reflect the present-day value of that sum. It is still not clear to me on what basis that procedure was initiated. I do not know whether it was Mr. Calcutt's initiative, whether in some senses he had guidance or whether there was any known precedent in such a case, which I doubt. Perhaps my hon. Friend can assist me in the description of that procedure, not when he replies but in writing. It has a wider significance and I shall return to compensation later in my speech.

I am anxious to explore the two findings. First, following my hon. Friend's letter, I wrote to him on 14 September and he replied on 27 September. Naturally I felt that I must probe the nature of the communication from MOD officials. I recognise the sensitivity of full disclosure if security is concerned, but my hon. Friend has confirmed that neither Kincora nor Clockwork Orange was the subject of that disclosure and, following our latest exchange of correspondence, that the communication does not contain, in Mr. Wallace's words:

"Information which he might have made available to higher authorities if he had been allowed to remain in his post."

That is an important assurance. My hon. Friend will accept that, for a long period, there has been concern about whether in some way Mr. Wallace's dismissal was to prevent him from giving authorities, including Ministers, information about activities which, it has been argued, was being suppressed.

The question remains: what type of communication was involved? It is reasonable to ask my hon. Friend whether we are speaking of a written or a verbal communication, whether it is some personnel assessment or whether the communication was of such a secret nature that he cannot give more information about it now, just as he asserts that the information could not have been made known at the hearing and therefore to Mr. Wallace.

Above all, can my hon. Friend assure the House that officials did not deliberately set out to mislead the CSAB? I hope that he can give a further idea in reply, if only of the most general sort. The nature of the information must have a bearing on the equity of the findings as a whole.

Secondly, the Calcutt inquiry found that the full range of Mr. Wallace's work was not known by the CSAB. Why did not officials provide the CSAB with a classified copy of Mr. Wallace's job description? Although my hon. Friend has said that revised CSAB and MOD procedures would rule out a repetition of what I have described as the nobbling of the CSAB, the question remains. I hope that he will reiterate assurances about revised procedures that would rule out a repetition of what I have described.

Consideration of the matter brings us back to a point on which I felt it right to write to my hon. Friend. The extent to which officials not only did not provide full and accurate information to the CSAB in 1975, but still refrain from disclosure of the full facts to Ministers worries me. My hon. Friend will recall that when I took up the concern about my constituent's unfair dismissal as long ago as my letter to the Prime Minister in December 1982 and throughout the following years in the hundreds of letters and meetings that I have had with my hon. Friend's predecessors and with him, I have raised one major question that remains: surely throughout the whole period some MOD officials knew that the CSAB had been nobbled. Why did not they speak out? That could have ended the injustice a long time ago and prevented Ministers from unintentionally misleading the House.

In a wider sense, Mr. Wallace is entitled to ask, as he does, why senior officials who had worked with him in Northern Ireland for a long time did not speak out when Ministers were put in the impossible position of giving less than a full account of the true nature of his work and of his actions during the period of a previous Administration.

The third part of the Calcutt report deals with equity and compensation. Mr. Calcutt suggested a figure of £30,000. It is no part of my brief tonight to argue in detailed financial terms on Mr. Wallace's behalf. He has taken legal advice. In some senses this matter could be regarded as sub judice, but I am not a lawyer and I am not clear whether that is the case. I have the impression—I hope that my hon. Friend can help to clarify the situation—that this is, in some ways, breaking new ground in regard to compensation for something that is not regarded as part of industrial tribunal activity as in commercial life. In many ways it is unparalleled in civil service experience.

When my hon. Friend comes to reply or, if necessary, to write to me later, I hope that he will outline fairly the options that are now open to my constituent because he is far from clear. I, too, find that this is a difficult situation to assess.

It is fair to ask some direct questions relating to compensation. First, upon what basis was the Calcutt calculation selected using 1975 as a base? Is it not clear, as I argued earlier, that the admitted official misdeed was compounded by the long period of silence by officials who could have put the matter right much earlier? What account can or should be taken of those and other circumstances?

Mr. Wallace asserts, for example, that his wife, who was employed as a civil servant at the time, was also made unemployed as a result of his enforced resignation. That is a matter on which it is only right that he should argue rather than me. However, I have observed Mr. Wallace's wife for many years in which she has faced a particular problem as the reputation of her husband and the life of her family have been torn apart. In all honesty, I must tell the House that it has been her steadfast support and total belief in her husband's integrity that have been a key factor in my concern to continue inquiries during the past eight years.

Surely a fair-minded employer would want to take such factors into account. I have no reason to suppose that the Government do not want to act like a fair-minded employer, but how to make good a wrong that has been done is a somewhat grey area. Therefore, I am seeking to discover the flexibility that exists—the extent to which the Government and my hon. Friend will keep an open mind.

I recognise, of course, that it would be unreasonable to expect my hon. Friend to make promises tonight. The matter will require careful consideration and advice might suggest that a legal recourse is the way through. I should prefer to find some other more reasonable negotiated settlement if such a mechanism were possible. I am not clear whether an equivalent to arbitration could apply.

It is fair to tell my hon. Friend that in all my dealings with Mr. Wallace he has stressed time and again that his concern is not to damage the security services of our

nation. but to put right a number of wrongs. He has argued that some of those wrongs persist in terms of wider matters that I have not touched on tonight. I seek to end as I began, by expressing a particular concern over an unfair dismissal and an enforced resignation, which is now clearly accepted by the Government and which they want to put right.

I hope that my hon. Friend can assure my constituent of the Government's willingness to keep looking at the matter with an open mind. I hope that they will consider the relevant factors, some of which I have tried to sketch in tonight. I know that the wider issues will continue to be argued over, but in terms of the enforced resignation—I think of it as an unfair dismissal—I ask my hon. Friend to confirm that the Government will ensure that justice is seen to be done.

10.13 pm

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Archie Hamilton): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel (Sir M. Marshall) on initiating this debate. I should like to pay tribute to the way in which he has consistently applied himself as Mr. Wallace's constituency Member to ensure that his case is dealt with fully and fairly. My hon. Friend has asked questions in the House and written to me on many occasions. We have been able to give sensible consideration to the issues as a result. He has shown an energetic concern for the interests of his constituent, genuinely seeking after the truth without being diverted by the more sensationalist aspects that have attracted others.

As the House will be aware, this is not the first time that we have debated aspects of Mr. Wallace's case. Indeeed, the ground has been well covered both in debate, in answer to parliamentary questions and in correspondence with right hon. and hon. Members. Copies of many of those letters have been placed in the Library of the House. The issues which have attracted interest—and which fall to me to deal with—occurred more than 15 years ago and the present renewal of interest stems largely from the steps I took in January this year to correct inaccurate information that had been given, mistakenly, to hon. Members.

When it was realised that there had been such inaccuracies, the Government commissioned an inquiry by a senior civil servant—himself wholly unconnected with the matters at issue—to ascertain how and why they had occurred. The conclusions and recommendations of that inquiry have been published. The inquiry confirmed that inaccurate information was given inadvertently, and that the inaccuracies arose in part because of the long passage of time since the period in which related events occurred or were alleged to have occurred. That inquiry cast no new light on Mr. Wallace's wider allegations that there was a campaign to smear members of the House and that there was a cover-up by the security forces of information about homosexual abuse of boys at Kincora.

Those measures to correct the public record have generated considerable speculation about Mr. Wallace's more sensational allegations. It seems to have been forgotten that nothing in the corrections made to the public record, or in the work carried out in preparing the corrections, lend any substance to those allegations. I hope that the House will acknowledge the efforts made by this Government to deal fairly with issues that arose in the time of other Administrations.

I should remind the House that, as has frequently been made clear, nothing has been found, when reviewing the relevant information, to justify allegations of wrongdoing by Crown servants. Reviewing the basis on which inaccurate information was given to hon. Members has shown only that genuine mistakes were made. The passage of time since Mr. Wallace left the Ministry of Defence in 1975 was a key element in the failure of the departmental "collective memory" which caused Ministers to be given inaccurate information that was in turn passed on to hon. Members. The problems which can arise in identifying relevant material amongst the vast amount generated annually within the Department do not excuse such failures. But equally such failures do not justify ill-found assumptions that there may have been a conspiracy against Mr. Wallace.

The Government also commissioned of their own volition the inquiry that Mr. David Calcutt, QC, undertook into the presentation of Mr. Wallace's case——

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Hamilton: —when he appealed to the Civil Service Appeal Board against his dismissal from the Ministry of Defence in 1975. Mr. Calcutt's advice and recommendations were published in September this year.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel for his welcome for that report. Few have given recognition to the Government's determination to deal appropriately with events that took place 15 years ago; rather, the Calcutt report has been used to justify renewed speculation. It is of particular note that there seems to be an assumption in some quarters that Mr. Calcutt's inquiry has provided the Government with new information that requires further revision of the Government's position in relation to Mr. Wallace's allegations. That is not so.

In order to satisfy themselves about Mr. Wallace's case the Government have had to look back over more than 15 years, but I will spare the House a full rehearsal and confine myself to the situation some 12 months ago when Ministers were alerted to the fact that inaccurate information had been given to the House. That realisation led to a careful review of all available information in preparation for the statement which I volunteered on 30 January this year correcting those errors.

When the errors came to light, Ministers were made aware that officials had in 1975 been in private communication with the chairman of the Civil Service Appeal Board hearing. Such communication was not part of the formal procedures and it was immediately recognised that the communication could, with hindsight, be held to be unsatisfactory. Accordingly, Ministers decided to commission an entirely independent review of the manner in which Mr. Wallace's case had been presented to the Civil Service Appeal Board. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and I concluded that Mr. David Calcutt—a distinguished lawyer—would be a very suitable person to undertake that inquiry. He was asked to consider whether Mr. Wallace suffered any injustice from the way in which his case was presented to the Civil Service Appeal Board. We determined from the outset—I must emphasise this point—that Mr. Calcutt's conclusions and recommendations would be published. This was done in full awareness that Mr. Calcutt's inquiry would touch on sensitive issues.

[Mr. Hamilton]

The Government have adhered to that course. Mr. Calcutt did conclude that two aspects of the presentation of Mr. Wallace's case were unsatisfactory. First, he advised that the private communication—and here I quote from the written advice which he submitted to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence—"should not have happened". And he added that what occurred probably affected the outcome of the appeal. Secondly, he concluded that it was unsatisfactory that the full range of Mr. Wallace's duties was not made plain to the board by the Ministry of Defence itself. He recommended that compensation be paid to Mr. Wallace. The Government have accepted his advice and recommendation, and compensation of £30,000 has been paid to Mr. Wallace.

Mr. Wallace has suggested that some of his difficulties have resulted from a form of conspiracy against him arising from what he claims was his involvement in, and ultimate withdrawal from, improper activities which he has alleged to have taken place in the early 1970s. I am aware that some are tempted to read Mr. Calcutt's advice —particularly the two aspects of the handling of the appeal which he concluded to be unsatisfactory—as giving credence to Mr. Wallace's suggestion. I have no reason to support such views.

Before dealing with Mr. Calcutt's conclusions, I wish to remind the House of the circumstances in whch disciplinary action was taken against Mr. Wallace. Mr. Wallace was employed at headquarters Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1975. During that period he rose from being an assistant information officer to the rank of senior information officer. His promotion reflected the very considerable effort and enthusiasm which he brought to bear on the work allocated to him in an onerous post and in a demanding environment. After six years in Northern Ireland, he was posted to the Army's headquarters, north-west district, with effect from February 1975.

Mr. Wallace occupied a responsible and sensitive position in Northern Ireland, with duties which had come to include the unattributable briefing of journalists. This was a delicate role but one in which Mr. Wallace had both military and civilian superiors whom he could consult on any problems. Terrorism was at a peak and it was fully understood by everyone working in Northern Ireland that it was essential to be particularly circumspect in any dealings with journalists. A good deal of trust had to be placed in the absolute integrity of those who carried out such duties, since any indiscretion or breach of trust was liable to undermine the success of anti-terrorist measures.

A classified document was passed to a journalist. Mr. Wallace was questioned. At first he denied responsibility. Then he admitted it. It became clear that this was a premeditated action and that he had neither sought approval for it from his superiors beforehand nor informed them of it afterwards. He had every opportunity to seek permission: he did not do so.

It was and remains within the powers of the Ministry of Defence to dismiss a civil servant for the type of disclosure to which Mr. Wallace admitted. When he appealed against dismissal, the Ministry of Defence accepted the view of the Civil Service Appeal Board that, given his previous good service, his resignation would be an acceptable alternative.

As many hon. Members may be aware, the Civil Service Appeal Board is an independent appeals body for the civil service, set up in the early 1970s, which deals with appeals from civil servants who have been dismissed or who have retired early. Its role is to decide whether a Department's decision to dismiss was fair. If it decides that the Department's decision was unfair, it may recommend that the appellant should be reinstated, or it may specify that compensation should be paid. If it considers that some other action is more appropriate, it may recommend accordingly. If the board recommends reinstatement, it is up to the Department whether to accept the recommendation. But, if such a recommendation is rejected, the board then decides whether to award compensation. The Department must pay any compensation awarded by the board.

Each appeal is heard by a panel of three. The chairman of the hearing is always the chairman of the board or one of the deputy chairmen. At the time of the Wallace appeal there was only one deputy chairman. The other two are members of the board, one drawn from a panel of people nominated by the official side, civil service management, and one from a panel nominated by the trade union side.

The operating procedures of the Civil Service Appeal Board are set out in some detail in the relevant provisions of the civil service code. The board issues guidance notes to Departments and appellants based on those provisions. How the board operates within those established procedures is a matter for the board itself.

The Government, with the benefit of hindsight, decided to consider whether during the dismissal and appeal proceedings there had been aspects of the handling of the case by the Ministry of Defence which may have given rise to any injustice. We commissioned an independent inquiry to ensure that an impartial assessment would be available.

I turn now to the two aspects of the presentation of Mr. Wallace's case which Mr. Calcutt identified as unsatisfactory. First, there is the matter of the private communication with the chairman of the Civil Service Appeal Board hearing. It is a fact that the board was approached off the record in Mr. Wallace's case. That private communication was outside the formal procedures. Mr. Calcutt has advised that the private communication should not have occurred.

Mr. Livingstone: Were they members of MI5?

Mr. Hamilton: The Government have accepted that advice and his recommendation that Mr. Wallace be paid compensation of £30,000.

I have been pressed to say what was the nature and content of that communication and I have declined to provide such details. I have stated that it was concerned with sensitive information which I would not wish to make public. That remains the case. I intend no discourtesy to the House in maintaining that position. The House will recognise that successive Governments have taken the view that, where issues of particular sensitivity are involved, it may be inappropriate to reveal publicly any or all of the relevant information. I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel, who raised this matter in his speech, that there is no way that this information was set out to mislead the Civil Service Appeal Board.

The decision to withhold such information has not been taken lightly in the present case, not least because, as I am only too aware, it could be misinterpreted. But I do not believe that there is sufficient cause to disclose sensitive information. The content of that communication was

sensitive and, as I explained in the letter which I sent to my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel on 13 September, a copy of which has been placed in the Library:

"For the same reasons as those which inhibited the Ministry of Defence from deploying the content of the communication openly at the hearing, I am not prepared to go into detail about it now. I can, however, say that it had nothing whatever to do with either Kincora or the smearing of politicians."

I am not willing to add to that statement.

As the House may be aware, Mr. Wallace's solicitors have made a complaint to the Metropolitan police. It is for the police and the prosecuting authorities to decide what action it would be appropriate to take in response to the complaint made to them on Mr. Wallace's behalf. Clearly it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on this matter.

I have also been pressed to comment on Mr. Calcutt's conclusion that it was unsatisfactory that the Ministry of Defence did not make clear to the Civil Service Appeal Board the full range of duties that Mr. Wallace was required to undertake. The Government accept this. Nevertheless, in case it should be supposed that nothing was done to inform the Civil Service Appeal Board in that respect, I will summarise what mention was made of Mr. Wallace's wider duties. First, in submitting its statement to the Civil Service Appeal Board, the Ministry of Defence referred specifically to the fact that his duties had come to include unattributable briefing.

The motion having been made at Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at half-past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 1 November 1990

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners: The House went:—and, having returned:

Royal Assent

10.7 am

Mr. Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that the House has been to the House of Peers where a Commission under the Great Seal was read, authorising the Royal Assent to the following Acts:

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990
Employment Act 1990
Landlord and Tenant (Licensed Premises) Act 1990
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990
Courts and Legal Services Act 1990
Broadcasting Act 1990
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Caldey Island Act 1990

City of Dundee District Council Order Confirmation Act 1990

Zetland Masonic Sick and Widows and Orphans Fund Order Confirmation Act 1990

London Local Authorities (No. 2) Act 1990

Port of Tyne Act 1990

Prorogation

HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH

Mr. Speaker: I have further to acquaint the House that the Lord High Chancellor, one of the Lord Commissioners, delivered Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, in pursuance of Her Majesty's Command. For greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy and also directed that the terms of the speech be printed in the Votes and Proceedings. Copies are being made available in the Vote Office.

The Gracious Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were pleased to receive the State Visits of His Excellency the President of the Republic of India and Mrs. Venkataraman in April and his Excellency the President of the Italian Republic in October.

We recall with pleasure our visit to New Zealand in February for the 150th anniversary of the Waitangi treaty and for the Commonwealth games. We remember with satisfaction our State Visit to Iceland in June, followed by a visit I made to Canada.

My Government have played a full and vigorous part in the actions taken by the United Nations and the international community to bring about the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of that country's independence and legitimate government. They have responded quickly to requests by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Governments of the region to contribute to their defence. They have made clear their determination that this act of aggression will not be allowed to succeed.

My Government have welcomed continuing progress towards economic and political reform in the Soviet Union and the far-reaching political changes which have taken place in most eastern European countries.

My Government have welcomed the changes in the German Democratic Republic. They have played a constructive part in the preparation for the unification of Germany and the ending of the four party rights and responsibilities.

My Government have maintained a sound defence based on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. They have played a full part in the process of adapting NATO to the new circumstances in Europe set in hand at the meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in London in July.

My Government have continued to work for balanced and verifiable arms control agreements. They have played a full part in the negotiations on reducing conventional forces in Europe and in the talks in Geneva on the abolition of chemical weapons. My Government played an important part in the Fourth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty.

My Government have continued to work actively for the completion of the single European market. They have made proposals relating to the forthcoming intergovernmental conference for economic and monetary union. They played a full part in the Community and wider international response to economic and political reform in eastern Europe and in multilateral negotiations to liberalise international trade.

They have, with our European partners, concluded a fourth Lomé agreement.

[Mr. Speaker]

My Government have welcomed the independence of Namibia and its membership of the Commonwealth. In South Africa there has been welcome progress towards the end of apartheid.

My Government have maintained a substantial and effective overseas aid programme to assist developing countries.

My Government welcomed the extension of democratic government in Latin America. They were pleased to re-establish diplomatic relations with Argentina and Iran.

My Government have continued their sustained efforts to combat terrorism in the United Kingdom and overseas. They welcomed the recent release of hostages from Lebanon and have continued their efforts to secure the release of all Britons held hostage or detained in the middle east.

My Government convened the world ministerial drugs summit in April, and have given practical support to other Governments, particularly in Colombia. They have concluded agreements to confiscate drug traffickers' funds with seven Governments.

My Government hosted the second meeting of parties to the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer in June, at which a significant strengthening of controls was agreed.

Members of the House of Commons

I thank you for the provision which you have made for the honour and dignity of the Crown and for the public service.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government have continued to pursue firm financial policies necessary for sustained economic growth. To reinforce these anti-inflationary policies, they have brought the pound sterling into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. They have made a public sector debt repayment for the third successive year, reducing Government debt to levels not seen since the first world war. National output has continued to grow and living standards to increase. The number of people in employment has risen further.

As part of my Government's programme to improve the performance of the economy and encourage saving, legislation has been enacted to allow the introduction of tax exempt special savings accounts and to abolish the composite rate of tax and stamp duty on share transactions. The independent taxation of married women has come into effect.

The 10 water and sewerage companies in England and Wales have been sold, continuing my Government's programme of encouraging greater industrial efficiency and wider share ownership.

An Act has been passed to provide new powers to control pollution and waste, and also to reorganise nature conservation in Great Britain.

A White Paper has been published providing Britain's first comprehensive survey of all aspects of environmental concern, and setting out a strategy for the environment over the next decade.

An Act has been passed to improve aviation and maritime security.

Legislation has been enacted to make further reforms in industrial relations and trade union law.

Legislation has been enacted to improve maintenance arrangements for lone parents, to give better protection for members of occupational pension schemes and to begin changing the structure of disability benefits.

An Act has been passed to improve the national health service and the management of community care.

An Act has been passed to institute a legal framework for scientific developments in human fertilisation and embryology.

An Act has been passed to improve the administration of civil justice and increase choice in the provision of legal services.

An Act has been passed to strengthen the law on food safety and consumer protection.

Legislation has been enacted to supplement students' grants with loans.

My Government have worked to restore confidence in Hong Kong, building on the Sino-British joint agreement. My Government have passed an Act to encourage key Hong Kong personnel and their families to remain there by giving them the assurance of British citizenship, thereby helping to maintain the future stability and prosperity of the territory.

An Act has been passed to reform the framework for commercial broadcasting, providing for a wider choice while strengthening the oversight of programme standards.

An Act has been passed to enhance international co-operation in the investigation and prosecution of crime.

In Northern Ireland, my Government have continued their efforts to combat terrorism, to tackle the Province's political, social and economic problems and to work constructively within the framework of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

For Scotland, legislation has been enacted to create Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to provide for the winding up of the new town development corporations and to effect certain law reform measures.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may attend you.

Thereafter a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read, after which the Lord Chancellor said:

"My Lords and Members of the House of Commons: by virtue of Her Majesty's Commission which has now been read, we do, in Her Majesty's name, and in obedience to Her Majesty's Commands, prorogue this Parliament to Wednesday the seventh day of this instant November, to be then here holden, and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Wednesday the seventh day of this instant November."

End of the Third Session (opened on 21 November 1989) of the Fiftieth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in the Thirty-Ninth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 22 October 1990

EMPLOYMENT

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the accident and fatality figures for people on YTS *(a)* nationally and *(b)* in St. Helens, for the last 12 months.

Mr. Jackson: Information is not available in the precise form requested. YTS accident information is not held specifically for the St. Helens area. The tables provide quarterly YTS accident figures for the last 12 months nationally and for Merseyside, which includes St. Helens.

Table A: National

Period	Accidents[1] Fatal	Major[2]	Minor
1 October 1989—31 December 1989	1[3]	170	721
1 January 1990—31 March 1990	1	133	527
1 April 1990—30 June 1990		163	604
1 July 1990—30 September 1990	—	87	440

Table B: Merseyside

Period	Accidents[1] Fatal	Major[2]	Minor
1 October 1989—31 December 1989		7	42
1 January 1990—31 March 1990	—	3	20
1 April 1990—30 June 1990	—	4	24
1 July 1990—30 September 1990	—	3	27

[1] Training Agency accident figures have been compiled on a similar basis to those prepared by the Health and Safety Executive on employed persons. However, the Training Agency's figures will include a number of accidents to trainees in educational establishments and road traffic accidents which may not have been reportable to the Health and Safety Executive had the individuals been employed.

[2] Major injuries are classified according to the severity criteria laid down in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

[3] This was a road traffic accident on scheme time.

Duty-free Sales

Mr. Cash: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what estimate he has made of how many jobs in the United Kingdom duty-free manufacturing and retailing industry, including jobs in airlines, ferry companies and airports, may be lost if duty-free sales are eliminated.

Mr. Jackson: My Department has not made estimates of the effect on United Kingdom unemployment of the abolition of duty-free sales.

Tourism

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much advertising the British Tourist Authority undertook in Japan in 1989.

Mr. Forth: In the financial year 1989-90 the British Tourist Authority did not undertake any advertising in Japan. This decision was taken by the authority against a background of very high advertising costs in Japan. But the authority spent a total of £670,000 on specific marketing activity in Japan in the same period.

Part-time and Temporary Work

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many responses from organisations were received in response to his Department's consultative document on the European Commission's proposals on part-time and temporary work and working time; how many of those responding supported the proposals in full or in part; and how many were against; and if he will list those organisations broadly supportive of the Commission's proposals.

Mr. Forth: The consultation document covered four proposals for directives. A total of 207 organisations have responded to the document, many of which were organisations representing large numbers of employers. A significant number of responses were concerned with some rather than all of the proposals.

A total of 141 organisations expressed a clear opinion on the directives on part-time work. Of these, 27 were clearly or mainly in favour of the proposals, and 114 were against.

On the directive concerning the health and safety of temporary workers, 14 organisations thought there is a need for this directive, while 47 took the opposite view. Ten organisations thought that temporary workers are at a greater risk than permanent workers, while 48 had an opposite view.

The proposed directive on working time was supported by 15 organisations, and was opposed by 100.

It is for the individual organisations concerned to decide whether to publicise their views.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Global Warming

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if there are any plans to follow up the discovery by the RRS Charles Darwin that biological production of nitrous oxide in the oceans is contributing to global warming.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Following the discovery that the nutrient-rich waters of the Indian ocean produced significantly larger amounts of nitrous oxide than had previously been thought, NERC scientists are preparing plans for future work on nitrous oxide production in cooler waters in order to assess whether estimates of the total ocean production should be changed.

"Education for Citizenship"

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the original publication date for curriculum guides paper No. 8; when he now expects it to be published; and if he will give the reasons for the delay.

Mr. Eggar: I understand that the National Curriculum Council intends to publish curriculum guidance 8: "Education for Citizenship" next month. The timing of its publications is a matter for the NCC.

Teachers' Pay

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many responses have been received by the Government to "School Teachers Pay—the Report of the Interim Advisory Committee"; and, of these, how many are critical of the recommendations for supply teachers.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend received responses from eight statutory consultees to the Government's proposals stemming from the third report of the Interim Advisory Committee. In addition, comments were received from eight other organisations. Three of the latter were critical of the proposals concerning supply teachers.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent discussions he has had with teachers' unions' representatives regarding teachers' pay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend last met representatives of the six teacher unions in June to discuss his proposals for new pay determination machinery.

Foreign Languages

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list by local education authority in England and Wales the range of foreign languages available in *(a)* schools and *(b)* other establishments, and taught in the last academic year for which figures are available.

Mr. Eggar: The information is not available in the form requested. A copy of the 1988 secondary school staffing survey is available in the Library.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for extending the choice of foreign languages available in schools and colleges after 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We have specified 19 languages as eligible to be the modern foreign language foundation subject in the national curriculum. These include all the working languages of the European Community and 11 other languages which also have cultural and commercial importance. Within this framework, we are encouraging schools to offer a wider variety of languages, and in 1991-92 we are making grants available to local education authorities in England to support schemes for the diversification of first foreign language provision in their areas.

The responsibility for deciding academic policy such as the range of foreign language tuition in institutions of further and higher education rests primarily with the institutions themselves.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the recruitment of teachers of foreign languages and the current position on vacancies in schools; and what plans he has further to increase the number of foreign language teachers.

Mr. Fallon: Following the extension of the teacher training bursary to modern foreign languages from September 1990, applications to modern foreign language courses beginning this autumn have increased by 16 per cent. over 1989. Recruitment figures for initial teacher training courses will be published shortly.

The January 1990 survey data show foreign language teacher vacancies of 2·3 per cent.

The Department is supporting a number of research projects both to ease the recruitment of foreign nationals and to enable a greater number of teachers here to become effective teachers of modern foreign languages. We are also the first country to implement the EC directive on the mutual recognition of qualifications, as it relates to teachers.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy on the teaching of European languages to children of school age; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: A modern foreign language is a foundation subject in the national curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 16. The languages specified as eligible to be taught as the national curriculum foundation subject include all the working languages of the European Community. Schools are required to offer pupils the opportunity to study at least one of these languages.

History

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his policy for the teaching of history for age groups five to seven, seven to nine, nine to 11, 11 to 13, 13 to 16 and 16 plus years.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend published his proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study for history on 26 July. The National Curriculum Council is currently carrying out the required statutory consultation on those proposals. Its report is due by 17 December.

A-levels

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish an analysis of the breakdown of 1990 A-level results in secondary schools, with comparable figures of grades and percentages for both the maintained schools and the independent sector; and if he will make a statement on indications of changes in overall A-level standards, both for pass levels and for the higher mark grade categories.

Mr. Eggar: The table shows, for school leavers in England in 1988-89, the percentage of those attempting A-level or AS examinations who achieve UCCA points scores of 1 to 8 and 9 to 15.

School Leavers in England, 1988-89

	Maintained	*Independent*	*All Schools*
Attempting 1 or more A/AS-levels (000's)	106·46	33·00	139·49
Percentage of above who gain UCCA[1] points score 1-8	59·1	43·4	55·4
UCCA[1] points score 9-15	31·2	52·9	36·3

[1] The UCCA points score is calculated using the 3 best A-level, or paired AS examination, results. Each grade is given a score, from 5 points for a Grade A to 1 point for a grade E, and the best 3 added together. The maximum points score is therefore 15.

CIVIL SERVICE

Executive Officers

142. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service, pursuant to his written answer of 15 October relating to salaries of executive officer recruits to the civil service, if he will answer those parts of the original question that would not involve a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* No part of the original question could be answered without disproportionate cost.

THE ARTS

Regional Arts Associations

152. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will report on progress with the devolution of responsibilities to the regional arts associations.

Mr. Mellor: The Arts Council published a consultative list setting out the allocation of future funding responsibilities between itself and the regional arts boards at the end of September. This is based on the principles endorsed by my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Shoreham (Mr. Luce), which I have since further confirmed. The period of consultation expires at the end of November. Final decisions will be taken as soon as possible thereafter.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Trade Statistics

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the increase in *(a)* gross domestic product, *(b)* manufacturing output, *(c)* unemployment, *(d)* unit labour costs in manufacturing, *(e)* real wages, *(f)* inflation and *(g)* the balance of trade in manufactures between (1) 1979 and 1989 and (2) 1985 and 1989 in (i) Germany, (ii) France, (iii) Italy and (iv) the United Kingdom.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information in respect of 1979 and 1985 can be obtained from the following publications:

(a) Gross Domestic Product

"National Accounts Main Aggregates Volume I 1960-1988" published by OECD

Part 6 table 4 gives GDP at current prices and 1985 exchange rates and table 13 GDP at current prices and current exchange rates both expressed in billions of US dollars for all the countries in question.

(b) manufacturing output

Information for 1979 can be found in "Short Term Industrial Trends" and for 1985 in "Industrial Trends" published by Eurostat.

(c) unemployment

Separate tables are given for each country in "Main Economic Indicators Historical Statistics 1969-1988" published by OECD.

(d) unit labour costs costs in manufacturing

Separate tables are given for Germany and the United Kingdom in "Main Economic Indicators Historical Statistics 1969-1988" published by OECD. Data are not available for France and Italy.

(e) real wages

Information on compensation of employees which includes all payments in cash and in kind made by employers in remuneration for the work done by their employees is given in Table J in "National Accounts ESA Aggregates 1970-1988 Theme 2 Series C" published by Eurostat.

(f) inflation

Separate tables showing consumer price indices are given for each country in "Main Economic Indicators Historical Statistics 1969-1988" published by OECD.

(g) balance of trade in manufactures

This can be calculated from data in "External Trade Statistics Year Book 1988 edition Theme 6 Series A" published by Eurostat.

Information in respect of 1989 can be obtained from the following publications:

(a) gross domestic product

Part III (Appendix) in "Main Economic Indicators" published monthly by OECD gives GDP at current prices and 1985 exchange rates and GDP at current prices and current exchange rates both expressed in billions of US dollars for all the countries in question.

(b) manufacturing output

"Industrial Trends" published by Eurostat.

(c) unemployment

Information can be found in the various country tables published in "Main Economic Indicators" published monthly by OECD.

(d) unit labour costs in manufacturing

Information can be found in the various country tables published in "Main Economic Indicators" published monthly by OECD.

(e) real wages

Not yet available.

(f) inflation

Information on Consumer price indices appears in Part I (Indicators by subject) in "Main Economic Indicators" published monthly by OECD.

(g) balance of trade in manufactures

This can be calculated from data in "External Trade Monthly Statistics Theme 6 Series B" published by Eurostat.

Copies of all these publications are available in the Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the time lag between changes in the International Monetary Fund index of the trade-weighted relative price of United Kingdom exports of manufacturers and changes in the United Kingdom balance of trade in manufactures in terms of value; what index figure is reflected in the latest trade figures; and by how much the index has since increased as a result of *(a)* the higher rate of inflation in the United Kingdom and *(b)* the increase in the nominal rate of exchange.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Changes in the IMF index of the trade-weighted relative price of United Kingdom exports of manufactures can to some extent have a contemporaneous effect on the value of United Kingdom exports and, hence, the balance of trade. The full effect, of course, takes longer to work through and estimates are subject to considerable uncertainty. The balance of trade is also influenced by the growth of home and overseas demand, and by non-price competitiveness which has improved markedly in the 1980s as a result of the Government's supply side measures. The IMF will publish the level of the index of trade-weighted United Kingdom relative prices relating to recent months in due course.

Financial Statistics

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what Budget surplus or deficit he anticipates for 1990-91; what he expects the inflation rate to be at the turn of the year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maples: It is clear that policy is now reducing inflationary pressures in the economy. The prospect is for a substantial reduction in inflation over the coming year. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will publish revised forecasts of inflation and of the public finances in the autumn statement.

Mortgage Repossessions

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the number of repossessions by building societies for each of the years since 1979 in *(a)* Nottingham, *(b)* the east midlands region and *(c)* nationally.

Mr. Maples: Statistics are not available in respect of Nottingham and the east midlands region. The figures published by the Council of Mortgage Lenders for the number of repossessions nationally by building societies and the Abbey National are as follows:

Year	*Number*
1979	2,530
1980	3,020
1981	4,240
1982	5,950
1983	7,320
1984	10,870
1985	16,770
1986	20,930
1987	22,930
1988	16,090
1989	13,740
[1]1990	14,390

[1] first half.

Duty-free Sales

Mr. Cash To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy on the elimination of duty-free sales under the EC treaty or the Single European Act; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The European Commission has made it clear that as a consequence of the completion of the single market, duty-free shopping for intra-Community travellers should cease. However, the Commission has not yet come forward with firm proposals for this.

The Government understand the Commission's view that it makes no sense to grant a tax concession for crossing a frontier when fiscal frontiers have been removed. Equally, the Government are aware of the economic significance of the duty-free trade and will examine all the arguments carefully before a decision is reached.

Tax Fraud

Mr. Nellist To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in relation to tax fraud, he will list *(a)* the number of investigators in the Inland Revenue, *(b)* the number of investigations in 1989-90, *(c)* the number of prosecutions in 1989-90, *(d)* the cost of these operations in 1989-90, *(e)* his estimate of the net tax collected and *(f)* *(e)* divided by *(d)*, expressed as £s collected for every £ of cost.

Mr. Francis Maude: During 1989-90 a total of 3,200 Inland Revenue staff units completed 110,000 investigations into possible or actual tax fraud. These investigations cost £89 million and yielded £941 million: a yield of approximately £10·50 for every £1 spent. There were 235 prosecutions for offences related to tax fraud in the year.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, during recent meetings of the European Council of Finance Ministers, he raised with his Italian counterpart the role of the Italian state-owned Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) in providing investment capital to Iraq.

Mr. Maude: No.

Mr. Flynn To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has had any discussions with the Governor of the Bank of England concerning the underwriting of contracts signed by United Kingdom companies with Iraq prior to 2 August, for the construction of facilities contracted by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning.

Mr. Maples: No.

Charities (VAT)

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the annual savings in total to registered charities as a result of being zero-rated for value added tax purposes for each of the past five years; and what was the estimated total for the current financial year.

Mr. Ryder: Charities as such are not zero-rated, but they benefit from various VAT reliefs on certain supplies they make and on certain goods and services they buy in, which are zero-rated by virtue of their intended use. They also benefit from the more general zero-rating of some everyday items, such as food. No precise information is available, but it is estimated that these zero-ratings save charities this year some £300 million in tax: a total roughly the same in today's terms for each of the last five years.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what options are currently under consideration in respect to harmonisation of value added tax rules by 1992 or any other target date; what discussions he has undertaken with the EEC or other Governments on this topic; and if he will make a statement on his policy in respect to the protection of charitable bodies in the United Kingdom from any adverse effects.

Mr. Ryder: The EC Commission now envisages more flexibility in the setting of VAT rates than was apparent in its original proposals for the single market. The Government have welcomed the revised thinking but have made it clear that they still do not consider centrally determined tax approximation to be appropriate or necessary. They have also resisted the suggestion that zero rates after 1992 should be restricted in scope and subject to certain conditions. The United Kingdom position remains that our zero rates as a whole, and not just those of particular interest to charities, are not a pertinent issue for the completion of the single market.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact on the work of voluntary organisations in Wales of any harmonisation of

value added tax which might end the zero-rated concessions currently in force; how much money would be involved; and what action he intends to take to protect the whole of voluntary and charitable organisations in Wales.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have no reliable figures on the extent to which voluntary bodies in Wales benefit from VAT reliefs, but are opposing any tax approximation proposals for the single market which would further restrict our ability to use zero rates. EC decisions in tax matters require the unanimous agreement of all member states, and there is no question of any unwelcome proposals being forced upon us.

North Sea Oil

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total tax on North sea oil production, including royalties, paid by oil companies in August and September 1990 and the equivalent in 1989.

Mr. Maples: Total receipts from tax on North sea oil production, including royalties, were £595 million in August and September 1990 and £523 million in August and September 1989.

Debt Relief

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much official debt is owed by Tanzania and Uganda; how much debt relief each has received under the Toronto terms; and what calculation the Treasury has made of the likely level of debt relief under Trinidad terms.

Mr. Maples *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* At end 1988, the total official long-term debt owed by Tanzania and Uganda was $4 billion, and $1·6 billion respectively. Tanzania has received two reschedulings on Toronto terms, consolidating a total of $576 million. Uganda has received one rescheduling on Toronto terms which consolidated $89 million. The cash flow saving from these Toronto terms reschedulings compared with the effect of non-concessional rescheduling is therefore about $20 million each year for Tanzania and about $3 million each year for Uganda. If all official bilateral creditors, including the non-OECD creditors, were to implement Trinidad terms the stock of debt would be reduced by a total of about $1·6 billion for Tanzania, and $0·3 billion for Uganda.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Shore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what conditions for the entry of sterling into the ERM, other than the DM2·95 central rate and the 6 per cent. margins, were sought by Her Majesty's Government and agreed to by the other European Community countries.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The central rates and fluctuation margins, which we proposed in exercising our right to take sterling into the exchange rate mechanism, were determined by mutual agreement. No conditions for entry were sought or agreed to.

Mr. Shore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer now that the pound is in the ERM, what assistance, through the very short-term fund facility from the other central banks, is available to the Bank of England for the purpose of holding the rate within its agreed margins.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The Bank of England has available very short-term credit facilities with the other participating central banks. These are automatically available and unlimited in amount for financing intervention at the compulsory intervention rates. They may also be made available by arrangement for intervention within the agreed margins.

Mr. Shore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who were the analysts who calculated the pound's purchasing power parity at DM3·30, DM3·19 and DM2·95, respectively; and what publication of the International Monetary Fund suggested that industry would be competitive at the DM2·95 rate.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The analysts were Phillips and Drew, Goldman-Sachs and the London Business School. The International Monetary Fund publication was "International Financial Statistics".

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in the *Official Report* the inflation-adjusted real exchange rate for each quarter since the second quarter of 1979, using the definition that he was using when he referred to the average inflation-adjusted real rate of the past decade being DM2·95, *Official Report*, 15 October, column 931.

Mr. Maples *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The figures are shown in the table.

Real deutschemark sterling exchange rate

	Rate
1979	
Q2	2·36
Q3	2·57
Q4	2·48
1980	
Q1	2·69
Q2	2·86
Q3	3·02
Q4	3·34
1981	
Q1	3·59
Q2	3·55
Q3	3·37
Q4	3·21
1982	
Q1	3·33
Q2	3·27
Q3	3·33
Q4	3·25
1983	
Q1	2·90
Q2	3·04
Q3	3·15
Q4	3·14
1984	
Q1	3·10
Q2	3·07
Q3	3·08
Q4	3·05
1985	
Q1	3·01
Q2	3·25
Q3	3·30
Q4	3·15
1986	
Q1	2·85
Q2	2·86
Q3	2·61
Q4	2·43
1987	
Q1	2·41
Q2	2·56

	Rate
Q3	2·60
Q4	2·64
1988	
Q1	2·69
Q2	2·85
Q3	2·91
Q4	2·96
1989	
Q1	3·04
Q2	3·00
Q3	2·92
Q4	2·78
1990	
Q1	2·71
Q2	2·77
Q3	2·96

Notes:
(i) Real exchange rate calculated using gdp deflators.
(ii) Deflators used for most recent observations are partly estimated.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Local Government Finance

65. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what letters of support he has received for the practice of collection of the poll tax from tenants of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have had no letters for or against the collection of the community charge from duchy tenants.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Social Security Commissioner

Ms. Short: To ask the Attorney-General what is the average cost to the office of the social security commissioners of an appeal to the social security commissioners.

The Attorney-General: The average cost to the office of the social security commissioners of an appeal to the social security commissioner is estimated at £430. This figure excludes accommodation, but includes staff costs and the costs of the social security commissioner.

Divorce (Legal Aid)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement about the amount of legal aid paid in respect of divorce cases during each of the past three years.

The Attorney-General: The gross amount of legal aid paid in respect of divorce and related matters during each of the past three years is as follows:

	£'000
1987-88	90,059
1988-89	108,366
1989-90	110,564

Those figures do not include Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act and Married Women's Property Act cases.

"Holocaust News"

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General what consideration has been given by the Crown prosecution service to initiating proceedings in respect of the publication "Holocaust News" distributed by the British National Party.

The Solicitor-General: The Crown prosecution service decided in 1987 not to institute proceedings in respect of the publication "Holocaust News, No. 1".

The Crown prosecution service has requested the police to investigate the circumstances of the publication and distribution of the publication "Holocaust News, No. 2", and a decision whether or not to initiate proceedings against any person will be taken when the results of the investigation have been received.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Stationery

71. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will take steps to improve and extend the range of everyday stationery items available to hon. Members.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The present range of stationery is designed to meet the needs of Members bearing in mind the limited storage space available. If my hon. Friend has a specific request he should contact the Serjeant at Arms.

ENERGY

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he, or officials from his Department, have been invited to participate in the international conference on quality management in the nuclear industry, to be held at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in London on 17-18 October.

Mr. Baldry: No.

Wave Power

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he or officials of his Department were invited to appear on the Thames Television programme "This Week" on wave power, broadcast on 27 September; and if he will obtain a copy of the transcript or a videocassette for his departmental library.

Mr. Wakeham: I am often invited to participate in a whole range of programmes. While I did not appear on the Thames Television programme "This Week" on wave power, my officials gave the programme makers extensive background briefing. It is not my Department's usual policy to obtain a copy of the transcript or a video cassette for its library.

Research Projects

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what financial support the Goverment are giving *(a)* to coal gasification research projects and *(b)* to research into pressurised fluidised bed combustion technologies in 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: My Department is providing £870,000 on coal gasification, of which nearly £600,000 falls in 1990-91, which represents about 15 per cent. of the total expenditure on the project.

My Department has offered to provide 50 per cent. of the cost of the experimental work at Grimethorpe on the topping cycle concept, up to £8 million. British Coal is currently pursuing negotiations with possible industrial partners and the level of Government support cannot be settled until those negotiations are completed.

Petrol

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the national consumption of petrol in August and September 1990; and what were the equivalent figures in 1989.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on Friday 19 October, *Official Report*, columns *964-65*.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has made since July 1990 to the oil companies about petrol prices.

Mr. Wakeham: I have encouraged United Kingdom oil companies to exercise restraint and not to increase prices any more than necessary. The companies have delayed price increases, and the Director General of Fair Trading found in his report of 28 September that restraint was being shown. The companies have made a number of decreases in pump prices over the last two weeks following decreases in the international market.

Non-fossil Fuel Obligation

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy for what reasons power generated from Scotland does not qualify for inclusion under the non-fossil fuel obligation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 8 February 1990, at column *724*.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the underwriters for the sale of the electricity distribution companies and the estimated total fees payable.

Mr. Wakeham: It has not yet been decided who the underwriters on the sale of the regional electricity companies will be, nor has the level of their fees been fixed. These items will be settled only once the price and terms of the offer for sale are agreed and following a competitive auction on underwriting rates.

International Atomic Energy Agency

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what action will be taken by the United Kingdom Government to ensure that any nuclear materials or nuclear installations transferred from military to peaceful usage are verified under the existing voluntary offer safeguards agreements of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Wakeham: All civil nuclear material held in the United Kingdom, including any material transferred into safeguards, is subject to Euratom safeguards under the Euratom treaty of 1957 and to the terms of the United Kingdom-Euratom-International Atomic Energy Agency voluntary offer safeguards agreement of 6 September 1976 —IAEA INFCIRC 263.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish any proposals made by Her Majesty's Government to the International Atomic Energy Agency conference at the end of September relating to the annual International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards implementation report.

Mr. Baldry: No proposals were tabled by the United Kingdom delegation concerning the annual International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards implementation report during the International Atomic Energy Agency general conference in September.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether the United Kingdom Government or any other Government raised the issue of International Atomic Energy Agency application of safeguards during the International Atomic Energy Agency annual conference in Vienna during September, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: During the recent International Atomic Energy Agency general conference many delegations, including that of the United Kingdom, expressed their continuing strong support for the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system.

Electricity Demand

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his Department's estimate of the likely system maximum demand for electricity in 2000.

Mr. Wakeham: The level of system maximum demand is highly uncertain and will depend on, among other things, the rate of economic growth, relative fuel prices and the relationship between generation and system maximum demand. Two possible scenarios of future electricity generation in 2005 and 2020 were published in "Energy Paper No. 58", a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the net amount of electricity imported from France in 1989; what proportion this represented of electricity consumed; and what are his Department's estimates of the equivalent figures for 1995 and 2000, respectively.

Mr. Wakeham: In 1989 net imports of electricity from France amounted to 12·6 terawatt hours, representing 4 per cent. of total electricity available from public supply and industrial producers.

Future import levels are uncertain and will depend largely on decisions taken by the market.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of electricity is generated from coal, gas, nuclear and renewables, respectively, now; and what is his Department's estimate of the likely proportions in 1995 and 2000, respectively.

Mr. Wakeham: The proportions of fuel used to generate electricity in 1989 are as follows:

Fuel used in electricity generation	Per cent. share
Coal	69
Nuclear	21
Oil[2]	8
Renewables[3]	2

The amount of gas used to generate electricity accounts for less than 0·1 per cent. of the total. Future proportions of fuel used are uncertain and will depend largely on decisions taken by the market. Two possible scenarios for 2005 were published in "Energy Paper No. 58"—table 4.10—a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

1. Information published in Energy Trends, Table 16. Coverage is for the generating companies formerly comprising the public electricity supply system: National Power, PowerGen, Nuclear Electric, National Grid Company, Scottish Power, Scottish Hydro, Scottish Nuclear, Northern Ireland Electricity Service, Midlands Electricity and South Western Electricity.
2. Including oil used in gas turbines and diesel plant or for lighting up coal fired boilers, and Orimulsion.
3. Mainly natural flow hydro.

PowerGen

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he is now prepared to disclose when he first had discussions with Lord Hanson about the possibility of a trade sale of PowerGen.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 26 July, at column *523*.

Radiological Protection

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the outcome of the development of the EXPURT computer model on exposure from urban radionuclide transfer developed by the National Radiological Protection Board.

Mr. Baldry: The EXPURT model—exposure from urban radionuclide transfer—has been developed by National Radiological Protection Board over a number of years with support from the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate and the European Community. It is intended primarily for use in assessing radiation doses received by the population resulting from accidental releases of radioactivity.

A report by the National Radiological Protection Board describing the current state of development of the model has recently been published and I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

Piper Alpha

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has received the report into Piper Alpha chaired by the Lord Cullen; and when he expects this to be published.

Mr. Wakeham *[pursuant to his reply, 19 October 1990, c. 967]:* I have today received Lord Cullen's report. I am arranging for this substantial document to be printed and presented to the House, and I shall make a statement as soon as possible.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Automobile-related Crime

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking in relation to automobile-related crime.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend met the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders in June, and asked it to consult members, and report back, on the following issues:

(i) how progress could best be made in Europe towards a new mandatory common standard on car security;
(ii) what plans manufacturers have for voluntarily building better security—particularly improved locks and locking mechanisms—into their new cars; and
(iii) what manufacturers are doing to encourage car buyers to give a higher priority to car security when buying a new car.

We are awaiting the society's report.

Officials are discussing with the Consumers Association, the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association and the insurance industry how they might assist with initiatives aimed at tackling car crime. We are also producing a car theft index to show which makes and models of cars are most likely to be the subject of crime.

Car crime has continued to receive a high priority in our crime prevention publicity campaign, including TV and press advertisements and our crime prevention handbook "Practical Ways to Crack Crime"—over 3 million copies of which have been distributed—and the briefer "Family Guide"—over 2 million copies of which have been distributed.

Romania

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications he has received for the adoption of mentally handicapped children from Romania since the fall of the Ceausescu regime, showing the results of these applications;

(2) what is the policy of his Department towards the adoption of mentally handicapped children from Romania.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Every application for entry clearance on behalf of a child adopted in Romania, or who is coming here for adoption, is considered on its merits as a matter of discretion outside the immigration rules. The main consideration is whether the proposed adoption is in the child's best interests. Only one such application has been made on behalf of a child who is known to be mentally handicapped. This application was made on 7 June 1990 and approved on 16 July. I wrote to the hon. Member about this case on 19 July.

Electoral Registration, Finchley

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what investigations have been undertaken by his Department into the decline in electoral registration in the Finchley parliamentary constituency following the figures published in 1988, 1989 and 1990; and what were the findings of these investigations.

Mrs. Rumbold: None. I understand, however, that in 1990 the electoral registration officer for the London borough of Barnet, which includes Finchley parliamentary

constituency, removed from the register for the borough the names of over 8,000 people about whom no information has been received for three or more years, and who, therefore, no longer appeared to be eligible for inclusion.

Energy Planning

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he or officials of his Department have been invited to participate in the conference on emergency planning organised by International Business Communications in London on 29 October.

Mr. John Patten: In July officials were asked to provide a speaker on the implications of 1992 for the emergency planning community. After discussion, it was agreed that the Health and Safety Executive would provide a speaker. Home Office officials will not be attending this conference arranged by International Business Communications, but will receive copies of the conference papers.

Dispersal Prisons

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the latest available figures for staff-inmate ratios in dispersal prisons during the time that inmates are unlocked.

Mrs. Rumbold: Inmates in dispersal prisons are unlocked from about eight in the morning until eight at night and the ratio of staff to inmates varies throughout this period. On a midweek afternoon when the largest number of regime activities, including work, education and visits are in operation, the number of prison officers to inmates would normally be as follows:

	Officers on duty[1]	*Number of inmates at 18 October*	*Ratio*
Albany	113	377	1:3·3
Frankland	185	398	1:2·2
Full Sutton	175	436	1:2·5
Gartree	122	311	1:2·6
Long Lartin	150	430	1:2·9
Parkhurst	177	234	1:1·3
Wakefield	205	704	1:3·4

[1]includes principal and senior officers and specialists.

The variations in staffing levels reflect a number of factors including differences in physical design and in the provision of certain particularly staff intensive facilities such as a psychiatric wing or a special secure unit.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current cost per inmate per week in each dispersal prison.

Mrs. Rumbold: The cost per inmate per week in each dispersal prison in 1989-90, the latest figures available, are:

Establishment	£
Albany	532
Frankland	600
Full Sutton	600
Gartree	600
Long Lartin	550
Parkhurst	882
Wakefield	390

Prison Officers

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers who graduated earlier this month from the Newbold prison officer training school expressed a wish to be placed in posts at prisons within the Yorkshire area; and how many were actually placed in posts within Yorkshire.

Mrs. Rumbold: Twenty-one of the 180 officers who completed their training at Newbold Revel on 12 October named an establishment in North, South or West Yorkshire as their first choice. None was posted there, such vacancies as there were being filled by existing officers with longstanding requests for a transfer.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letter of 6 August from the Prison Officers Association branch at Her Majesty's prison, Wakefield, regarding staffing levels.

Mrs. Rumbold: The letter concerned a dispute about the staffing of Her Majesty's prison, Wakefield which was resolved at a national disputes meetings on 2 October. In the light of the outcome of that meeting, one of my officials replied to the letter on 18 October.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the prison officer staffing levels agreed under "fresh start" for Her Majesty's prison, Wakefield and the actual number in post for 1 April 1988, 1 April 1989 and 1 April 1990; and what information he has on the reasons for the differences in these figures.

Mrs. Rumbold: Wakefield prison went on to "fresh start" in April 1988. A staffing level of 429 officers, including principal and senior officers and specialists, was set by the regional director. The actual number of officers in post on the dates in question was:

1 April	*Number of officers*
1988	406
1989	426
1990	440

In setting the original staffing level and in determining subsequently the resources to be allocated to Wakefield, the regional director took account of the needs of the establishment relative to the others in his region and of the contribution which it was able too make to the efficiency improvements which were an integral part of the "fresh start" package.

Lorrain Osman

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long has Lorrain Osman now been in prison on remand.

Mrs. Rumbold: Mr. Osman was held on remand only from 7 December 1985 until 1 June 1987. On that date he was committed to custody by the chief metropolitan stipendiary magistrate to await the Secretary of State's order for his surrender. The Secretary of State has been prevented from completing his consideration of the extradition request from Hong Kong because of the series of appeals initiated by Mr. Osman, the last of which is outstanding.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the longest time any prisoner has been imprisoned on remand *(a)* in the last 30 years, *(b)* in the last 20 years and *(c)* in the last 10 years.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information about the longest periods held in remand during the last 30 years is not available centrally. On 30 June 1990 one unconvicted prisoner had been held in Pentonville prison for more than four and a half years having been committed to custody pending completion of extradition proceedings. An indication of the length of time spent in prison service establishments by person received on remand is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales"—tables 2.3 and 2.4 of the latest issue, for 1989, Cm. 1221, copies of which are in the Library.

Ritual Murder (Leaflet)

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what investigations the police are conducting into the identity of those responsible for publication or distribution of the leaflet "Another Blood Libel or Ritual Murder".

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that inquiries have established that the names given for the publisher and the printer of the leaflet are false. The investigation is continuing.

RELATE

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what financial contributions his Department is making to RELATE; if it plans to increase its contribution; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: In the present financial year RELATE will receive a grant of £1,306,840, which includes a special grant of £300,000. I am not yet in a position to say what its grant for the following year will be.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the inquiry by the Devon and Cornwall police into the Birmingham pub bombings to be complete; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: In the light of new information discovered by the Devon and Cornwall constabulary, my right hon. and learned Friend referred the cases of the Birmingham Six to the Court of Appeal on 29 August. Any further police inquiries into these cases in connection with the hearing before the Court of Appeal are a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions.

AIDS (Police Information)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any information or data are recorded, referenced or retained by the police on their manual files or upon computer, including the national police computer, the Metropolitan police computer and any other constabulary computer, which describes, or can identify, an individual as being antibody positive to a test for human immunodeficiency virus or as having an AIDS diagnosis or any related human immunodeficiency virus illness or which describes that individual as being contagious as a consequence of such diagnosis; whether guidelines have been issued to the police in relation to the recording of such information; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister of State, the Earl Ferrers, wrote to the hon. Member on 16 October on these matters. As he explained in the letter, it is for chief officers to decide what information to keep on local force computers and manual records. He also confirmed that police forces are able to record on the police national computer information on the health or likely behaviour of a person where such information would be of help to them in dealing with that person. The reply to a question by the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) on 15 October at column *725*, sets out the warning signals which may be used on the police national computer. These include a warning that the subject of the record may be a hazard to others as a carrier of diseases. It is for the police to decide whether to use this or any other warning signal.

PRIME MINISTER

Green Issues

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister what benefits Her Majesty's Government gained from the attendance by an official of her efficiency unit at the Royal Institute for Public Administration conference on greening the way we govern at Royal Holloway college on 21-22 September.

The Prime Minister: I understand that a member of the efficiency unit accepted a personal invitation to chair a session on "Environment, accountability and value for money". No costs were incurred by Government.

Romanian Children

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister what initiative she put forward to support Romanian children suffering from AIDS and other diseases during her visit to the United Nations conference on children in New York in September.

The Prime Minister: At the world summit for children. I signed the world declaration on the survival, protection and development of children and supported the plan of action. Both documents recognised the urgent need to accord a high priority to health care and to AIDS programmes for children in all countries, including Romania.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will include in the *Official Report* a table showing, for each of the last 10 Sessions, the ratio of statutory instruments introduced by the negative resolution procedure to those by the affirmative resolution procedure.

The Prime Minister: Figures for the numbers of statutory instruments laid before the House each Session are not readily available. However, all instruments laid, with the exception of Orders in Council and draft Orders

in Council made or proposed to be made under paragraph 1 of schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Act 1974, are considered by the Joint or Select Committee on Statutory Instruments. The following figures, derived from the sessional returns relating the delegated legislation, are based on instruments considered by these Committees during each of the last 10 full Sessions. Excluded from the figures are statutory rules of Northern Ireland, special procedure orders and all instruments which are not subject to parliamentary procedure.

Session	*Instruments considered by the Joint or Select Committee on Statutory Instruments*		
	Instruments subject to annulment A	*Instruments subject to affirmative procedure* B	*Ratio A:B*
1979-80	1,010	235	4·30:1
1980-81	755	130	5·81:1
1981-82	686	121	5·72:1
1982-83	455	99	4·60:1
1983-84	863	180	4·79:1
1984-85	637	158	4·03:1
1985-86	815	158	5·16:1
1986-87	462	117	3·95:1
1987-88	1,179	246	4·79:1
1988-89	854	160	5·34:1

Leaks

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister (1) how many persons elected to the office of Member of Parliament, office holders and non-office holders, other than the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister knew, prior to 4 pm on Friday 5 October, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's intention to announce in October either a cut in base rates or entry into the exchange rate mechanism;

(2) whether she will institute a full leak inquiry into how information relating to the cut in base rates and exchange rate mechanism entry was known to individuals in the City of London more than one and a half hours prior to the statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at 4 pm on Friday 5 October;

(3) how many civil servants knew prior to 4 pm on Friday 5 October of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's intention to announce in October either a cut in base rate or entry into the exchange rate mechanism.

The Prime Minister: Only those with an operational need to know were informed prior to 4 pm on Friday 5 October of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's intention to announce a cut in base rates and the Government's decision to enter the exchange rate mechanism on Monday 8 October.

I have no evidence to suggest that information relating to the cut in base rates and entry in to the exchange rate mechanism was known to anyone in the City of London outside the Bank of England prior to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement. If the hon. Gentleman believes that he has such evidence he should make it available to the appropriate authorities.

Foreign Troops (Training)

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Prime Minister which Government Department is responsible for granting approval to companies seeking to provide millitary training for foreign military forces when such training involves the release of United Kingdom classified information.

The Prime Minister: Were any such requests for approval to be made, they would be considered by the Department or Departments which had originated the United Kingdom classified information concerned.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to open; what discussions he has had concerning the bank recently; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will be able to start operations when so authorised by the inaugural meeting of its board of governors. This will be held when the bank's articles of agreement have been ratified by members with two thirds of the total voting power, to include at least two borrowing members. The ratification process is likely to be concluded by next spring.

I opened the second conference of prospective members of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development at Lancaster house today which will review progress in developing a sound operational framework for the new bank. I am confident that the bank will soon be able to play its part in fostering private enterprise and economic development in central and eastern European countries committed to democratic principles and market economics.

Cambodia

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list for 1988, 1989 and 1990 to the most recent practicable date the development aid given to Cambodia by the United Kingdom Government; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on 15 October, at column *633*. Britain has no Government-to-Government aid programme in Cambodia, but details of humanitarian aid provided to Cambodians since 1988-89 is as follows:

A. Projects co-funded with British non-governmental organisations

Project	*Disbursed*		*Committed*
	1988-89 (£)	*1989-90* (£)	*1990-91* (£)
Support for Primary and Secondary Schools	—	13,884	—
Community Schools	15,000	—	—
World Council of Churches	21,490	—	—
Preventative Health Care Services, Kampot	—	—	192,250
Initial Assessment	—	5,841	—
Primary Health Care	—	8,631	—
Primary Health Care	—	—	61,433
Rural Water Supply	46,656	—	—
Takeo Canal Irrigation System	79,534	—	—
Rural Water Supply	—	—	7,570
Animal Vaccines Project	—	—	43,604

Project	Disbursed		Committed
	1988-89 (£)	1989-90 (£)	1990-91 (£)
Ministry of Agriculture	—	—	54
Agricultural Development	—	33,270	—
Engineering Assistance Programme	—	—	35,985
	162,680	61,626	340,896

B. Multilateral agencies working inside Cambodia

Agency and Programme	1988-89 (£)	1989-90 (£)	1990-91 (£)
United Nations Children's Fund			
Health, water, nutrition, sanitation and education	250,000	250,000	500,000
Food and Agriculture Organisation			
Animal vaccines	100,000	—	—
World Health Organisation			
Anti-malaria	—	—	200,000
World Food Programme			
To support UNICEF's well and pond digging programme	—	—	300,000
	350,000	250,000	1,000,000

C. Assistance to Cambodians on Thai/Cambodia border

	1988-89 (£)	1989-90 (£)	1990-91 (£)
UNBRO	350,000	500,000	[1]—
Humanitarian Aid to non-communist Cambodian refugees	100,000	100,000	—
NGOs	100,000	60,000	44,000
ICRC	50,000	—	—
	600,000	660,000	44,000

[1] 1990 contribution to UNBRO made in first quarter of year.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reason a proposal for the repair of a water filtration plant in Cambodia was turned down.

Mrs. Chalker: Oxfam applied in 1988 for co-funding of a water distribution project in Phnom Penh under our joint funding scheme. When we told non-governmental organisations, including Oxfam, that we were prepared to support projects in Cambodia, we indicated that we would prefer to consider smaller-scale development projects with a humanitarian element and not infrastructural projects concerned with restoring or maintaining major public utilities which are more usually the concern of government rather than non-governmental organisations.

This project fell into that second category and was therefore rejected. Since 1988-89 we have committed £565,000 to co-fund 12 projects in Cambodia carried out by non-governmental organisations, including five from Oxfam, and are currently considering five new proposals, including three from Oxfam.

Developing Countries (Conference)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution his Department made to the 11th review conference of CAB International on technological assistance and ecological protection in developing countries, held in London at the end of July.

Mrs. Chalker: I gave the opening address at CAB International's 11th review conference. My Department represented the dependent territories at the conference and one of my senior officials was a member of the United Kingdom delegation. Following the conference we are considering with CAB International possible forms of assistance during its transition to a more commercial footing. My Department was also represented at CAB International's workshop on the ecological foundations of sustainable agriculture which was held a few days before the review conference.

Brazil

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he or officials in his Department have had with Ministers or officials of the Brazilian Government in regard to technical and planning assistance available from the United Kingdom to support RIMA environment impact studies, in particular on the development of ecologically balanced projects in the Amazonian rain forests.

Mrs. Chalker: There have been discussions between officials about assistance for training in environmental impact assessment. A proposal for British support for a joint review of Brazil's environmental impact assessment needs is at a preliminary planning stage and requires detailed discussions with the Brazilian Government. All project proposals for British support in Brazil are of course assessed for their likely environmental impact. Under our bilateral programmes we can support Brazilians to undertake in the United Kingdom training in environmental assessment techniques.

South America

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government have plans to discuss further the rescheduling of the external debts of those countries in South America which are currently allocating significant resources to the task of preserving remaining areas of natural rain forest.

Mrs. Chalker: The Government recognise that many of those countries in South America with large areas of rain forest face serious debt problems.

The Paris club is always ready to discuss, where necessary, the rescheduling of official debt for countries pursuing IMF-agreed economic reform programmes.

Much of the South American countries' debt belongs to commercial banks: arrangements for dealing with this debt are a matter for negotiation between the debtor countries and the banks within the framework of the strengthened debt strategy.

Pergau Hydro-electric Project

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much aid has been offered under the aid and trade provision to support contracts between the Malaysian Government and Balfour Beatty, General Electric Company, and Trafalgar House for the Pergau hydro-electric project.

Mrs. Chalker: An offer of a grant of up to £68·25 million from the aid and trade provision, based on an estimated contract value of £316 million, was made on 17 April 1989. An extension of this offer expired on 17 October 1990. A further extension remains a possibility, but no decisions have been taken.

WALES

Lorries (Magor and Undy)

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he proposes concerning the petition from the No Lorries Through Magor and Undy Action Group presented at the Welsh Office, Cardiff on Friday 12 October.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The petition is being taken into account in the consideration of construction traffic routes in Gwent.

Young People (Secure Accommodation)

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list for each local social services authority in Wales for each of the years 1975, 1980, 1985, 1987, 1988 and 1989 the number of placements made in facilities providing secure accommodation and indicate what proportion of those children in the care of the home authority such a number represents;

(2) if he will list for each facility in Wales providing secure accommodation for young persons for each of the years 1975, 1980, 1985, 1987, 1988 and 1989 the number and proportion of young persons so accommodated on behalf of a local social services authority other than that providing the secure accommodation.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on Thursday 18 October.

Nurses Grading

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many clinical regrading appeals by nurses in Wales were still awaiting a decision on 1 October or on the nearest date for which this information is available; and how many appeals were dealt with in each month in 1990;

(2) how many clinical regrading appeals by nurses were still awaiting a decision in each health authority area in Wales on 1 October or on the nearest date for which this information is available; and how many appeals were dealt with in each health authority area in Wales in each month in 1990.

Mr. Grist: The latest information available is as shown in the table:

Number of appeals outstanding (October 1990)

District health authority	*Number*
Clwyd	209
East Dyfed	112
Gwent	588
Gwynedd	—
Mid Glamorgan	699
Pembrokeshire	79
Powys	57
South Glamorgan	396
West Glamorgan	42
Total—Wales	2,182

Details of numbers of appeals dealt with each month are not held centrally.

Intensive Care Beds

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of designated intensive care beds in *(a)* each district health authority in Wales and *(b)* in each district general hospital in Wales in each of the years 1980 to 1990.

Mr. Grist: Details of the beds allocated to intensive therapy units for the years 1980 to 1988-89 are published in the relevant issues of "Hospital Bed Use Statistics", copies of which are in the Library. Beds allocated to ITUs as at 31 March 1990 are given in the table:

Authority/hospital	*Beds allocated*
Clwyd	
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	6
Ysbyty Maelor	6
Total	12
East Dyfed	
Bronglais	4
West Wales General	3
Total	7
Gwent	
Nevill Hall	6
Royal Gwent	7
Total	13
Gwynedd	
Ysbyty Gwynedd	7
Mid Glamorgan	
Princess of Wales	8
East Glamorgan General	6
Prince Charles	4
Total	18
South Glamorgan	
University Hospital of Wales	16
Cardiff Royal Infirmary	6
Llandough	4
Total	26
West Glamorgan	
Morriston	7
Neath General	9
Total	16
Pembrokeshire	
Withybush	2

Infertility

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish the most recent figures available showing the number of clinics in Wales offering *(a)* IVA, GIFT and other procedures and *(b)* GIFT and other procedures but excluding IVA; and if he will also publish the total numbers of (i) single, (ii) twin, (iii) triplet, (iv) quadruplet, (v) quintuplet and (vi) sextuplet pregnancies following GIFT procedures in each category of clinic.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not available centrally. However, some information on these matters is published in the annual report of the Interim Licensing Authority, a copy of which is available in the Library. The Interim Licensing Authority was established by the Medical Research Council and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1985.

It is expected that in future some of the data requested will be available from the IVF register, which has been set up by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys with funding from the Department.

European Regional Development Fund

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the annual sums of money committed since the inception of the European regional development fund to each recipient local authority and the annual amount paid to each from the fund.

Mr. David Hunt: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Childbirth Statistics

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish figures for 1988 and 1989 showing the estimated percentage of women delivering in Wales *(a)* whose labours were induced, *(b)* whose labours were of spontaneous onset and *(c)* who had elective caesarean section.

Mr. Grist: The available information is given in the table. Information for 1989 is not yet available.

Estimated percentages of hospital deliveries by type of onset of labour: Wales 1988

Type of onset of labour	*Percentage*
Induced	4
Spontaneous	84
Elective caesarean	5
Other caesarean	7

Note: The information is based on OPCS 4th revision codes for the classification of surgical operations and procedures which were introduced in 1988.

Sewage

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consideration he has given to setting special requirements in respect of the treatment of sewage from hospitals in Wales in general and particularly in regard to Ysbyty Gwynedd; what factors were taken into account; and what conclusions were reached.

Mr. Grist: Under the Water Act 1989, the setting of discharge consents is a matter for the National Rivers Authority.

Rents to Mortgages

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many sales have been completed under the rents to mortgages scheme.

Mr. Grist: Out of some 60 applications, 10 sales have been completed under the flexi-ownership scheme. The Development Board for Rural Wales estimates that by the end of the first year of the scheme about 5 per cent. of the eligible stock will have been sold to flexi-owners.

Grant-maintained Schools

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been received by his Department from schools wishing to opt out of local authority control in order to attain grant-maintained status.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Two.

Cot Deaths

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many deaths by sudden infant death syndrome were recorded in Wales in each of the years 1980 to 1989; and if he will make a statement as to measures which he proposes to take to reduce the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Recommendations to secure improvements in the quality of care for new-born babies and their mothers, including the establishment of a regional perinatal intensive care service and a regional paediatric pathology service at University hospital of Wales—UHW—Cardiff, were made in the perinatal mortality initiative report in 1986. Subsequently, the Secretary of State decided that an expert advisory group would be set up to consider the operational structure of the proposed regional centre and its relationship to other perinatal services in Wales. That group, chaired by Sir Eric Stroud, professor of child health at Kings College school of medicine and dentistry, produced a report "Perinatal Intensive Care Services in Wales", which was widely distributed to interested authorities and professional bodies in Wales in February this year.

The report makes a number of recommendations for the improvement of services and identifies in detail the manpower and other requirements for the development of the regional centre at UHW which will be associated with a number of regional sub-centres strategically located throughout the Principality.

Action has been put in hand to secure, by central funding, the appointment of a consultant paediatric pathologist for the regional centre at UHW. Pending this appointment part-time consultant sessions are being funded centrally. Funds are also to be made available to South Glamorgan health authority in the coming financial year to secure the services of a consultant neonatologist and a registrar in paediatrics in line with the recommendations of the report. It is also intended to establish, over the coming five-year period, a programme of developments which will lead to the provision of an integrated service of excellence. As the first stage, health authorities have been asked to prepare proposals to achieve a rationalisation of services in relation to the numbers of special care costs and neo-natal intensive care costs which the report considers necessary to meet the needs in those areas.

Available data on deaths of children resident in Wales in the years 1980 to 1989 are given as follows:

Year	Deaths of children in Wales where the term 'Sudden Infant Death' (ICD 798.0) was: Mentioned on the death certificate (Column A)	Recorded as the underlying cause (Column B)[1]
1980	75	53
1981	56	59
1982	66	49
1983	65	51
1984	51	45
1985	76	68
1986	74	[2]68
1987	98	[2]90
1988	83	[2]71
1989	67	[2]64

[1] Column B included in Column A.
[2] The introduction in 1986 of a separate death certificate for the neonatal period, that is within the period 28 days after birth, means that it is not appropriate for the practitioner to assign a single underlying cause to such deaths. These data therefore exclude deaths occurring within the first 28 days after birth.

Hospice Movement

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he intends to announce the level of funding for the hospice movement in Wales.

Mr. Grist: An announcement will be made as soon as possible.

HEALTH

Haemophiliacs

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in light of the remarks made by Mr. Justice Ognall, he will reconsider his position on compensating haemophiliac HIV sufferers who contracted the disease by way of contaminated blood products.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State gave the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 15 October at columns *664-66*.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the annual cost to the National Health Service in the Nottingham district health authority for staff who have been employed through agencies as nurses, operating department assistants, ancilliary and other staff.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Nottingham health authority has provided the following breakdown of costs to the health authority for non-NHS (agency) staff:

1989-90	
Non NHS Staff (Agency etc)	*£*
Nursing	71,455
Ancillary Staff	50,953
All other Staff	410,761
TOTAL: NON NHS STAFF (AGENCY ETC)	533,169

The cost for operating department assistants is incorporated in the figure for "all other staff".

Alternative Therapies

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to recompense qualified medical practitioners using alternative therapies under the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: There are no such plans. Registered medical practitioners may, within the services they provide to NHS patients, offer to use any of the complementary therapies if they consider it to be in the interests of their patients.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of places available annually for training students in physiotherapy in each of the last 10 years; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of existing places.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information on the number of pre-registration training places for physiotherapists was not collected before 1986. The available figures are for Great Britain and are as follows:

Year	Number
1986	987
1987	970
1988	994
1989	1,048

The responsibility for ensuring an adequate supply of training places is a matter for regional health authorities in consultation with units providing a service. Guidance has been issued which clearly places a responsibility on regional health authorities to assess demand for training and to ensure that training places are available to meet such a demand.

Air Ambulances

Mr. Moate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospital regions of the United Kingdom have the use of air ambulances; what is the basis of funding this service; and if he will institute a study into the possible provision of such a service on a nationwide basis.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not collected centrally. A study is being carried out into the services in two areas and the results will be considered in due course. The services provided in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Northern Ireland.

Residential Homes

198. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will introduce guidelines indicating the attitude local authority social services departments should take over the size, unit bed limits and staffing of registered care homes.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: There are no plans to do so at present. "Home Life"—a code of practice for residential care—already gives general guidance on such matters.

199. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received protesting at the interpretation of the provisions in the Registered Homes Act 1984 regarding unit size and bed limits by certain local authority social services departments.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A small number of letters about this has been received in the Department.

Baby Milk

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if midwives are regarded as one of the groups of relevant health professionals which should be consulted by district health authorities about the purchase of baby milk formulas.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Midwives, because of their key role in the provision of maternity care, should be among the health care professionals from whom advice is sought.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the problems which could arise from purchasing baby milk from only one manufacturer; and what guidance he has given to health authorities.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All supplies personnel are aware of the problems that may arise by purchasing any vital product from only one manufacturer.

Junior Doctors

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he intends to introduce legislation to limit the working week of junior doctors to 72 hours; or to recommend such a maximum; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The group on junior doctors' hours, which I chair, is considering a variety of changes in working practices in order to reduce onerous hours of work.

All parties on the ministerial group are aiming to reach broad agreement in principle on specific changes by the end of the year.

The Government have accepted an average 72-hour week for junior hospital doctors as a sensible long-term objective.

Secure Accommodation

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each facility providing secure accommodation for young persons for each of the years 1975, 1980, 1985, 1987, 1988 and 1989, and the number and proportion of young persons so accommodated on behalf of a local social services authority other than that providing the secure accommodation.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 18 October at column *891*.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each local social services authority for each of the years 1975, 1980, 1985, 1987, 1988 and 1989 the number of placements made in facilities providing secure accommodation; and what proportion of those children in the care of the home authority such a number represents.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The number of placements made in facilities providing secure accommodation for the years 1985 to 1988 is published in "Children accommodated in secure units during the year ended 31 March", copies of which are available in the Library. Figures for 1989 will be available shortly. This information was not collected centrally prior to 1985. Figures on proportions could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Adoption

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he intends to issue a report on adoption procedures; which categories of people have and will be consulted in the process of drawing up the report; and whether procedures for adoption of children from Romania are under consideration.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Three discussion papers were issued in September in connection with the inter-departmental review of adoption law. The papers have been circulated widely for comment among groups and individuals with an interest in adoption; and are freely available to all interested parties. Further papers in the series will follow, including a discussion paper on inter-country adoption.

New guidance was issued in September to social services departments on inter-country adoption, including adoption of Romanian children.

Copies of the adoption law review papers and of the guidance on inter-country adoption have been placed in the Library.

Incontinence Pads

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list district health authorities in England and Wales, showing which of these charge private residential nursing homes for the use of incontinence pads for national health service patients who are their residents;

(2) how many representations he has received in the current year concerning district health authorities charging private residential nursing homes for incontinence pads for national health service patients who are their residents and if he will make a statement.

(3) if he will list the standard charges by district health authorities to private residential nursing homes for the use of incontinence pads for national health service patients who are their residents.

Mr. Dorrell: We have received a number of representations about the supply of incontinence pads to private nursing and residential homes. The free provision of incontinence pads under the National Health Service Act 1977 does not extend to people living in private nursing homes; the same legislation provides that district health authorities may provide incontinence materials and other nursing aids to people in their own homes and at their discretion to residents of local authority and private residential homes. The extent to which this discretion is exercised varies from place to place and information about these decisions is not held centrally.

Infertility Treatments

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the most recent figures available showing the number of clinics in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and

Wales offering (i) IVF, GIFT and other procedures and (ii) GIFT and other procedures but excluding IVF; and if he will also publish the total numbers of *(a)* single, *(b)* twin, *(c)* triplet, *(d)* quadruplet, *(e)* quintuplet and *(f)* sextuplet pregnancies following GIFT procedures in each category of clinic.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is not available centrally. Some information on these matters is published in the annual report of the Interim Licensing Authority, a copy of which is available in the Library.

In future we expect that some of the data requested will be available from the IVF register, which has been set up by OPCS with funding from the Department.

Childbirth

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the most recent figures available showing the estimated percentage of women delivering in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales (i) whose labours were induced, (ii) whose labours were of spontaneous onset and (iii) who had elective Caesarean section.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The most recently available information, for 1988-89, from a sample of 173,000 births in England, is shown in the table. Information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Method of onset of labour	*Percentage*
Induced labour	17
Spontaneous onset, including accelerated labour	73
Elective Caesarean section	5
Not known	5

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the most recent figures available showing the estimated percentage of women delivering in (a) England and (b) England and Wales whose deliveries were (i) spontaneous including abnormal presentation of head and breech spontaneous, (ii) instrumental including forceps, vacuum and breech extractions, (iii) Caesarean section and (iv) other and unspecified means.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The most recently available information, for 1988-89, from a sample of 173,000 births in England, is shown in the table. Information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Method of delivery

	Percent
(i) Spontaneous including abnormal presentation of head and breech spontaneous	78
(ii) Instrumental including forceps, vacuum and breech extractions	11
(iii) Ceasarean sections	10
(iv) Other and unspecified means	1

Wakefield Health Authority

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the names, home addresses, ages and occupations of the newly appointed chairman, executive and non-executive members of Wakefield health authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Brian Hayward was appointed the chairman of Wakefield health authority from 14 November 1988 until 31 March 1992. The hon. Member may care to write to Mr. Hayward at the district health authority for his personal details.

The Yorkshire regional health authority is responsible for appointing the non-executive members of Wakefield health authority. The chief officer and the chief finance officer are "ex-officio" executive members of the authority. Other executives are appointed by the chairman, the non-executives and the chief officer.

The hon. Member may therefore wish to contact Sir Bryan Askew, chairman of Yorkshire regional health authority, for the information he requires.

Acute Care

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines are issued by his Department to area health authorities as to the relative priority to be granted to patients *(a)* over the age of 70 years and *(b)* under the age of 70 years who have been diagnosed as having suffered serious coronary attacks, in respect of acute care treatments.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None. The treatment of an individual patient is a matter for the clinician responsible for his or her care.

General Practitioners

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to allow general practitioners a statutory right to buy their premises where they are owned by the public sector.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authorities are at liberty to sell unneeded health centres to general practitioners, provided suitable arrangements are made for the continuing provision of any community services based there.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, further to his answer of 16 October, *Official Report*, column 1045, he will publish the evidence showing that the amount of time general practitioners spend with patients is increasing.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State's comments were based on a survey published in "PULSE" on 4 August, which showed 54 per cent. of GPs had spent more time in patient contact since the inception of the new contract. A copy of this publication is available in the Library.

Eye Tests

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the impact of charging for eyesight checks on attendances for examination in the London borough of Newham.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information about NHS sight tests is not collected for individual London boroughs. Figures are available, however, for regional health authorities. For North East Thames regional health authority, which includes the London borough of Newham, the number of NHS sight tests paid for in 1988-89 and 1989-90 by family health service authorities in that region was as follows:

NHS Sight Tests

1988-89: 1,054,960
1989-90 (after entitlement was restricted to certain groups): 468,230.
After 1 April 1989, many patients in Newham, as elsewhere, will have had a private eye examination. Regular statistics are not kept on private sight tests.

NHS Capital Programme

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for health what report the national health service management board has made to him on the impact on the capital programme of the national health service arising from the fall in property values.

Mr. Dorrell: None.

Bed Closures

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health with what frequency he requires the national health service management board to report on the number of bed closures by region or district; and what are the latest figures.

Mr. Dorrell: We do not require reports from the management executive on numbers of bed closures since this information is not an accurate guide to the level of services to patients.

Heracleum Mantegazzianum

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many recorded incidents there have been in the last five years of the hospitalisation of patients who have come into contact with the furocoumarins released by heracleum mantegazzianum

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not available.

Hostels

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will give social services departments overall responsibility for financing the cost of care in hostels to the extent that it is not covered by other existing funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Local authorities have powers under existing legislation to support hostels and the people in them. It is for each local authority to decide the type and level of support to make available.

Vitamin A Supplements

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will identify the research or peer review journal which led to his Department's decision to recommend restricted consumption of liver and vitamin A supplements; and whether he has any plans to make the findings of this research more widely available.

Mr. Dorrell: A number of pieces of research contributed to the Department's decision. The major contributing factor was the increasing knowledge of the potential teratogenicity of vitamin A and growing evidence that the consumption of high amounts of vitamin A by pregnant women may be associated with birth defects in their babies. This information is reviewed in the following publications: Rosa FW, Wilk AL and Kelsey FO (1986) Teratology *33*, 355-364; Biesalski HK (1989) Toxicology *57*, 117-161 and Teratology Society position paper: "Recommendations for Vitamin A use during pregnancy" (1987) Teratology *35* 269-275. Results of recent measurements of vitamin A levels in samples of domestic and imported liver on sale in the United Kingdom are quoted in the Department's press release of 18 October 1990, ref 90/507. Copies of these documents have been placed in the Library.

Electromagnetic Fields

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the research projects he has instigated into the potential health implications resulting from exposure to electromagnetic fields.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The National Radiological Protection Board is under a statutory duty to inform and advise Government and others on possible hazards to health from ionising and non-ionising radiation. The board has undertaken an extensive review of the possible health consequences of exposure to electromagnetic fields. The review, to be published shortly, will form the basis of a revision of the board's recommendations published in 1989 entitled, "Guidance on Exposure to Time-Varying Electromagnetic Fields" (NRPB-GS11), a copy of which is in the Library.

Projects undertaken by board staff include measurement of occupational and domestic electromagnetic fields and theoretical calculation of energy absorption in people. A programme of work investigating the cancer-related responses of cell cultures to electromagnetic fields is to begin shortly.

Industrial Deafness

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will list the type of machines covered by provisions relating to industrial deafness; when that list was compiled; when it was last revised; and whether he will review the list.

Mr. Scott: I have been asked to reply. The machines specified in the jobs prescribed for occupational deafness are listed in schedule 1, part 1, of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985 as amended by regulation 2 of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1987. The list can also be found in leaflet NI 207 "If you think your job has made you deaf" —copies of which are available in the Library. The list was first prescribed in 1975 and last revised in 1988. The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council reviewed the list in Cm. 817 "Occupational Deafness"—October 1989—but decisions on its recommendations were deferred pending a further report from the council on improving the administrative arrangements for dealing with claims for this disease. This report will be published very shortly. The council has asked the Department to evaluate the feasibility of the report's recommendations within six months. It should then be easier to determine whether there are orderly ways in which to extend provision for this disease to further occupations.

ENVIRONMENT

Planning Applications (London)

Mr. Jessel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from *(a)* Richmond upon Thames borough council and *(b)* Marks and Spencers plc requesting him not to call in the planning application for a Marks and Spencers shop on the embankment beside the River Thames at Twickenham; and what arguments were advanced in each instance.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend has received one letter from the London borough of Richmond upon Thames and one from the planning advisers acting for Marks and Spencers plc requesting him not to call in the application.

Mr. Jessel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in respect of a planning application for a Marks and Spencers store on the embankment of the River Thames at Twickenham, he will set out the number of letters he has received either direct or via the hon. Member for Twickenham, for and against *(a)* planning permission and *(b)* calling in the application for a public inquiry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend has received 16 letters supporting and 53 objecting to the proposed development, and 120 calling for and three opposing a public inquiry. He has also received 25 representations supporting and 47 objecting to the proposed development on printed forms.

Mr. Jessel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* those planning applications within Greater London which he has called in within the last three years.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Applications for development at the following locations have been called in since October 1987:

St. John's Hospital, SE13
Stamford Bridge Stadium
Abbey National Sports Ground, Kenton
London Bridge City Phase II
Noak Hill/Appleby Drive, Romford
St. Theresa's School, Hatch End
Land adjacent to the M11, Woodford
Haverfield Road, Cordova Road and Clinton Road, E3
Branch Hill, Camden
Victoria Park Wharf, Mile End Park
Westfield College, Brent
PLA Sports Ground, Redbridge
Feltham Lower School
Galsworthy House, Kingston Hill
43-49 Grove Road, E3
City of London Heliport
London City Airport
Spitalfields Market
North Wards Site, Harefield Hospital

This list does not include applications in the legal precincts and for foreign embassies which are subject to special arrangements.

Environmental Meetings

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the future environmental conferences, seminars and meetings which Ministers or officials in his Department will be attending in the next three months and, where possible, the date of each.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* Ministers and officials from this Department will as usual be attending a number of conferences, seminars and meetings during the next three months.

Coastal Protection

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to take account of the special responsibilities of maritime district councils in exercising their duties under the Coast Protection Act 1949; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No. While I am aware of a number of cases where the interests of nature conservation have seemed at variance with the need for coastal protection under the Coast Protection Act 1949, I am pleased to be able to report that these are generally resolved by agreement between the parties involved.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why it was decided to close down the Crown Suppliers so soon after he had announced that they were to be privatised; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The decision to close a part of the Crown Suppliers was taken in the light of the disappointing result of the sale competition, two and a half years after the announcement that it would be offered for sale. Discussions are continuing with bidders for other parts of the Crown Suppliers.

Bournemouth Borough Council

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his assessment of the appropriate level of service for Bournemouth borough council which has resulted in a 13·7 per cent. reduction in real terms of support grant between 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Key: The revenue support grant entitlement for Bournemouth borough council was calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the revenue support grant distribution report approved by the House in January and applied equally to all authorities. Among other factors, the Bournemouth area now has to find a smaller share of the precept from Dorset county council than under the former system and this is reflected in the grant entitlement.

Sunday Markets

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what restrictions exist governing the freedoms of Sunday markets to operate without permission; whether the Government have any plans to review the position; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988—GDO—grants planning permission for the temporary use of land for markets for up to 14 days in any calendar year. Use for more than 14 days requires specific planning permission, and a local planning authority may withdraw the GDO permission by making a direction under article 4 of the order.

Section 37 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 enables a local authority to resolve to require both the operator and the site occupier to give not less than one month's notice of a forthcoming market. Non-compliance with this requirement is subject to a fine.

Under section 58 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, local authorities may serve a notice requiring the abatement or restriction of noise nuisance arising from a temporary market. Breach of the terms of such a notice attracts a fine of up to £2,000.

I do not believe that any further legislation is needed to control the planning aspects of markets, although the GDO is kept under review.

Recycling

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing all EEC member states' records on recycling paper, glass and aluminium *(a)* in total tonnes, *(b)* tonnes per head of population and *(c)* net cost per tonne for the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I understand, from data supplied by the Pulp and Paper Information Centre, the British Glass Manufacturers' Confederation and the Organisation of European Aluminium Smelters, that the figures for 1989 are as tabulated. No information is available on the net cost per tonne of recycling these materials.

	Paper		*Glass*		*Aluminium*	
	Total tonnes	*Tonnes/ head*	*Total tonnes*	*Tonnes/ head*	*Total tonnes*	*Tonnes/ head*
Belgium	[1]691,000	[1]0·0671	208,000	0·02100	[2]—	[2]—
Denmark	311,000	0·0610	58,000	0·01140	[2]—	[2]—
France	2,881,000	0·0522	760,000	0·01300	233,100	0·0040
Germany (Federal Republic)	5,627,000	0·0922	1,538,000	0·02470	537,000	0·0086
Great Britain	2,975,000	0·0526	310,000	0·00560	220,000	0·0040
Greece	[2]—	[2]—	14,000	0·00140	[2]—	[2]—
Ireland	[2]—	[2]—	11,000	0·00310	[2]—	[2]—
Italy	1,733,000	0·0304	670,000	0·01175	390,000	0·0068
Netherlands	1,488,000	0·1026	279,000	0·01880	129,000	0·0087
Portugal	273,000	0·0268	34,000	0·00330	[2]—	[2]—
Spain	1,591,000	0·0412	287,000	0·00740	77,600	0·0020

[1] Includes Luxembourg; no other figures are available for that country.
[2] No figures are available.

Disabled People (Housing)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations his Department has received from John Grooms housing association concerning investment in housing for physically disabled people; what response he has made; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We received a letter from John Grooms housing association signed by representatives of a number of organisations connected with the housing, support and care of disabled people, concerning the provision of housing for the physically disabled, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) replied on 5 September. I have placed copies of the correspondence in the Library.

Food Safety Act

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money is being earmarked for local authorities to pay for the increased work load resulting from enforcement of the Food Safety Act; how and when this will be paid to local authorities; what formula is being employed to determine the allocation between local authorities; and how the resources will be divided between county and district councils.

Mr. Key: The Government have estimated that local authorities in England will need to spend £24·7 million, in 1991-92, to carry out the additional duties resulting from the Food Safety Act. This additional cost has been taken into account in the total of aggregate external finance, proposed to be £26·05 billion, which will be distributed to local authorities on the basis of standard spending assessments. My right hon. Friend will be announcing our proposals for standard spending assessments in the near future.

Camden

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he proposes to take in regard to the London borough of Camden under part I of the Local Government Act 1988.

Mr. Key: On 3 July 1990, my right hon. Friend served two notices under section 13 of the Local Government Act 1988 on the London borough of Camden, setting out his view that the authority had failed to comply with the requirements of the Act in carrying out refuse collection and street cleaning work. Under section 14 of the Act, he may issue directions to an authority on which he has served a notice under section 13. The London borough of Camden made a written response to the section 13 notices on 2 August 1990 and requested a meeting on the case, which the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory), held with it on 24 September 1990. We are still considering whether to issue a section 14 direction in the light of the points made at that meeting and of further information submitted since the meeting.

Minerals Act 1981

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what stage has been reached over his Department's review of the operation of the Minerals Act 1981; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Government's intention to review the operation of the provisions of the Minerals Act 1981 was

announced in paragraph 6.57 of "This Common Inheritance". Some work relevant to this review is already under way. Any proposals for change arising out of the review will be the subject of full public consultation.

Waste Management

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he, or officials of his Department, have been invited to participate in the conference on recycling, organised by the Institute of Wastes Management in London on 4 December.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Yes. I shall be speaking at the conference, as will two officials from the Department's local environmental quality division.

Committee Corridor (Carpet)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state *(a)* the cost of replacing the carpet on the Committee corridor, *(b)* the origin of the carpet and *(c)* how the original was disposed of.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The cost was some £33,000. The carpet was manufactured in the United Kingdom and those parts of the original carpet that have any value will be sold by auction.

Environmental Conferences

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he, or officials of his Department, have been invited to participate in the International Business Communications conference on environmental protection in practice organised by the United Kingdom Environmental Law Association at the London press centre on 10-11 December.

Mr. Trippier: No.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he, or officials from his Department, will attend the international science and technology forum on environmental policy and management, sponsored by the British Council, to be held in Alfriston on 7-14 November.

Mr. Trippier: No. This is a British Council seminar for overseas specialists, some of whom will be visiting my Department as part of the scheduled programme of visits.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he, or officials of his Department, have been invited to participate in the conference "Going Green —Benefits Versus Costs", organised by the Environment Council, to be held in London on 22-23 November.

Mr. Trippier: Officials have been invited to attend the conference, and will be doing so.

Environment White Paper

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to obtain for his departmental library a transcript of the Radio 4 phone-in programme on the financial implications of the White Paper on the environment, broadcast on 2 October.

Mr. Trippier: My Department is aware of this broadcast and its contents. I have no plans to obtain a transcript for my departmental library.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek an early meeting with the chairman of the radioactive waste management advisory committee to discuss the proposals revealed by British Nuclear Fuels plc to the "European Nuclear Conference '90" in Lyons, on 25 September, to extend the capacity of the Drigg site in Cumbria to accommodate compacted radioactive waste presently earmarked for the repository being developed by UK Nirex Ltd.

Mr. Trippier: No.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the implications for current Government policy on the disposal of low-level radioactive waste (LLW) arising from the plans by British Nuclear Fuels plc to introduce a compaction plant for low-level waste, to be operational from 1993.

Mr. Trippier: The Government remain committed to the safe and early disposal of low-level radioactive waste. The compaction plant introduced by British Nuclear Fuels plc will enable it to extend the lifetime of the disposal site at Drigg, but this does not obviate the need for a repository to accommodate both low and intermediate-level radioactive waste.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to meet the chairman or board of UK Nirex Ltd to discuss the future development of the programme to handle low-level radioactive waste.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Development Orders

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) who is responsible for keeping copies of 1946 interim development orders; and if they can be obtained by the public;

(2) if he will establish a national register of interim development orders;

(3) how many interim development orders issued in 1946 are still current; and if he will list them.

Mr. Atkins: Interim development orders, first made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1932, continued to be issued until 1 July 1948, when the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 came into force.

Interim development orders provided the earliest form of planning permission granted on application and aimed to establish a form of planning control until such time as the planning schemes, for which the local planning authorities were responsible, came into force.

All permissions granted under interim development orders before 21 July 1943 have lapsed, but permissions applied for and granted on or after that date and before 1 July 1948 were preserved by section 77 of the 1947 Act and by subsequent legislation.

No records of applications made under interim development orders were required and no information about the total number of permissions granted is currently available. Such records as there are of such permissions will be held by the successor planning authorities and we are discussing the information currently available with the local authority associations.

The Department is aware of the recent concern about interim development order permissions and is examining the issue in the review of the operation of the provisions of the Minerals Act 1981 announced in "This Common Inheritance".

Local Government Finance

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce the level of the uniform business rate for 1991-92.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend hopes to announce the proposed figure shortly.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish his best estimates of the actual total yield from the national non-domestic rate for the current financial year.

Mr. Portillo: I estimate that the yield from non-domestic rates in England in 1990-91 will be of the order of £10·8 billion. There are, however, several factors, such as the level of buoyancy, losses and reliefs, whose effect on the outturn cannot be predicted accurately at this stage.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish his best estimates of the additional costs faced by local authorities as a result of the decision to cut the rate of subsidy for housing and poll tax benefit from 97 to 95 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The proposal to change the proposed rate of subsidy from 97 to 95 per cent. will reduce the amount paid to local authorities in England by about £67·5 million in 1991-92. This was taken into account by my right hon. Friend in his proposals for aggregate external finance announced on 19 July. He proposed raising AEF by 12·8 per cent.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultations he has undertaken with local authorities on *(a)* the impact of the cut in the rate of subsidy for housing and poll tax benefit and *(b)* the way in which this could be taken into account in setting the level of rate support grant for 1991-92.

Mr. Portillo: We shall be consulting the local authority assocations formally about the proposals for revenue support grant for 1991-92 next month. The proposed level of aggregate external finance announced on 19 July took account of the proposed change in the rate of housing and community charge benefit subsidy.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what account is to be taken of the likely surplus in national non-domestic rate income in 1990-91 and 1991-92 in setting the totals for NNDR and RSG for 1991-92; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what consultations he has undertaken on the use of income from the national non-domestic rate which exceeds the planned distributable amount for 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: As required by schedule 8 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988, in setting his forecast of the distributable amount of non-domestic rates for 1991-92 my right hon. Friend will take account of the amount of rates likely to be collected for 1991-92 and any anticipated surplus in 1990-91 in the amount actually collected over the amount distributed. The level of revenue support grant will be the amount necessary to be added to the distributable amount and the specific and special grants to bring the total of aggregate external finance to £26·05 billion. In announcing that level of AEF, which my right hon. Friend proposed on 19 July, he took account of the likely surplus in 1990-91.

Housing Revenue Account

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will consult representatives of local government and relevant professional bodies on his determination under part VI of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 of housing revenue account subsidy for 1991-92; and what proposals he will be making.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department is today consulting local authorities, the local authority associations and other interested bodies on proposals for determining each authority's entitlement to housing revenue account subsidy for 1991-92. The proposals include tighter rules on empty properties and give details of guideline rents, management and maintenance allowances, and some important technical changes to the rules for calculating subsidy entitlement. Comments are invited within six weeks. I am placing a copy of the consultation papers in the Library together with a list of the guidelines and allowances for each authority.

I propose to tighten the subsidy rules where councils leave houses and flats unoccupied. At present the subsidy makes some allowance for the rent income that is lost on empty properties, but this allowance takes the form of a sliding scale which also gives some extra help to authorities with higher percentages of empty property. I want to stop this. I am therefore proposing to restrict the allowance to a flat 2 per cent. of dwellings. An authority would receive the same allowance whether its empty properties are more or less than 2 per cent, so that there would be a direct financial incentive not to keep dwellings empty.

For rent guidelines I propose an average rent increase of just 2 per cent. above the allowance for inflation. This means an average increase per week of £1·84 ranging from £1·38 to £2·50 over the guideline rents which applied this year. The increases would continue the process introduced last year of encouraging authorities towards charging sensible levels of rents which better reflect the value of property in different parts of the country, while ensuring that rents remain within the reach of tenants.

For management and maintenance allowances, I propose introducing a system of targeted allowances which better reflects the nature of each authority's stock. This would help a group of about 20 authorities with the worst problems by means of a small re-distribution of allowances from all other authorities. Overall the level of allowances would be increased in order to maintain them at this year's level in real terms.

The rent guidelines and management and maintenance allowances are no more than the assumptions the Government will make in calculating each authority's subsidy entitlement. It is for each council to determine its own rent and how much to spend on management and maintenance of its stock.

Also included are two proposals affecting local authorities' subsidy entitlement in respect of properties held on leasehold terms. First, for leases acquired after midnight tonight, I propose that the present arrangements for subsidy towards the rents payable by authorities should be replaced from 1 April 1991 by arrangements under which subsidy is payable on discounted capital costs. The effect of the change would be to bring subsidy entitlement on new leases within the aggregate limit on subsidy for new capital expenditure. This is a sensible proposal which will replace the existing, inadequate controls on the subsidy of leases with one that would allow authorities flexibility to decide between new investment and new leases within a common control total.

Secondly, also from 1 April 1991, for all leases with a term of less than three years, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security is proposing that any rent rebate payable will be subsidised only to the extent that the claimant's eligible rent does not exceed one and a half times the authority's average rent. This would counter an anomaly in the current arrangements under which authorities may benefit from subsidy in respect of such leases in excess of their actual costs.

Asbestos Dust (Palace of Westminster)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the measures being taken to eliminate asbestos dust from *(a)* the Press Gallery and *(b)* elsewhere in the Palace of Westminster; and what assessment he has made of the potential health hazards to Members and employees of the House of Commons as a result of exposure to asbestos dust.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* During the summer recess the Parliamentary Works Office removed asbestos from the Press Gallery staircase and other areas of the Palace of Westminster. This was done either to facilitate other jobs or as part of the asbestos removal programme, not because the asbestos was in a dangerous condition. The work was carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety Executive's asbestos regulations. The results of mandatory air tests carried out afterwards showed readings well below the minimum statutory safety levels.

Soil Acidification

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he proposes to take in response to the results of research undertaken by the critical loads advisory group into the acidification of soil; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The results of research undertaken by the critical loads advisory group into the acidification of soil will form an important part of the United Kingdom input to the development of the critical loads approach in Europe. This will help lay the basis for cost-effective and closely targeted future pollution abatement measures.

Sewage Contamination

144. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he takes to ensure contaminated agents washed off in slaughterhouses are not present in sewage effluents reaching rivers and beaches; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The levels of contaminants in trade effluents entering sewers in England and Wales are subject to strict control by the relevant sewerage undertakers. Statutory powers are available to the undertakers which enable them to set such quality standards as are necessary to ensure that their treated sewage can meet the terms of the discharge consents granted by the National Rivers Authority. The quality conditions set by the undertakers for trade effluents also ensure the structural safety of their sewers and the protection of the health of those who work in them.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1989-90.

Mr. Chris Patten *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* Expenditure on hospitality in my Department, including the Property Services Agency, in 1989-90 was £83,500.

Open University

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of his discussions on 2 October at the Open university—in Milton Keynes—on the development of environmental education programmes in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* Following an interesting discussion about the Government's White Paper "This Common Inheritance" with the pro-vice-chancellor and other members of the faculty of the Open university on 2 October, my officials will be meeting staff of the Open university to take matters forward.

Construction Industry

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he or officials of his Department have been invited to participate in the conference on environmental implications for the construction industry organised by ECCE and *Construction News*, to be held in London on 15 November.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* My Department cannot trace any invitations. I understand that the conference has now been postponed.

Homelessness

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to include Leeds in additional measures to tackle homelessness.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* The allocation of £250 million for the present financial year and next, for schemes to house homeless families, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced in November last year was targeted on London and the south-east, where homelessness pressures, particularly the numbers in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, were greatest. Those pressures continue to be most severe in those regions.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Dunsdale Securities

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to set up an official inquiry into the future of Dunsdale Securities.

Mr. Redwood: The Secretary of State does not plan an inquiry into Dunsdale Securities. This case is being handled by the regulatory authorities and the receiver in the normal way. They will take whatever action is necessary.

Departmental Brochures

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many copies were initially printed of the brochures *(a)* "Design for the Environment" and *(b)* "Cutting your Losses—A Business Guide to Waste Minimalisation"; what has been the cost to date of publishing each brochure; to which organisations the brochures were sent; what steps have been taken to publicise the brochures; what proportion of recycled paper fibre has been used in the initial print run; and whether there are any plans to organise further print runs.

Mr. Redwood: The initial print run of "Cutting Your Losses" was 12,000 copies; 36,000 copies have been printed to date at a total cost of £51,448. Recycled paper was used throughout. The booklet was launched at a joint CBI/DTI conference on waste minimisation in November 1989. It was advertised in selected trade magazines and has been made available on demand and at relevant seminars and exhibitions including a series of regional seminars on waste legislation and waste minimisation organised jointly by the DTI and the CBI. More than 30,000 copies of "Cutting Your Losses" have been taken up, mainly by business organisations and higher education establishments. There is a continuing demand and it is likely that a further print run will be necessary.

"Design for the Environment" was published for a conference of the same name, sponsored by the Design Council, the Environment Council, the DTI and the Institute of Metals, and held in March 1990. There has been one print run, of 4,000 copies, at a total cost of £8,376·50. Recycled paper has been used throughout. The booklet has been made available on demand and almost all 4,000 copies have been taken up. No decision has yet been taken on the possibility of a further print run.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, in the most recent meeting of the Ministerial European Trade Council, the activities of the companies Water Engineering Trading (WET) of Hamburg, Preussag of Hanover in Germany, Technology Development Group Limited (TDG) of London and Schmiédemeccanica SA of Lugano, Switzerland, in regard to trade arrangements with Iraq, were discussed.

Mr. Sainsbury: The matters referred to by the hon. Member have not been discussed at any recent meetings between European Trade Ministers.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department was invited to participate in the Panorama programme, "Saddam's Secret Arms Ring", broadcast on 3 September; and if he will obtain a copy of the transcript and videocassette for his departmental library.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department was invited to participate in the "Panorama" programme broadcast on 3 September and supplied written answers to written questions. I do not propose to obtain a copy of the transcript and videocassette for the departmental library.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to raise at the next Council meeting of European Community Trade Ministers the export activities of the German companies H and H Metalform Gmbh and Export Union Gmbh in regard to sales of sensitive equipment and militarily useful material to Iraq since 1988.

Mr. Sainsbury: No.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list all restrictions introduced since 2 August on trade with Iraq agreed at international forums of which the United Kingdom is a party; and if he will set out the measures adopted to enforce the restrictions.

Mr. Sainsbury: The restrictions introduced since 2 August on trade with Iraq agreed at international forums are as follows:

6 August
United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 661 was adopted imposing sanctions against Iraq and Kuwait.

8 August
Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2340/90 was made preventing trade by the Community as regards Iraq and Kuwait. Equivalent provision was made as regards products covered by the ECSC Treaty.

25 August
UNSCR 665 was adopted authorising the multinational forces navies to halt shippping in order to inspect and verify cargoes.

25 September
UNSCR 670 was adopted introducing measures to tighten the air embargo, and detain or deny entry to Iraqi registered ships breaching sanctions.

The measures adopted by the United Kingdom are as follows:

2 August
The Control of Gold, Securities, Payments and Credits (Kuwait) Directions 1990 were made

4 August
The Control of Gold, Securities, Payments and Credits (Republic of Iraq) Directions 1990 were made.
The United Kingdom amended the Open General Import Licence to impose restrictions on the import of crude oil and petroleum products originating in Iraq or Kuwait.

8 August
The Iraq Kuwait (United Nations Sanctions) Order 1990 was made. It prohibits activities in connection with the exportation of goods from Iraq or Kuwait and the supply
of goods to Iraq or Kuwait or Iraqi or Kuwaiti controlled companies except under the authority of a licence.
The Export of Goods (Control) (Iraq and Kuwait Sanctions) Order 1990 was made. It prohibits exportation from the United Kingdom of all goods to Iraq or Kuwait or to any other destination for the

purposes of any business carried on in Iraq or Kuwait, except under the authority of a licence.

An amendment was made to the open general import licence of 4 December 1987 prohibiting the importation into the United Kingdom of goods originating in Iraq or Kuwait.

29 August

The Iraq and Kuwait (United Nations Sanctions) (Amendment) Order 1990 was made. It made minor amendments to the Iraq and Kuwait (United Nations Sanctions) Order and prohibits, except under a licence, payments under bonds in respect of a contract the performance of which is unlawful as a result of the sanctions.

5 October

The Iraq and Kuwait (United Nations Sanctions) (No. 2) Order 1990 was made. It imposes restrictions on aircraft overflying the United Kingdom where their destination is Iraq or Kuwait. The Order also imposes restrictions on ships registered in Iraq entering ports in the United Kingdom.

Similar provision has been made in respect of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the dependent territories.

Within my Department's export control organisation a new licensing and enforcement unit was created at the time of the imposition of the embargo against Iraq and Kuwait. This unit has specific responsibility for the co-ordination of all export licensing matters arising from the embargo and of any information that is received about possible embargo-related events.

Astra Holdings Limited

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when, and for what purpose, he set up the inquiry to investigate the affairs of Astra Holdings Ltd.

Mr. Redwood: Following an application by the company, inspectors were appointed on 16 August 1990 under section 431(2)(c) of the Companies Act 1985 to investigate and report on the affairs of the company. My right hon. Friend has asked them to look in particular at the events surrounding the rights issue by the company in July 1989.

UN Conference, Geneva

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting of the governing trade and development board of the United Nations conference on trade and development held in Geneva in early October, in so far as it affects United Kingdom trade policy.

Mr. Sainsbury: The first part of the 37th UNCTAD trade and development board took place from 1 to 12 October 1990. Agreement was reached on the agenda for the eighth United Nations conference on trade and development to be held in 1991, where discussion will cover international trade, commodities, technology and services, and resources for development, taking into account the need to promote economic growth and adopt good management and structural reform.

Chemical Industry

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he or officials of his Department have been invited to participate in the conference on the human factor in safety in the chemical and process industries to be held in Manchester on 20-21 November.

Mr. Redwood: No. The safety of people at work is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

Single European Market

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he or officials of his Department have been invited to participate in the seminar on the environmental implications of a single European market to be held at the London Press Centre on 5 December.

Mr. Redwood: A director of the Department's environment unit has accepted an invitation to speak at this seminar.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the Government's current attitude towards the multi-fibre arrangement and detail the preparatory discussions that have been held with textile organisations regarding the arrangement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Government continue to support the EC's position that the MFA should be phased out, after its latest extension expires next year, as part of the integration of textiles and clothing into GATT on the basis of strengthened rules and disciplines. Ministers and officials frequently meet representatives of the textiles and clothing industry to discuss the negotiations.

Leak Inquiry

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether he will call for information from the London International Financial Futures Exchange on dealings with the LIFFE short sterling contract market, the gilt futures market and the TSE 100 futures market in the 90 minutes immediately prior to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement of a cut in base rates and exchange rate mechanism entry at 4 pm on Friday 5 October;

(2) whether he will call for information from the London International Financial Futures Exchange on dealings in the LIFFE market in the 90 minutes immediately prior to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement of a cut in base rates and exchange rate mechanism entry at 4 pm on Friday 5 October.

Mr. Redwood: The London International Financial Futures Exchange is conducting a review of trading on 5 October before the announcement of entry into the exchange rate mechanism. This review has not yet been completed. However, the exchange has told me that the trading records of the individual firms and of the market as a whole provide no evidence of any prior knowledge of the announcement.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will call for

information from the stock exchange surveillance department on dealings in the stock exchange in the 90 minutes immediately prior to the Chancellor's statement of a cut in base rates and exchange rate mechanism entry at 4 pm on Friday 5 October.

Mr. Redwood: The International Stock Exchange has conducted a review of equity trading on 5 October before the announcement of entry into the exchange rate mechanism. It has told me that the trading records of individual firms and of the market as a whole provide no evidence of any prior knowledge of the announcement.

British Shipbuilders

Mr. David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received the annual report and accounts of British Shipbuilders for 1989-90.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In accordance with sections 17(9) and 18(6) of the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977, I laid copies of British Shipbuilders' annual report and accounts for 1989-90 before each House on 27 July 1990.

Hospitality

129. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1989-90.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* In the financial year 1989-90, the Department of Trade and Industry spent £298,000 on official hospitality.

Much of this was spent in support of the United Kingdom's trade activities, hosting receptions and meals for visiting Ministers and introducing British business to the right people from overseas.

Timeshare Industry

125. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is to be taken to implement the recommendations in the Director General of Fair Trading's report concerning problems with the timeshare industry.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* We are currently considering Sir Gordon Borrie's recommendations.

Dangerous Goods

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many inquiries from companies registered to handle imported toxic hazardous and special waste his Department's dangerous goods advisory service (DAGAS) has received each month since its inception; and for what proportion of inquiries DAGAS has been unable to assist.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* The dangerous goods advisory service (DAGAS) advises on the classification and labelling of packaged dangerous goods for international transport; such advice is normally sought in the country of origin. DAGAS has received only two inquiries on hazardous and special waste since its inception; assistance was given on both occasions.

Grand Met/Elders Merger

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he has received the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the Grand Metropolitan/Elders IXL pubs-breweries swap;

(2) when the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the Grand Metropolitan/Elders IXL pubs-breweries swap will be published.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* We have received the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the merger situations between Elders IXL Ltd. and Grand Metropolitan plc. The report was published on Tuesday 16 October.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fish

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether any grilse or salmon captured in Northern Ireland waters during the last five years and the current year have been identified as salmon ranching escapees.

Mr. Brooke: During the past five years, three salmon identified as escapees from salmon farms have been captured in the fish traps operated by the Department of Agriculture on the River Bush. This would indicate that insignificant numbers of escapees from salmon farms are reaching Northern Ireland.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what investigations have been carried out into stocks of sea trout in Northern Ireland waters in each of the last 10 years; whether any changes in numbers have been noted during those years; and whether the factors causing variations in population or size of fish have been identified.

Mr. Brooke: No such investigations have been carried out during the last ten years. General observation of sea trout runs in Northern Ireland waters have shown no significant changes in population or size of fish.

Devolution

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the progress of his talks with leaders of the political parties in the Province about a devolved administration; whether he intends to continue with these talks; what measure of agreement has been achieved; and whether differences with the Government of the Republic of Ireland about their wish to be consulted have now been ironed out.

Mr. Brooke: My discussions with the leaders of the main constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland and with the Irish Government have produced a significant measure of agreement on a basis for talks which would address the various relationships relevant to the situation in Northern Ireland. These discussions are continuing with a view to resolving the outstanding matters to the satisfaction of all concerned through further discussion.

Butter

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements have been made for the distribution of EEC intervention butter to pensioners.

Mr. Brooke: Fifty organisations have been designated to distribute beef and butter this year to the most needy in Northern Ireland under the EEC surplus food scheme. As in previous years the most needy in the United Kingdom have been defined as including the homeless and destitute, people in receipt of income support or family credit and people living in welfare hostels. Pensioners who fall into one of these categories will qualify for free food.

Stevens Inquiry

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of *(a)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary, *(b)* the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(c)* the Northern Ireland Prison Service and *(d)* the Regular Army were questioned in the course of the Stevens inquiry in relation to (i) the loss or transfer of confidential security force files, (ii) the death of Mr. L. Maginn, (iii) the death of Mr. P. Finucane and (iv) other matters.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* The information in the form requested is not readily available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, I understand that during the investigations carried out by DCC Stevens's inquiry team more than 1,900 written statements were taken from witnesses and suspects, including those from members of the RUC, Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Regular Army (including the UDR).

Pipe (Limavady)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will specify who is responsible for the pipe at Ruchie Park, Drumsurn, Limavady.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* I am aware that there is uncertainty about which authority is ultimately responsible for this pipeline. This uncertainty is being resolved. Meanwhile the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has undertaken to remove any blockages from the pipe which might occur.

I will write to the hon. Gentleman once the matter is resolved.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Diego Garcia

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultation there has been between his Department and its counterparts in the United States of America concerning the United States bases in Diego Garcia, following the publication of the national security strategy of the United States in March.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have continued our traditional process of close consultation with the United States authorities over the United States navy support facility on Diego Garcia.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement outlining any progress made towards returning Diego Garcia to Mauritius.

Mr. Waldegrave: The position remains that the territory will be ceded to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes. In present circumstances the defence facilities in British Indian Ocean territory continue to make a vital security contribution and we envisage no change in the status of the territory in the foreseeable future.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultation there has been between his Department and the relevant departmental ministers in the United States concerning overflights on Diego Garcian territory.

Mr. Waldegrave: We consult fully the US authorities on overflights whenever the need arises.

COCOM

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all countries for which the policies and rules of the Co-ordinating Committee on Multilateral Exports have been changed since January 1989.

Mr. Waldegrave: The German Democratic Republic was removed from the Co-ordinating Committee (COCOM) list of proscribed destinations following unification on 3 October 1990 with the Federal Rupublic of Germany. This is being given effect through a change to the Export of Goods Control Order 1989 (SI 2376).

Poland

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guarantees have been agreed to safeguard the current western boundaries of Poland where they join those of Germany.

Mr. Waldegrave: Under the treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany, Germany's borders, including the border with Poland, are definitive and it is stated that Germany has no territorial claims whatsoever and shall not assert any in the future. The Polish Foreign Minister, who took part in the two-plus-four negotiation on this subject, has expressed satisfaction at this outcome.

Tibet

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to meet the Dalai Lama to discuss the impact of Chinese involvement in Tibet and restrictions on religious practices.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no such plans.

Immigration

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the current queues for applications for entry clearance in each category for the latest available month, and the numbers in each queue, for the posts at *(a)* Bombay, *(b)* Karachi, *(c)* New Delhi, *(d)* Nairobi, *(e)* Calcutta, *(f)* Islamabad and *(g)* Dar-es-Salaam.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: As at 30 September, the estimated waiting times (in months) are:

Settlement	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
(a) Bombay	1	6	9	10
(b) Karachi	1	4	4	8
(c) New Delhi	0	3	8	10
(d) Nairobi	All settlement applicants normally wait 2-3 days			
(e) Calcutta	No settlement queues			
(f) Islamabad	3	6	10	[1]18
(g) Dar-es-Salaam	All settlement applicants normally wait 4-6 weeks.			

[1] As at 31 August.

The number of people waiting as at 30 September is as follows:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Bombay	0	246	490	130
Karachi	8	76	22	[1]6
New Delhi	0	302	330	117
Islamabad	105	2,227	302	[1]265
Calcutta, Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam	Have no queues at present			

[1] As at 31 August.

Settlement queues are organised as follows:

Q1—Persons with a claim to the right of abode, dependant relatives over 70 years, special compassionate cases.

Q2—All spouses, and all children under 18 years.

Q3—Fiancé(e)s and others applying for the first time for settlement.

Q4—Re-applicants.

During periods of seasonal high demand applicants for visit visas in Islamabad requiring a full interview can expect to wait up to five days. Elsewhere they are dealt with on the day of application.

Eastern Europe

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff have been transferred from DG VIII in the European Community to work on PHARE, or other forms of European Community assistance to eastern Europe; and how many of these have been replaced.

Mr. Garel-Jones: A total of three members of DG VIII in the Commission applied for transfer to work on the Community's assistance programme for eastern Europe. All three positions vacated in DG VIII have been re-filled.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any representations to the Government of the People's Republic of China concerning the proposed sale of 7 tonnes of lithium hydride by the North China Industries Corporation (NORINCO) to Iraq in October, in contravention of United Nations resolution 661 on trade with Iraq agreed in August.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have made representations about the reported activities of this company to the Chinese Government, who have assured us that they are applying the UN trade embargo fully and have not acted in contravention of UNSCR 661.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has raised with his counterpart in the Federal Republic of Germany the role of German companies in the covert provision of technologies to Iraq that have uses in chemical or nuclear weapon production.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are in constant touch with the Governments of Germany and other friendly countries exchanging information about the practical implementation of UN Security Council resolution 661. We are closely co-operating on this shared objective.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any representations to his counterpart in Chile concerning the role of the Cardoen Company in Chile in providing military equipment to Iraq.

Mr. Waldegrave: This matter has been raised with the Chilean Government and we have received assurances that they are complying with the terms of UNSCR 661.

Romania

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the current guidelines in Romania for the adoption of children by applicants from the United Kingdom, including the guidelines for the adoption of mentally handicapped children.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am arranging for a translation of the relevant Romanian Act of Parliament to be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received any request for funding from the Romanian Government to permit the operation of a second television channel in their country.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice he has given to the Romanian health authorities concerning the trials of a drug invented by Mr. David Hughes with children suffering from AIDS in Colentia hospital, Bucharest.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have passed on to the Romanian authorities information received from British medical experts about Mr. Hughes' background and the drug that he has been testing.

Conference on Security and Co-operation

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of the 35-nation conference on security and co-operation in Europe, held in New York on 1-2 October.

Mr. Waldegrave: The CSCE Foreign Ministers conference provided a useful forum to review the preparatory work being carried out for the CSCE summit, to be held in Paris on 19-21 November. Ministers' discussions reflected a convergence of views regarding the scope and objectives of the summit and the major new steps which are now possible for the CSCE process. They agreed that the role of the CSCE must be enhanced to

respond to new opportunities for co-operation. We look forward to measures for such enhancement being endorsed at the Paris summit, enabling us to turn the CSCE from a process into an organisation.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action has been undertaken by Her Majesty's Government to encourage South Africa to become a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have urged South Africa to accede to the NPT on numerous occasions, notably at meetings between South African and NPT depository powers representatives. The most recent such meeting was held in Vienna on 11-12 December 1989.

I raised this matter with the South African Government during my visit to South Africa on 19 September.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have called on any non-proliferation treaty signatory state to complete subsidiary safeguard arrangements with the International Atomic Energy Agency since the fourth non-proliferation treaty review conference.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will outline any changes in Her Majesty's Government's policy on the responsibilities of the non-proliferation treaty signatories between the disarmament committee of 23 February 1967 and the present day.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our policy on the responsibility of NPT signatories remains that they should abide by their commitments under the treaty. As regards the clauses relating to disarmament, we welcome the progress made in this direction since 1967 through SALT and the INF and CFE treaties, and we look forward to an early conclusion of the START negotiations and the ratification of the threshold test ban treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement outlining Her Majesty's Government's position on article VII of main committee II in the recent fourth non-proliferation treaty review conference relating to South African nuclear capability.

Mr. Waldegrave: A proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa was discussed in main committee 2 of the fourth NPT review conference. In principle we are in favour of such a zone because of its nuclear non-proliferation benefits. We have called upon South Africa on many occasions to submit all its nuclear installations and facilities to IAEA safeguards and to accede to the non-proliferation treaty.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what correspondence he has received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the European proliferation information centre concerning the fourth non-proliferation treaty review conference.

Mr. Waldegrave: This Department has received several letters from members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament about nuclear non-proliferation issues since the fourth non-proliferation treaty review conference. To the best of my knowledge, we have not received any recent correspondence from the European proliferation information centre.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures have been taken by Her Majesty's Government to promote a nuclear weapons-free zone in the middle east since the adoption of paragraph 13 in article VII of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United Kingdom has since 1980 joined consensus in the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly on successive resolutions sponsored by Egypt calling for a middle east nuclear-weapons-free zone, making clear that our support is conditional on such a zone being acceptable to all states in the region.

Middle East

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent developments relating to British hostages held in Beirut.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 15 October at column *752* to the hon. Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans).

Military Training

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any companies have contacted his Department to seek approval for the provision of military training for foreign military forces.

Mr. Waldegrave: Companies intending to provide military training for foreign military forces would be required to request approval from the Government only if such training involved the release of United Kingdom classified information. We have no record of any request of this nature being made to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Visa Applications

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visa applications for visits to the United Kingdom are outstanding in respect of *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Czechoslovakia, *(c)* Romania and *(d)* Hungary; how many have been refused in the last 12 months; what is the fee payable by applicants in each of the countries listed; and what happens to the fee if an application is refused.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 19 October]:* Visas were abolished for Czechoslovakia and Hungary on 1 October 1990. Information in respect of applications lodged at our embassies in Warsaw and Bucharest is as follows:

Country	*Visa applications outstanding*	*Refusals (October 1989-September 1990)*
Poland	17	2,484
Romania	[1]371	23

[1]Includes other foreign nationals.

The visa fee is £20 world wide, payable in local currency. The fee is charged when an application is formally lodged, and is non-refundable in the event that the application is refused. Visa fees contribute to the administrative costs of processing visa applications, which are incurred whether or not a visa is issued.

TRANSPORT

Dartford Bridge

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects construction of the southern approach to the Dartford bridge to be completed.

Mr. Freeman: Full completion is due by the end of 1991.

Network SouthEast

10. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received on the quality of service currently being provided by Network SouthEast.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Government have set tough quality of service objectives. Network SouthEast is making every effort to meet them and is investing £1·2 billion over this and the next two years.

Channel Tunnel

11. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the likely implications for businesses in the north-west of England of the British Railways Board's proposals for direct freight and parcels rail services to Europe on completion of the channel tunnel.

Mr. Freeman: British Rail is still working up its plans for freight and parcels services. It hopes to clarify the position on freight services for the north-west around the end of the year. We recognise that tunnel freight service to the north-west is of great importance to business in the region.

16. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department intends to respond to the proposals contained in the draft European Community directive for investment to provide high-speed rail links between Scotland and the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The draft directive makes no such proposal, but a full electric service between Edinburgh and London is expected to start in 1991, and British Rail's plans for the channel tunnel include services between Scotland and the continent.

23. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department intends to respond to the proposals contained in the draft European Community directive for investment to provide high-speed rail links between Scotland and the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

24. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department intends to respond to the proposals contained in the draft European Community directive for investment to provide high-speed rail links between Scotland and the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) earlier today.

46. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has supplied to the European Commission on arrangements concerning the transport of nuclear fuel and waste through the channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to my written reply of 14 June, at column *304*. There has been no change since then.

55. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has had on regional transport connections to the channel tunnel.

Mr. Freeman: We have received a number of representations to the effect that road and particularly rail services to the tunnel should be improved. The Government are confident that road and rail links to the tunnel will meet both passenger and freight demand.

London Underground (Crime)

12. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the latest figures for crimes committed on the Northern line of the London Underground.

Mr. Parkinson: I understand from the British Transport Police that in the first nine months of 1990, the number of reported crimes on the Northern line was 1,977. During that time the Northern line carried over 150 million passengers. The introduction of pilot schemes at six stations at the southern end of the line, financed from a £15 million Government grant, has brought about a major reduction in robberies—from 52 in 1988 to eight in 1989.

Manchester Metro-link

13. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress there has been on plans to build the Manchester metro-link.

Mr. McLoughlin: Agreement to this important project was given by the Government last year with approximately £50 million of grant and additional revenue support will be given. The track bed has been laid in a number of streets in central Manchester, and we look forward to seeing services begin late next year.

A1

14. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent estimate he has made of the increase in traffic he expects to occur on the A1 north of Morpeth when the A1 south of Newcastle becomes a motorway.

Mr. Chope: Traffic models prepared as part of the routes south of Edinburgh study took into account potential high growth and the upgrading of the A1 south of Newcastle. The predicted flows are substantially below the threshold criterion for dualling.

38. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what additional arrangements are being planned regarding the safety of the section of the A1 road which straddles the Scottish border after the A1 becomes a motorway; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the Member for Edinburgh, West (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton), has commissioned Borders regional council to carry out a feasibility study for a short extension within Scotland of the proposed A1 Marshall Meadows dual carriageway scheme.

Rail Electrification, Bradford

15. **Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received recently about the electrification of railways in the Bradford area.

Mr. McLoughlin: The West Yorkshire passenger transport executive has proposed the electrification of the railways between Leeds and Bradford Forster square and on to Shipley, Ilkley, Keighley and Skipton. We are considering this project for credit approvals.

Docklands Light Railway

17. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider the privatisation of docklands light railway.

Mr. Freeman: The private sector already has a significant role in the expansion of the railway and that involvement will continue to be encouraged, but we have no plans at present to privatise the DLR.

21. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much is being invested in the docklands light railway over the next three years.

Mr. Freeman: The docklands light railway plans to invest more than £250 million, mainly on completing the extensions to Bank and Beckton.

Greater London Stations

18. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what improvements are under way or are planned for stations in the Greater London area.

Mr. Freeman: Network SouthEast has a programme of improvements for all stations including those within the Greater London area. Since 1986 NSE has rebuilt or modernised 370 stations—nearly 40 per cent. of the total. A continuing programme of improvements is planned.

East Coast Electrification

19. **Sir Marcus Fox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress in electrifying the east coast route.

Mr. McLoughlin: The electrification of the east coast main line has made excellent progress. The line is electrified as far as Leeds, beyond York to Northallerton, and from Edinburgh to Berwick. Electric services have already been introduced from London to Leeds. British Rail plans to start electric services to Edinburgh in May 1991.

Birmingham Relief Road

20. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport is he will make a statement on the proposed Birmingham northern relief road.

Mr. Freeman: Proposals were received from the three tenderers at midday today. The Government expect to select a successful tenderer as soon as possible after a proper evaluation of the proposals.

Rail Transport, East Midlands

22. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had recently with British Rail and European Transport Ministers concerning rail transport in the east midlands; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: We are keen to see good rail transport throughout the country. It is for British Rail to develop any specific proposals for further improvements in the east midlands.

London Transport

25. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was invested in London Transport last year.

Mr. Freeman: In 1989-90 London Transport invested £443 million—an increase of 35 per cent. in real terms compared with the previous year.

Disabled People (Transport)

26. **Mr. Hill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department is taking to improve transport for the disabled.

49. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further measures he is taking to improve access to public transport for disabled passengers.

Mr. Freeman: Improving transport for people with disabilities is a continuing priority. Our plans are set out in "Transport and Disability—a Statement of Aims and Priorities.

Radioactive Materials (Transport)

27. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has about the monthly average number of movements and volume of radioactive materials carried by ships in British coastal waters

Mr. McLoughlin: The Department does not collect data of the kind requested.

The safety regulations for the transport of all radioactive materials in this country are based on stringent internationally agreed standards laid down by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In brief, these require safety to be "built in" to the design of the

container used for transport so that the contents would not present a significant radiological hazard even in the event of a severe accident.

Rail Freight Services

28. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future financial prospects for freight services within the British Rail network.

Mr. Freeman: Much of rail freight is profitable and has good prospects, but BR's Railfreight distribution business, which includes the Speedlink wagon service, continues to make very heavy losses. BR is currently reviewing the future of Speedlink in consultation with its customers. We have set Railfreight an overall objective of earning a profit of £50 million in 1992-93 (at 1989-90 prices), and we are backing new investment in rail freight wherever it offers sound commercial prospects.

Road Signs

29. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his policy on road signs along single carriageway A roads in rural areas.

Mr. Chope: Our policy is that traffic signs should be erected so as to convey clearly all relevant warnings, restrictions and prohibitions, together with other important information such as directions. Traffic signs are prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, and the Traffic Signs (Speed Limits) Regulations, which are approved by Parliament.

Policy on driver information such as brown tourist signs is covered in administrative arrangements notified to highway authorities.

Advice to highway authorities on the design and siting of signs is given in the traffic signs manual, published by HMSO.

Transport Investment

30. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what amount transport investment in the United Kingdom has changed in real terms over the last three years; and what are the projected figures for investment over the next three years.

Mr. Freeman: In 1989-90 investment in transport through the Department of Transport's programme and the nationalised industries for which it is responsible was nearly 40 per cent. higher in real terms than three years earlier. In three years hence, on the basis of the plans shown in the public expenditure White Paper, it will be about 40 per cent. higher again.

Horses

31. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department is taking to protect horses and horse riders who use the road.

Mr. Chope: Following the recent enactment of legislation requiring children under 14 to wear protective headgear, we are about to consult on regulations to bring the Act into force. We have also entered into discussions with the British Horse Society on measures to extend road traffic law to cover ridden horses and on possible amendments to the highway code to provide better advice to horse riders and motor vehicle drivers.

Buses, London

32. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are planned to improve the flow of buses in London.

Mr. Freeman: The Government plan to propose legislation to implement a majority of the recommendations of the roads and utilities report on public utilities street works. We shall also be implementing the proposals in our consultation paper on "Traffic in London". London Transport has formed a new bus priority team to identify practical solutions to the bottlenecks which cause the most serious delays to buses.

Highway Code

33. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when a new edition of the "Highway Code" is planned.

Mr. Chope: We updated the "Highway Code" earlier this year to take account of the new requirements for children to wear rear seat belts. We will include some improvements to the artwork when we next reprint in early 1991. We will consider a complete revision of the "Highway Code" in the light of future legislative changes arising from the North report on road traffic law.

MOT Enforcement Inspectors

34. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many enforcement inspections of MOTs were carried out last year.

Mr. Chope: The vehicle inspectorate carried out 27,441 standard control inspections at MOT testing stations and investigated 2,728 individual appeals against the outcome of MOT tests in the year up to 31 March 1990.

London Traffic

35. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are planned to improve the flow of traffic in London.

Mr. Chope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn Hatfield (Mr. Evans) earlier today.

Air Traffic Control

36. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Civil Aviation Authority will invest in new air traffic control equipment and facilities over the next three years.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Civil Aviation Authority currently has plans to spend about £319 million on air traffic control equipment and facilities, in the three years 1990-91 to 1992-93. This includes expenditure on the new en route centre (a major new air traffic control centre for the southern part of the United Kingdom), and the central control function (a substantial reorganisation of south-eastern airspace). Both these projects will lead to significant increases in airspace capacity.

Cycle Routes

37. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further progress has been made towards the provision of a network of cyclist routes in London and Greater London.

Mr. Chope: The London Cycling Forum, of which the Department is a member, has been consulting recently all London highway authorities on a proposed 1,000-mile network of cycle routes.

The Department has organised a seminar to be held on 7 November on "The Next Steps" in the development of the cycle network.

Car Exhaust Emissions

39. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals to check exhaust emissions from cars.

Mr. Chope: We are now consulting interested parties on draft regulations to introduce an emissions check in the MOT test. Consultation ends on 9 November 1990.

British Rail

40. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the development of equality of service indicators for British Rail.

Mr. Freeman: Quality of service standards for the passenger sectors were first agreed in 1986. Some were revised earlier this year, as set out in my right hon. Friend's letter of 19 December to the chairman of British Rail, (*Official Report*, 19 December 1989, column 227). British Rail is required to report progress in its annual report and accounts. More detailed reports are provided regularly to the Transport Users Consultative Committee.

Rail Electrification, Scotland

41. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to meet the chairman of ScotRail to discuss electrification in Scotland.

Mr. Freeman: We welcome proposals from British Rail for further electrification where that would offer good value for money.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his discussions with ScotRail about the options for railway electrification of the *(a)* Edinburgh-Fauldhouse-Shotts-Glasgow, *(b)* Edinburgh-Carstairs-Glasgow and *(c)* Edinburgh-Linlithgow-Falkirk-Glasgow railway lines.

Mr. Freeman: The £12·5 million electrification of the line between Glasgow and Edinburgh via Carstairs is under way and due to be completed by the spring of 1991. ScotRail is to introduce the new class 158 express diesel units on the route from Glasgow Queen Street to Edinburgh via Falkirk and Linlithgow. A full service using these new trains will be in operation by the end of this year. I understand that ScotRail is still considering whether a case can be made for electrifying the route via Shotts.

Highway Schemes

42. **Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of highway schemes began construction last year.

Mr. Chope: In 1989-90 construction work commenced on 125 miles of national motorways and trunk roads. In addition, 93 miles of local authority road schemes costing more than £1 million were started.

London Underground

43. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many London Underground stations are currently being modernised.

Mr. Freeman: Modernisation works are currently going on at 20 underground stations. By the turn of the century London Underground intends that every station will have been modernised.

Roundabouts (Accidents)

44. **Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the number of road traffic accidents occurring at roundabouts for each of the last three years.

Mr. Chope: The Department collects only information on road accidents involving personal injury. The number of injury accidents occurring at roundabouts and mini-roundabouts was 11,831 in 1987, 13,037 in 1988, and 13,952 in 1989. The percentage of these accidents in which at least one person was killed or seriously injured has fallen from 15 per cent. to 13 per cent. over the period.

Learner Drivers

45. **Mr. Nelson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he is taking to tighten up the supervision of learner drivers.

Mr. Chope: Since 1 October, those accompanying L-drivers have had to be at least 21 years old and to have held a full licence for at least three years.

"Safety on the Move"

47. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many safety campaigns his Department is running under the new "Safety on the Move" campaign; and what areas they cover.

Mr. Chope: "Safety on the Move" is an umbrella campaign, bringing together the Department's existing safety initiatives and incorporating several new ones. To date, it embraces six campaigns, covering the following areas:

Child road safety
Coastal safety
Drinking and driving
Aviation security
Motorway litter
Bus safety

Further campaigns are being developed in co-operation with transport operators and the private sector.

Coach Parking, London

48. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultations he has undertaken about the problem of coach parking in London.

Mr. Freeman: As part of the Government's role of encouraging positive co-operation among organisations

with direct responsibilities for coach parking in London, I chaired a discussion with the main organisations involved on 16 October. We agreed the need to take a fresh look at six main topics: the provision of off-street parking facilities; the provision of on-street parking arrangements; the standard structure of the typical sightseeing tour route; the arrangements for purchasing parking permits for the changing of the guard ceremony; codes of operating and parking practice for British and foreign tourist coaches; and coach terminal arrangements. Consideration of these issues will be taken forward by appropriate organisations with a view to the conclusions being studied at a further meeting in January.

Regional Airports

50. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he is taking to support regional airports.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Government encourage the maximum use of regional airports, both to meet local demand and to relieve pressure on the London airports.

Over the past decade some £450 million of capital expenditure has been facilitated, through special borrowing approvals, for the development of local authority airports. Special borrowing approvals totalling £59 million are available for 1990-91, facilitating investment which the airports concerned estimate could total some £149 million this year.

We also very much welcome the contribution to the development of local authority airports which the private sector already makes through direct investment and joint venture schemes; and we continue to look to the airports concerned and their local authority owners to take full account of the opportunities for private sector involvement as they formulate their plans for further expansion.

The working group now being established to take forward the Civil Aviation Authority's recent advice on long-term United Kingdom airport capacity is to examine regional airports' role in meeting overall growth in demand into the next century.

We are continuing to pursue liberalisation policies, both in the European Community and in bilateral negotiations, which increase further the scope for services from our regional airports.

51. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by how much traffic through the regional airports has grown in the last 10 years; and how much it is forecast to grow.

Mr. McLoughlin: Passenger traffic through United Kingdom regional airports grew by 90 per cent. between 1979 and 1989 (from 17·8 to 33·8 million). The Department of Transport's most recent forecasts for this traffic, published in December 1988, set out figures based on different assumptions about the growth rate of the United Kingdom economy:

(million passengers)

	1995	*2000*	*2005*
Low forecast	42·1	52·4	62·6
High forecast	51·0	68·2	87·4

Note: The statistics and projections include Northern Irel and and Isle of Man airports; they exclude Gatwick, Heathrow, London City, Luton and Stansted, and also the Channel Island airports.

By comparison with 1987, the 2005 figures represent an increase in regional airports' share of total United Kingdom traffic from 33·2 per cent to between 37·3 per cent. and 38·2 per cent.

Midland Line Electrification

52. **Mr. Ashby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about future plans for the electrification of the midland railway line.

Mr. Freeman: It is for British Rail to develop worthwhile future plans for the midland main line. I understand that BR is continuing discussions with the local authorities in the area.

Bypasses

53. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bypasses will be started this year.

Mr. Chope: Fifteen bypasses are planned to start in 1990-91. They will relieve cities, towns and villages throughout England of intrusive and polluting through traffic, bringing major environmental benefits to their inhabitants. The places being bypassed include Norwich, Brighton, Axminster, Whitchurch and Egremont in Cumbria.

Aviation Liberalisation

54. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when full liberalisation of European aviation will begin.

Mr. McLoughlin: EC Transport Ministers, meeting in June 1990, committed themselves to complete a single market in aviation by the beginning of 1993. In the interim, a second package of liberalisation measures, building on a first package in 1987, will apply.

Coach Fares

56. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the relative cost of coach fares in 1989 and 1979.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that we do not have information on a national index basis for coach fares.

Motorway Construction

57. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on new motorway construction in each of the past four years, at constant prices.

Mr. Chope: Spending on motorways changes with the balance in the national roads programme between motorways and trunk roads. Expenditure on motorways, including structural maintenance, for the last four years at 1990-91 prices was as follows:

	£ million
1986-87	466
1987-88	398
1988-89	459
1989-90	576

British Rail Investment

58. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current level of investment by British Rail; and when this figure was last equalled in real terms.

Mr. Freeman: British Rail's latest forecast for railway investment in 1990-91 is some £820 million, which is the highest level in real terms since 1962. This includes investment in track, signalling, locomotives, rolling stock, stations and railway facilities, but excludes investment in non-railway items, pre-payments for channel tunnel-related items and expenditure on continuously welded rail (CWR).

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the British Rail investment projects currently approved by him including in each case the source of funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Current British Rail investment projects approved by my right hon. Friend include:

- East coast main line electrification, and associated rolling stock and locomotives
- 31 additional mark IV coaches for the east coast main line
- 100 class 60 freight locomotives
- 700 deepsea container wagons
- 324 class 319/321 electric multiple units for Network SouthEast services north of the Thames and Thameslink
- Cambridge to Kings Lynn electrification
- 180 class 165 Networker vehicles (for Thames and Chiltern lines)
- 400 class 465 Networker vehicles for Kent and inner suburban lines (with purchase of a further 276 vehicles approved in principle)
- 48 class 456 electric multiple units for Network SouthEast south central
- Rail link to Stansted airport and associated rolling stock Waterloo resignalling.
- Chiselhurst to Folkestone resignalling
- British Rail's share of the Heathrow express project
- 447 class 158 vehicles for Provincial
- Manchester airport rail link
- Birmingham cross-city electrification and associated rolling stock
- 30 new passenger trains for channel tunnel services
- 20 class 92 freight locomotives for channel tunnel services Tonbridge to Redhill electrification
- Construction of Waterloo international terminal and maintenance depot

British Rail has of course approved many other investment projects itself.

We do not apportion expenditure on particular projects between different funding sources.

Speed Limits

59. **Sir David Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any proposals to increase the observance of the 70 mph limit by drivers of vehicles coming off motorways.

Mr. Chope: We are concerned to improve observance of speed limits on all types of roads. Motorways, including the sliproads, are among our safest roads. They carry 14 per cent. of all traffic but account for only 2·5 per cent. of those killed and seriously injured. Drivers leaving the motorway are advised in the "Highway Code" to adjust their driving to suit the new conditions and to check their speedometers since an incorrect perception of speed can occur.

Duty-free Sales

60. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has considered the effect on United Kingdom airlines, ferries and airports of the elimination of duty-free sales.

Mr. McLoughlin: Policy on any proposals which the European Commission might bring forward to eliminate duty-free sales would, of course, be a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We are considering very carefully the evidence that has been, and continues to be, put forward by the United Kingdom industry on the effects of abolition.

Aircraft Safety

Sir Ian Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether, following the decision of the United States civil aviation authorities that no seats should be allowed to block the safety exits from aircraft, and the immediate implementation of that directive by Pan-American and others, he will ask the Civil Aviation Authority to carry out an immediate and comprehensive review of the current practices of all airlines operating to and from the United Kingdom.

Mr. McLoughlin: Neither the Department of Transport nor the Civil Aviation Authority has any knowledge of any recent decision of the United States Federal Aviation Administration amending its requirements related to aircraft seating.

However, new rules were introduced by the United States Federal Aviation Administration on 5 October concerning the physical abilities of persons to be seated in exit rows and the display of instructions for opening emergency exits. Such rules are already in force for United Kingdom-registered aircraft.

The practices of airlines operating to and from the United Kingdom may differ to some extent, but all subscribe to the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Ports Police

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals for reviewing the operation of the ports police; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Department wrote on 3 August 1990 to interested bodies in the ports industry and organisations representing the police seeking their views about the future of harbour authorities' powers to operate private police forces. They were invited to reply by 1 December. A copy of the consultation letter was sent to my hon. Friend; copies are being placed in the Library.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will investigate the role of Jayship Limited of London in the export of equipment to Iraq, following the detention of the vessel the Gur Mariner, managed by Jayship Ltd., on 13 September by the Dutch customs authorities at Flushing.

Mr. McLoughlin: I am fully aware of the circumstances of the detention of the Gur Mariner. The vessel, which had

been en route to the middle east with cargo for Iraq at the time of the introduction of sanctions, returned to northern Europe on the initiative of Jayship Ltd. Its subsequent arrest was due to an action in Dutch civil law brought by Iraqi authorities. The arrest order has since been lifted. There was no question of the vessel or Jayship Ltd. attempting to break sanctions.

Bus Passes

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to propose an amendment to section 93 of the Transport Act 1985 to end sexual discrimination over the minimum age at which bus passes may be issued.

Mr. Freeman: We have no plans to change the present arrangements which link eligibility for travel concession for elderly people to state pensionable age.

M20

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set a target for the M20 Ashford to Hollingbourne motorway, now under construction, to be open to traffic by next Easter.

Mr. Chope: The M20 motorway under construction between Maidstone and Ashford comprises two contracts. The contract completion date for the first from Hollingbourne interchange to Lenham is April 1991, but it cannot be opened to traffic before completion of the second contract from Lenham to Ashford interchange. That contract is due for completion in July 1991. As these are contractual dates I can give no assurance that an earlier opening will be achieved.

Roadworks

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action is taken by his Department in advising highway and street authorities on the specification for reinstatements following work carried out by public and private utilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: At present specifications for reinstatements following utility street works are a matter for agreement between highway authorities and utilities. The Department recognises the unsatisfactory nature of much reinstatement work, and has been working with highway authorities and utilities on the production of a code of practice to establish a national specification and performance standards for reinstatements. These standards will be prescribed under the legislation it is proposed to introduce to reform the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950.

Dangerous Driving

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will introduce legislation to provide for stiffer penalties for drivers who cause the deaths of other road users.

Mr. Chope: Our proposals for the reform of road traffic law are set out in the White Paper "The Road User and the Law" (Cm. 576). These include the creation of a new offence of

"causing death by careless driving while unfit through drink or drugs"

and the reformulation of the reckless driving offences. Legislation to implement these proposals will be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

Ports Consultation Document

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations were received by his Department on the British Ports Federation consultation document proposing a flat rate light dues charge for pleasure craft; and when he expects to announce a decision on the proposals.

Mr. McLoughlin: About 90 representations have been made by bodies and individuals, generally opposing registration of pleasure craft for light dues purposes. Over 40 hon. Members have written on behalf of sailing clubs and yachtsmen in their constituencies. My right hon. Friend is still considering the matter.

Hydro-electric Barrier (Solent)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether any environmental ecological or tidal impact studies have been carried out by his Department for the hydro-electric barrier proposed for the western Solent between Hurst Castle and Fort Victoria; and whether any consultation has taken place between his Department and the Royal Yachting Association, the Solent Protection Society and the Commercial Fishermen's Association;

(2) Whether any public expenditure is planned for the proposed tidal barrage between Hurst Castle and Fort Victoria.

Mr. McLoughlin: No approach has been made to my Department about this proposed scheme, for which my right hon. Friend's consent would be needed. His concern is with safety of navigation and the right of innocent passage through the Solent. I am not aware of any plans for public expenditure on the scheme.

Isle of Wight Ferries (Signs)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish his decision on mainland signs to the Isle of Wight ferries.

Mr. Chope: Signing on roads within the boundary of the city of Southampton is a matter for the city council.

We understand that Southampton city council intends to erect signs to Department of Transport standards reading "For Ferries Follow Waterfront". The Isle of Wight ferry will be clearly signed in the immediate vicinity of the ferry terminal.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1989-90.

Mr. McLoughlin *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The Department spent £114,016 on official hospitality in 1989-90.

SCOTLAND

Physiotherapy

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many places were available annually for training students in physiotherapy in each of the last 10 years; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of existing places.

Mr. Rifkind: The number of places for training physiotherapy students in Scotland is available only over the last four years and is as follows:

	Number
1987	153
1988	155
1989	154
1990	160

Physiotherapy courses are heavily oversubscribed and there is no longer a limit on the number of student places. There is no indication that the number of physiotherapists qualifying each year is insufficient to fill vacant posts in Scotland. Recruitment and retention of staff in all the professions allied to medicine including physiotherapy is being examined by a paramedical manpower steering group recently established by the National Health Service management executive.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received any recent information from UK Nirex Ltd. in regard to any changes in projected volumes of radioactive wastes that may be disposed of at Dounreay, should the site prove suitable after assessment and all planning consents have been obtained.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. Dounreay is, of course, only one of the sites currently under investigation as a possible location for the proposed national deep repository.

European Regional Development Fund

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the annual sums of money committed since the inception of the European regional development fund to each recipient local authority and each regional council and the annual amounts paid to each from the fund.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Infertility

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the most recent figures available showing the number of clinics in Scotland offering *(a)* IVA, GIFT and other procedures and *(b)* GIFT and other procedures but excluding IVA; and if he will also publish the total number of (i) single, (ii) twin, (iii) triplet, (iv) quadruplet, (v) quintuplet and (vi) sextuplet pregnancies following GIFT procedures in each category of clinic.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I regret that this information is not held centrally. Some information on these matters is published in the annual report of the Interim Licensing Authority, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Rents to Mortages Scheme

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many sales have been completed under the rents to mortgages scheme.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: By end September, 23 sales had been completed and a further 40 missives had been concluded with an entry date of 31 October or earlier.

Giant Hogweed

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on how many occasions in the past five years Scottish district or regional councils have used the provisions of the Public Health (Scotland) Act 1897 to serve notice on landowners to remove a nuisance, or to recoup losses for the removal of a nuisance from privately owned land; and, of these, how many are related to the removal of Heracleum Mantegazzianum.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No record of local authorities' use of these powers is held centrally.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many recorded incidents there have been in the last five years of the hospitalisation of patients who have come into contact with the furocoumarins released by Heracleum Mantegazzianum.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information on the number of patients admitted to hospital suffering from the effects of Heracleum Mantegazzianum (giant hogweed) is not collected centrally.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the origin and number of representations he has received in the last 12 months about problems created by Heracleum Mantegazzianum.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Six such representations have been received—three from Moray and one each from Edinburgh, Kyle and Carrick and Nithsdale.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prosecutions there have been in each of the years since 1981 under section 14(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act against landowners who have planted or caused to grow in the wild a plant listed in schedule 9 of that Act; and whether any of these prosecutions related to Heracleum Mantegazzianum.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is not separately identifiable within the Scottish Home and Health Department's classification of crimes and offences.

Electricity

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he plans to take to ensure Scottish generators of electricity from renewable sources are able to compete on equal terms with those in England and Wales

in respect of qualification for inclusion under the non-fossil fuel obligation quota; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Arrangements for the non-fossil fuel obligation are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. Scottish generators from renewable sources can sell their electricity in England and Wales on a levy exempt basis.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much he spent on fees to advisers on electricity privatisation in 1989-90; and what is the budget for the current year.

Mr. Lang: In 1989-90 the provisional outturn expenditure on advisers' fees and other expenses relating to the privatisation of the electricity supply industry in Scotland is £3,811,000. The final outturn figure will be contained in the appropriation accounts to be published on 26 October. The supply estimates for 1990-91 included provision of £5 million for such fees.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Christmas Bonus

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the present cost equivalent of the £10 Christmas bonus to pensioners paid in 1972.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: If the Christmas bonus had been increased in line with the movement in the retail prices index since December 1972 it would be worth over £50 at December 1990. To pay the Christmas bonus to all recipients at this rate would cost more than £600 million.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many disabled women will benefit from the Court of Appeal's decision in the case of Evelyn Thomas of Caldicot, Gwent and others; and what action he has taken to trace those who are made eligible for invalid care allowance by the decision.

Mr. Scott: We are considering the implications of this decision.

Hostel Dwellers

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will examine whether there are delays in income support payments to hostel dwellers; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Arrangements for paying benefit to hostel dwellers were kept under close scrutiny following the October 1989 changes which removed from them the special board and lodging rate of income support, and this continues as part of the Department's general monitoring activity. Where problems have arisen and where central action could help, that action has been taken: for example, the restoration of the facility for certain income support payments to be made directly to hostels.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will take steps to allocate responsibility for paying for care costs in hostels; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Since October 1989 people in hostels, like people in other types of rented accommodation, have been able to claim income support specifically to help with day-to-day living expenses. From the same date help with accommodation costs has been available through housing benefit. These arrangements replaced the old income support special board and lodging rate for hostel dwellers, although financial support from social security for existing claimants and the hostel places they occupied has been maintained at the October 1989 level by means of payments to hostels from a central unit in the Department of Social Security.

The money being paid out by the central unit broadly represents payments from social security under the old arrangements towards the cost of the care provided in hostels. It will be transferred to other funding sources from April 1991, as explained in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) on 15 October. Within income support, vulnerable people such as those who are disabled can qualify for a premium in addition to their personal allowance which can of course go towards meeting hostel charges.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will carry out research to establish whether people in hostels need extra benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no current plans to undertake such research.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what guidance is given by his Department to local adjudication officers with regard to the payment of income support to temporary residents of unregistered care homes with fewer than four residents who are occupying the bed of a resident away from home on a period of leave.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Eligibility to income support is defined by regulations. Independent adjudication officers are provided with guidance on the interpretation of the regulations by the chief adjudication officer, but no specific guidance has been given on this point.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he plans to increase income support for hostel dwellers; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Since October 1989 accommodation costs for people in hostels have been met by housing benefit in the same way as they are for people in other types of rented accommodation. Income support provides help for other normal day-to-day living expenses. These and other income-related benefits are reviewed each year and a statement about next year's uprating will be made shortly.

Benefit Subsidy

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what consultations he held prior to his decision to cut the rate of subsidy for housing and poll tax benefit from 97 per cent. to 95 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: My right hon. Friend the Minister of State announced on 19 July at column *698* that we would that day be consulting the local authority associations on a proposal to change the basic rate of

direct benefit subsidy from 97 per cent. to 95 per cent. from April 1991. The associations were invited to comment on the proposals by the end of August, and a number of them submitted written representations.

Following requests from the associations, my right hon. Friend the Minister of State met their representatives to discuss the proposal on 24 September and the final deadline for comments was extended until one week after that date.

Family Credit

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many families in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole are presently in receipt of family credit; and what percentages these are of those families estimated to be eligible for such support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available information is as follows:

	Number
(a) Greenock and Port Glasgow	[1]934
(b) Strathclyde	[1]15,828
(c) Scotland	[2]39,000

Notes:

[1] Number of awards actually in payment on 21 September 1990, ie excludes awards on claims made before that date but not decided at that stage.

[2] Provisional caseload at end of July 1990, ie including backdated awards. Information on this more comprehensive basis is only available for Scotland as a whole.

Information about the total number of families eligible for family credit can be obtained only for Great Britain as a whole, and only retrospectively, from Family Expenditure Survey data.

Elderly People

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what were the total annual amounts paid in supplementary benefit, income support from April 1988, and board and lodging payments to elderly people of limited and no means living in private or voluntary residential care and nursing homes in each year from 1979-80 to 1989-90 *(a)* at current prices and *(b)* at 1989-90 prices.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if it is his intention to trawl the attendance allowance computer programme to inform recipients and carers of its existence.

Mr. Scott: I am unable to answer the question as its meaning is not clear. If the hon. Member would care to write to me, I will give a full reply.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many appeals to the social security commissioners were lodged in the last year for which statistics are available concerning attendance allowance; what proportion of all attendance allowance claims in that year they represented; and how many such appeals resulted in the case being remitted to the Attendance Allowance Board for reconsideration.

The Attorney-General: I have been asked to reply. The information is not readily available and I shall reply as soon as possible.

Income Support Deductions

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, further to the answer to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East of 15 October on income support deductions to cover debts arising from the poll tax, what information he has as to the breakdown by office of the 9,000 deductions being made at 31 August; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest count showed that 40 offices had income support cases with a deduction to clear community charge arrears. The number of such deductions for each office is shown in the table.

Annex

Local office	*Number of deductions*
Scotland	
Airdrie	24
Ayr	320
Bathgate	65
Bellshill	295
Campbeltown	5
Clydebank	100
Coatbridge	125
Cowdenbeath	91
Cumbernauld	447
Dumbarton	193
Dumfries	3
Dundee East	11
Dunfermline	71
East Kilbride	101
Falkirk	983
Galashiels	308
Glasgow (Anniesland)	343
Glasgow (Bridgeton)	315
Glasgow (City)	172
Glasgow (Craigton)	29
Glasgow (Laurieston)	416
Glasgow (Maryhill)	311
Glasgow (Partick)	251
Glasgow (Provan)	394
Glasgow (Shettleston)	504
Glasgow (Springburn)	992
Greenock	121
Hamilton	86
Irvine	75
Johnstone	18
Kirkcaldy	75
Motherwell	593
Oban	15
Perth	1
Port Glasgow	32
Stirling	1,196
Subtotal	9,081
England	
Goole	24
Halifax	1
Newcastle (Staffs)	5
Rugby	1
Subtotal	31
Total	9,112

Industrial Diseases

Mr. Eastham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the number of outstanding cases in the pneumoconiosis byssinosis and miscellaneous diseases

benefit branch at the Department of Social Security central office, Blackpool; and what is the average number of weeks taken to finally process these claims.

Mr. Scott: Some 85 claims are outstanding. It takes an average of 19 weeks to clear such claims.

Mobility Allowance

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many appeals to the social security commissioners were lodged during the last year for which statistics are available concerning mobility allowance; what proportion of all claims for mobility allowance in that year they represented; and how many such appeals resulted either in the case being remitted for reconsideration by the Medical Appeal Tribunal or in the commissioner substituting his or her own decision for that of the Medical Appeal Tribunal.

The Attorney-General: I have been asked to reply.

The information is not readily available and I shall reply as soon as possible.

Income Support

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans he has to amend the present regulations so that 19-year-olds in full-time relevant education will be able to claim income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I am aware of the hon. Member's interest. We are continuing to keep the position under review.

Benefits

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of *(a)* pensioners, *(b)* lone parents, *(c)* unemployed, *(d)* sick-disabled and *(e)* two parent families on benefit have no income from national benefits.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 25 June 1990]:* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to those on income-related benefits. The information requested is as follows:

	Percentage
Pensioners	1
Lone parents	7
Unemployed	85
Sick-disabled	53
Two parent families	69

Child Benefit

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will direct the expression child allowance to be used in place of child benefit in all official usage.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no plans to do so.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a further statement on the reasons for having a child benefit scheme.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The reasons for having a child benefit scheme were clearly set out in the Prime Minister's reply to my hon. Friend on 17 March 1981 at column 55 when she said that it has long been the view of all parties that our tax and benefit systems should recognise the needs of families with children, and should differentiate between such families and those without responsibilities for children. Child tax allowances achieved this but gave no help to families below the tax threshold. Family allowances did not recognise the first child. Child benefit, which replaced both allowances, was introduced in 1977 with the support of all parties.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Common Fisheries Policy

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will make a statement on his plans to monitor other EEC member states' enforcement of the regulations of the common fisheries policy;

(2) what plans he has to secure agreement of all EEC member states to strengthen the numbers and role of the EC fisheries inspectorate and gradually to phase out individual national inspectorates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Monitoring the enforcement arrangements of other member states is the job of the EC fisheries inspectorate. Each member state has the responsibility to enforce the common fisheries policy in its own territory and fisheries limits. The United Kingdom co-operates with other member states through the exchange of information on the landings and activities of vessels.

I see no need to press for any change in the present role of the EC fisheries inspectorate. Member states' inspection services should continue to perform their present functions and penalties should continue to be applied under national legislation.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the United Kingdom share of the total cost of the EEC common fisheries policy for the last year for which figures are available *(a)* as a percentage of the total and *(b)* the actual amount spent.

Mr. Curry: It is not possible to separate the United Kingdom's share of the costs of individual EC policies from the United Kingdom's contribution to the EC budget as a whole.

Total EC payments to the United Kingdom under the EEC common fisheries policy in 1988 (the most recent year for which figures are available) was 10·7 mecu (£7·3 million). This was 4·1 per cent. of the amount paid to all member states.

Source: European Court of Auditors report, 1988.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the future role he plans for the common fisheries policy; and whether he will make it his policy to consider alternative ideas for the management of fish stocks after 1993.

Mr. Curry: The common fisheries policy was agreed in 1983 to last for at least 20 years with a mid-term review. The Government are wholly committed to the present framework. It provides a firm and clear basis for the allocation of fishing opportunities, and allowable catch levels take full account of scientific advice. At the same time it provides flexibility for the introduction of further

essential conservation and other measures. We intend to continue to develop and improve fisheries arrangements within the existing framework.

EC Intervention Stores

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give details of the location, foodstuff and quantity of European Economic Community intervention stores in Greater London; and what was the position 12 months previously.

Mr. Curry: There were no stores in Greater London holding United Kingdom intervention stocks 12 months ago and there is none holding United Kingdom intervention stocks currently.

Free Food

Mr. Madden: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will arrange for eligibility to free European Economic Community butter and meat to include those whose income support is paid quarterly.

Mr. Curry: All citizens who are in receipt of income support, and produce means of identification, are eligible under these arrangements.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the total number of BSE cases that have been confirmed on a county-by-county basis in England, Wales and Scotland since the disease became notifiable, until the end of September 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The information is as follows:

County	*Number*
Avon	332
Bedfordshire	49
Berkshire	107
Borders	19
Buckinghamshire	138
Cambridge	65
Central	20
Cheshire	411
Cleveland	25
Clwyd	177
Cornwall	1,287
Cumbria	302
Derbyshire	247
Devon	1,916
Dorset	1,522
Dumfries	99
Durham	69
Dyfed	662
Essex	83
Fife	39
Glamorgan Mid	41
Glamorgan South	50
Glamorgan West	7
Gloucestershire	563
Grampian	123
Gwent	127
Gwynedd	50
Hampshire	733
Hereford & Worcestershire	334
Hertfordshire	85
Highland	29
Humberside	79
Isle of Wight	125
Kent	401
Lancashire	356
Leicestershire	417
Lincolnshire	141
London	7
Lothian	14
Manchester	11
Merseyside	9
Norfolk	260
Northamptonshire	144
Northumberland	70
Nottinghamshire	106
Orkney	7
Oxfordshire	287
Powys	157
Shropshire	419
Shetland	1
Somerset	1,424
Staffordshire	340
Strathclyde	155
Suffolk	211
Surrey	182
Sussex East	231
Sussex West	456
Tayside	45
Tyne & Wear	1
West Midlands	12
Warwickshire	188
Western Isles	1
Wiltshire	1,080
Yorkshire North	637
Yorkshire South	54
Yorkshire West	78
Total	17,817

Poison Gas, North Sea

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what monitoring is carried out to determine whether *(a)* fish stocks and *(b)* sea mammals in the North sea are contaminated by poison gas dumped after the first and second world wars, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* The Ministry and the Scottish Office undertake a national programme of monitoring fish and shellfish round our coasts for contaminants which could present a hazard to public health. The sea mammals research unit of the Natural Environment Research Council, on contract to the Department of the Environment, and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland are undertaking contaminant analysis of small cetaceans stranded around the United Kingdom coastline.

This work, however, is not directed specifically towards identifying contaminants arising from the dumping of poison gas at sea. Scientific advice is that these materials pose no risk of contamination of fish and sea mammal population.

EC Agriculture Spending

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total amount which was spent by the European Economic Community on all its agricultural activities, including the storage and disposal of surpluses, in each of the years from 1973; what is the estimate for 1990 and 1991, respectively; and if he will also publish a table showing the percentage increases in each year.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* The information requested is set out in the table.

	Total Capital		Increase Over Previous Year Percentage
	(mecu)	(£ million)	
1973	3,785·5	1,901·54	—
1974	3,225·1	1,644·17	−14·80
1975	4,701·3	2,632·85	45·77
1976	5,811·1	3,612·05	23·61
1977	7,139·7	4,667·23	22·86
1978	9,018·8	5,986·31	26·32
1979	10,884·2	7,066·41	20·68
1980	11,942·8	7,231·84	9·73
1981	11,578·4	6,447·91	−3·05
1982	13,106·3	7,310·71	13·20
1983	16,610·8	9,743·58	26·74
1984	19,097·4	11,152·29	14·97
1985	20,547·8	12,083·15	7·59
1986	23,028·4	14,918·97	12·07
1987	24,003·9	17,266·49	4·24
1988	29,100·4	19,740·05	21·23
1989	30,076·3	19,692·31	3·35
1990	30,216·6	21,058·07	0·47
1991	33,563·4	23,390·47	11·08

Source: 1973-1988: Budget (outturn figures)
1989-1990: Budget
1991: Draft Budget

Note: The budgets for the years 1989-1991 include an additional 1,000 mecu (£700 million) monetary reserve which has not been included in the above totals.

Agriculture Council

Mr. David Davis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Agriculture Council held in Luxembourg on 15 and 16 October.

Mr. Gummer *[pursuant to his reply, 17 October 1990, c. 830]:* I represented the United Kingdom at a meeting of the Agriculture Council on 19 October which was specially convened so that the Council could continue its discussion of the Commission's proposal for a Community offer for reducing agricultural support and protection in the current GATT round.

I continued to make clear that I could endorse the Commission proposal as a basis for taking negotiations forward. There was support for this view from a few other Ministers, but a majority pressed various objections and were unwilling to agree.

The Council again failed to reach agreement and discussion will now pass to the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 October.

I much regret the further delay in the adoption of a Community position and the absence of agreement in the Agriculture Council on such an important issue for the Uruguay round. It is a pity that the United Kingdom's support for the Community position should not have been followed by the other nations which, with Britain, agreed the basis for this negotiation under the French presidency last December.

DEFENCE

Battle of Britain

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of post-war examination and research, he will redefine the official time for the end of the battle of Britain.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The term "Battle of Britain" refers to the threatened invasion in 1940. German plans never got beyond the first phase, an air assault intended to pave the way for the invasion by driving the RAF from the sky. By 17 September the heavy Luftwaffe losses forced Hitler to put off his invasion plans. Photo-reconnaissance on 20 September showed the German invasion fleet dispersing, and an Enigma decrypt on 25 October confirmed that invasion units had been disbanded. On 31 October the Defence Committee under Winston Churchill confirmed that the danger of invasion was over, and this day became the official end-date for the battle of Britain. All subsequent evidence has confirmed this decision and there would be no grounds for a redefinition.

Nuclear Testing

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total cost to date of the United Kingdom nuclear testing activities.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It would not be in the national interest to reveal the cost of the United Kingdom's nuclear testing programme.

Public Accounts Committee (Information)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those categories of information withheld from the Public Accounts Committee by his Department on the grounds of (i) commercial confidentiality or (ii) military sensitivity.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence does not withhold information from the Public Accounts Committee on the grounds of commercial confidentiality or security classification, except where there is a requirement to protect the confidences of other Governments, or under the established arrangement by which the Department informs the National Audit Office, but not the Public Accounts Committee, of any projects which, but for their high security classification, would have been included in the Department's annual statement on major projects. Parliament was informed of this arrangement on 2 February 1987 (*Official Report*, column *517*); and it is further described in a memorandum by the Comptroller and Auditor General which was published with the Committee's 47th report of Session 1987-88 (HC 371).

Military Equipment (Iraq)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the likely benefits to accrue to United Kingdom arms manufacturers and defence material producers as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent military developments since 2 August.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the policy of this and previous Administrations not to comment on matters of this kind.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will obtain a copy of the transcript or cassette of the feature investigation broadcast on Channel Four news on 28 August on Iraqi acquisition of high technology weapons and other military equipment from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

Hazardous Substances

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total cost incurred by his Department for the contracting of external consultants to implement assessments under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988, since they came into force on 1 October 1989; and if he will list the consultants taken on in respect of this work to date by his Department.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: No central contracts have been placed for external consultants to implement assessments under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) 1988 Regulations. Details of contracts placed locally by units and establishments are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost and effort.

Military Equipment (UAE)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recent discussions held with the United Arab Emirates for the sale of British defence equipment.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the policy of this and previous Administrations not to comment on matters of this kind.

Beryllium

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, in the light of the serious toxic contamination caused by the dispersal of beryllium oxide after the accident at the Ulbinsky metallurgical factory in Ust Kamenogorsk, in the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan in September, he will review the present safety of facilities operated by, or contracted to, his Department that use beryllium.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The recent reported incident in Kazakhstan is understood to have involved a production process in which beryllium metal is obtained from ores. Such processes are not carried out at any United Kingdom facilities operated by, or contracted to, the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all defence facilities where beryllium is stored, fabricated or fashioned for military purposes; and when the assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 was conducted at each such establishment.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Beryllium is used at the atomic weapons establishment sites at Aldermaston, Burghfield and Cardiff. Safety assessments, as required by the Control

of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, have recently been completed for all beryllium facilities within those sites.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had with his Soviet counterpart regarding health and safety procedures in beryllium machining plants for weapons applications since the fire and explosion at Ust Kamenogorsk.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: None. I understand that the recent reported incident in Kazakhstan involved a production process in which beryllium metal is obtained from ores. Such processes are not carried out at any United Kingdom facilities operated by, or contracted to, the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had with Hunting-BRAE as the nominated contractor for managing the atomic weapons research establishments regarding the appropriate health and safety procedures for the safe machining of beryllium since the fire and explosion at Ust Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan, USSR.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: None. I understand that the recent reported incident in Kazakhstan involved a production process in which beryllium metal is obtained from ores. Such processes are not carried out at any United Kingdom facilities operated by, or contracted to, the Ministry of Defence. The atomic weapons establishment management contract requires that established health and safety procedures are fully adhered to at Cardiff and all other atomic weapons establishment sites.

Lithium Hydride

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department holds stocks of lithium hydride; and what military uses there are in the United Kingdom defence programme for this chemical.

Mr. Carlisle: Stocks of lithium hydride are held by the atomic weapons establishment and are used in the nuclear weapons programme.

Chieftain Tank

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce a decision on the replacement for the Chieftain tank.

Mr. Alan Clark: I have nothing to add to the answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) on 15 May at col. *727*.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors he will take into account in making a decision on the replacement for the Chieftain tank.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger) on 20 December 1988 at cols *259-60* and the answer that I gave the hon. Member on 15 May at col *727* et seq.

Military Equipment Exhibitions

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he possesses in regard to the attendance of agents for the Iraqi Government's military equipment procurement network at the arms and military equipment exhibitions held earlier in 1990 at Aldershot, Portsmouth and Farnborough, respectively.

Mr. Alan Clark: It is not our practice to comment on the representation of specific countries at defence-related exhibitions.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's response to the criticisms made of actions taken by his Department in the report on Mr. Colin Wallace produced by David Calcutt QC in September.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to my letter of 13 September to the hon. Member for Arundel (Sir M. Marshall), a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Equipment Sales (Saudi Arabia)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what requests he has received from the Comptroller and Auditor General for information in regard to his Department's payment practices on the 1986 agreement with Saudi Arabia for the sale of Tornado aircraft and other military equipment.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Ministry of Defence co-operates fully in providing information to the NAO within the terms of the National Audit Act 1983. It is not our practice to comment on detailed matters concerning individual defence sales.

Cambodia

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what mines technology has been made available to the Cambodian resistance.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not the practice to comment on allegations of this nature.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations Astra Holdings has made to him about trade with Cambodia.

Mr. Alan Clark: None.

Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the availability of desert-related spare equipment for tanks and armoured vehicles of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards in the middle east meets target requirements.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Sufficient spare parts and major assemblies are available to meet anticipated requirements.

Strategic Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards a reduction in strategic nuclear weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We fully support the bilateral START negotiations between the United States and the

Soviet Union. The Government's position on the inclusion of the British strategic deterrent in negotiations on strategic nuclear weapons is set out fully in paragraph 124 of the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990 (Cm. 1022-1).

Ministry Accounting Procedures

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he intends to appoint independent financial consultants to review accounting procedures in the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Alan Clark: There is currently no intention to appoint independent financial consultants to review accounting procedures in the Ministry of Defence.

Computers

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department in its purchase of computers and computer equipment in the last five years for which information is available.

Mr. Alan Clark: During the last five years the Ministry of Defence has spent £345·5 million on the purchase of administrative computers and associated equipment and services. The expenditure for each year is as follows:

Financial year	*Expenditure £ million*
1985-86	39·2
1986-87	62·2
1987-88	58·8
1988-89	76·5
1989-90	108·8

Details of expenditure on computers for weapons systems are maintained only as an integral part of expenditure on such systems as a whole, and could be disaggregated only at disproportionate cost.

Low Flying

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will institute an inquiry into the potential for RAF low-flying training to take place other than over mid-Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom low-flying system is kept continuously under review with the aim of spreading activity more widely so as to reduce disturbance in busier areas and improve overall safety.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will institute an inquiry into the potential for RAF low-flying training to take place outside the United Kingdom on flying ranges leased from or licensed by foreign Governments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The majority of operational low-flying training, at heights below 250 ft, is already carried out outside the United Kingdom. Further opportunities for low-flying training abroad will continue to be given very careful consideration. In each case, however, a balance has to be struck between the advantages of the particular overseas location and the extra cost and dislocation resulting from overseas deployment and the need for aircraft to carry out adequate training in the theatre where they are based.

Thai Army

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many United Kingdom military personnel have been attached to the Thai army since 1984.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 30 November 1989 at col. *358*. No loan service personnel have served with the Thai armed forces in the period in question. Further specific details of military assistance provided are confidential between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Thailand.

Princess of Wales RAF Hospital, Ely

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all the capital improvements, additions and alterations to the Princess of Wales Royal Air Force hospital, Ely for each of the last five years giving details of the sums involved in each case.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will write to my hon. Friend.

Captain Anthony Leigh de Normann

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the military career of Captain Anthony Leigh de Normann, including countries where he was stationed.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not our practice to reveal personal details of this nature.

British Troops (Gulf)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current cost of the total operations in Saudi Arabia at the most recent date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) on 15 October 1990 at column *688*.

Victoria Barracks, Windsor

Sir Alan Glyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to ensure that the precautions provided for residents whose houses are in the vicinity of military installations, such as the Victoria barracks, Windsor, are satisfactory in view of the recent terrorist attacks.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The responsibility for countering the threat of terrorist attacks at large lies with the police and is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary. At a local level, the Ministry of Defence co-operates closely with police forces in order to maintain the security both of its establishments and of its personnel. We are putting in place a major package of enhanced security measures and are constantly looking at ways to improve security further. I appreciate that my hon. Friend is concerned for the security of his constituents. By reducing the likelihood of an attack, our security improvements benefit both those who work or live in a defence establishment, and those who live nearby. Awareness of the risk and personal vigilance is a key

element in security; members of the public who see unusual or suspicious activity should report it to their local police as soon as possible.

"Options for Change"

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply of 17 October, when he hopes to complete the work on refining the detail of the broad proposals he put forward on 25 July; and whether he will make a statement on this work when it is completed.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is too early to say when the work will be completed. The House will be kept informed of our progress.

Civil Servants (Qualifications)

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records are kept of the recognised qualifications acquired by his civil servants.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Department keeps records of all educational and professional qualifications obtained by individual civil servants.

Service Personnel (Qualifications)

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records are kept of the recognised qualifications acquired by service personnel through their pre-release training.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The main purposes of pre-release vocational training are to prepare service personnel for working life in a civilian environment and to convert existing skills or to provide new ones, in preparation for the employment opportunities available in the civilian labour market. The acquisition of qualifications of the nature referred to by the hon. Gentleman is subordinate to these purposes, not least because of the difficulty of doing so in the 28 days allowed for this training. Successful completion of courses at Ministry of Defence resettlement centres and of Ministry of Defence sponsored courses elsewhere is marked by the issue of certificates, records of which are held by the institutions concerned for a minimum of one year. The possibility of qualifications for those who undertake their pre-release training in the form of attachments to outside organisations does not generally arise, since the purpose is to gain experience of work with civilian companies.

Military Training Assistance

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply of 17 October, what are the circumstances in which details of military training assistance provided by British service personnel may be released.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Details of military training provided to overseas Governments are normally confidential. Any exception would be considered on its own merits and would be subject to the agreement of the overseas Government concerned.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has contacted the Belize Government regarding the release of detailed information on the provision of military training assistance by British service personnel.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Details of military training assistance provided for the Belize Government, as set out in my answers to the hon. Gentleman of 7 November 1989 at columns *542-43* and 14 November 1989 at column *189*, updated information published in the eighth report of the House of Commons Defence Committee (HC 624, Session 1987-88). Prior permission for the publication of that information was sought and received from the Belize Government.

Community Charge

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the percentage of service personnel of the rank of *(a)* major and above, *(b)* captain and below, *(c)* warrant officer and senior non-commissioned officer and *(d)* corporal and below, in service accommodation in Britain who will be responsible for community charges above the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement, and will be eligible for reimbursement of accommodation charges;

(2) what is the percentage of service personnel in *(a)* grade 1, *(b)* grade 2, *(c)* grade 3, and *(d)* grade 4 service accommodation in Britain who will be responsible for community charges above the average as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement, and will be eligible for reimbursement of accommodation charges;

(3) what is the percentage of service personnel in *(a)* grade 1, *(b)* grade 2, *(c)* grade 3 and *(d)* grade 4 service accommodation in Britain who are liable for community charges below the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement;

(4) what is the percentage of service personnel of the rank of *(a)* major and above, *(b)* captain and below, *(c)* warrant officer and senior non-commissioned officer and *(d)* corporal and below, in service accommodation in Britain who are liable for community charges below the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement;

(5) what is the percentage of service personnel of the rank of *(a)* major and above, *(b)* captain and below, *(c)* warrant officer and senior non-commissioned officer and *(d)* corporal and below, in service accommodation in Britain who will be responsible for community charges above the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement, but are not eligible for reimbursement of accommodation charges;

(6) what is the percentage of service personnel in *(a)* grade 1, *(b)* grade 2, *(c)* grade 3 and *(d)* grade 4 service accommodation in Britain who will be responsible for community charges above the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement, but are not eligible for reimbursement of accommodation charges.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested could not be provided without disproportionate effort.

Military Training Assistance

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list in the *Official Report* those countries or groups within countries to which either British service men or other employees in his Department, or individuals privately contracted via his Department, have provided military assistance, training or advice, in the last two years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In the two-year period to 1 October 1990, the following states have been provided by Her Majesty's Government with military training assistance in-country, or military training courses in the United Kingdom:

Algeria
Australia
Austria
Bahamas
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Cameroon
Canada
Chad
Chile
China
Colombia
Denmark
Djibouti
Dominica
Ecuador
Egypt
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Grenada
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Malta
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Somalia
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Tanzania
Thailand
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Turks and Caicos
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
United States of America
Venezuela
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Details of training provided are normally confidential between Her Majesty's Government and the Government concerned.

Procurement Programmes

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply of 17 October, what are the financial implications of his decision to *(a)* cancel the eighth batch of Tornado aircraft and *(b)* slow production of the Warrior armoured infantry fighting vehicle and its variants.

Mr. Alan Clark: I estimate that the cancellation of the eighth batch of Tornado aircraft will save around £400 million in total. The details of the financial implications of slowing down production of the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle and its variants are commercially confidential.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which equipment procurement programmes, whose total value is expected to be greater than £100 million, have been either delayed, cancelled, or reduced in size since 1 June.

Mr. Alan Clark: In addition to the two projects named in my answer of 17 October, I have decided since 1 June that the delivery programmes for two others with a total value of over £100 million should be extended. These are the Challenger replacement armoured repair and recovery vehicle and demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the approximate production rate of the Warrior armoured infantry fighting vehicle and its variants prior to his decision to slow production; and what it will be as a result of his decision.

Mr. Alan Clark: The effect of the decision to slow production of the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle and its variants on the rate of production is commercially confidential.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 23 October 1990

TRANSPORT

ATC Radar, Edinburgh (Jamming)

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the outcome of the inquiry by the Civil Aviation Authority into the jamming of air traffic control radar at Edinburgh airport on 19 June during a mock attack on Rosyth dockyard.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Edinburgh approach radar was subject to interference for a period of 90 seconds on 19 June 1990, caused by an RAF aircraft participating in a routine exercise. There was no risk to the safety of any civil or military aircraft during this period.

The air traffic control authorities at Edinburgh airport have now agreed procedures with the military exercise planners to prevent such interference occurring in the future.

Pipes and Cables

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will seek to amend the Highways Acts to enable the more effective servicing of pipes and cables through deposit in common ducts below streets.

Mr. Chope: No such amendment is required, since highway authorities already have the necessary powers.

Jubilee Line

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has yet taken a view on whether there should be stations at Southwark and Bermondsey on the proposed Jubilee line extension to docklands.

Mr. Freeman: I told the House on 24 July—*Official Report*, columns 373-74—that it was the Government's policy that stations should be built at Southwark and Bermondsey; I also said that further analytical work was to be carried out to confirm that the case for these stations was positive. The House will wish to know the outcome of this work. The appraisal showed that on current costings the economic case for the stations was positive—and was indeed as strong as that for the line itself, provided that, in Southwark's case, direct passenger access was provided between it and British Rail's Waterloo East station. The Government are therefore prepared to approve construction of both stations provided the cost of the project as a whole can be held within agreed cost limits. There is no question of London Transport or the Government seeking to withdraw provision for Southwark and Bermondsey stations from the Bill.

Low Bridges (Accidents)

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents involving *(a)* buses and *(b)* other commercial vehicles at low bridges occurred in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chope: In 1939, 28 buses and 664 other commercial vehicles were involved in accidents in which low railway bridges were struck.

Nuclear Waste (Transportation)

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he has planned in the event of an emergency or accident occurring during the transportation of nuclear waste from Torness power station to Sellafield.

Mr. Chope: Scottish Nuclear Limited ensures that comprehensive emergency arrangements are in place to respond to any incident involving the transport of radio-active materials from Torness power station to Sellafield.

MV Derbyshire

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce his decision whether or not to order a reopening of the inquiry into the loss of the MV Derbyshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: The new material is now being examined by the marine accident investigation branch. Once it has concluded its investigations, a report will be sent to the Secretary of State. After consideration of that report, he will then decide whether or not the formal investigation into the loss of the Derbyshire should be reopened.

London Underground

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to help offset the shortfall of £40 million faced by London Underground in the current financial year.

Mr. Freeman: London Transport, of which London Underground Limited is a subsidiary, is responsible for running its business within its means. I understand that it is making plans accordingly.

Minibus Passengers

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to introduce legislation which would require that all passengers in minibuses be strapped in by safety belts.

Mr. McLoughlin: We have no present plans to do so. Currently, very few minibuses are fitted with belts on any seats other than front seats. We are, however, anxious to see the much wider availability of seat belts on minibuses, so that passengers can wear them if they so choose. At our request, the European Commission has agreed to bring forward proposals by the end of 1991 requiring the fitting of seat belts to all seats in minibuses and coaches.

London Underground (Extension)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he plans to accede to the request by London Transport and Hackney council for permission to deposit a private Bill in November to enable the east London line extension to the tube system to proceed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: We hope to make an announcement shortly.

Road Congestion

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the background papers detailing the ways to eliminate congestion on inter-urban roads which are summarised in paragraphs 10 to 16 of the 1989 White Paper, "Roads for Prosperity".

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* A wide range of relevant material is already available for instance in the Department's publication "Transport Statistics 1979-1989" and in the Department's submissions to the Select Committee on Transport.

DEFENCE

Warship Visits

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Royal Navy warships visiting the United States of America over the next two months.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not our normal practice to comment on future deployments of Royal Navy warships.

Air-to-air Missiles

Mr. Neale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether all decisions have been taken on the advanced short-range air-to-air missile.

Mr. Alan Clark: We have recently endorsed staff requirement (air) 1234 for an advanced short-range, air-to-air missile and, in accordance with our norrmal procurement policy, we shall be seeking competitive proposals from industry. We are proceeding in accordance with the family of weapons memorandum of understanding and we shall seek bids which are compliant with its terms.

Gulf Crisis

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last discussed the Gulf crisis with the United States Secretary for Defense; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend last met Mr. Cheney on 15 October. A range of subjects of mutual interest was discussed, including the Gulf crisis.

British Forces (Gulf)

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on co-ordination in the Gulf between British and Syrian forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Arrangements have been agreed which would enable British forces in Saudi Arabia to operate effectively with Saudi, American or other forces as necessary. 7 Armoured Brigade will, however, be positioned alongside the United States Marines in north-east Saudi Arabia.

Military Hospitals

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the specialties available to national health service patients at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The following specialties are generally available to NHS patients at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich, subject to Army operational and management considerations:

Anaesthetics and Resuscitation
Dietetics
Dermatology[1]
Ear, Nose and Throar
General Medicine
Tropical Medicine and Cardiology
Genito-urinary Medicine
General Surgery
Gynaecology
Intensive Care
Neurology[1]
Neuro-surgery
Nuclear Medicine
Oncology
Ophthalmology
Oral Surgery
Orthopaedics
Pathology
Plastic Surgery
Psychiatry
Radiology
Rheumatology and Rehabilitation
Urology

[1] Visiting consultant's clinic only.

Some of these specialties may not be available during the current Gulf deployments.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* service personnel and *(b)* civilians are currently employed at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The peacetime establishment of the Queen Elizabeth military hospital is 174 officers, 395 other ranks and 149 civilians. Current commitments in the Gulf and management considerations may, however, affect the established staff levels.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the service hospitals covered by the surgeon general's recent review.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All eight of the service hospitals in the United Kingdom are included in the Surgeon General's review. They are:

Royal Navy
Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar
Royal Naval Hospital, Stonehouse

Army
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Woolwich
Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot
Duchess of Kent Military Hospital, Catterick

Royal Air Force
Princess of Wales RAF Hospital, Ely
Princess Mary RAF Hospital, Halton
Princess Alexandra RAF Hospital, Wroughton.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the estimated annual running costs of

the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich in 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90; and what is the current estimated average cost of in-patient stays for *(a)* service and *(b)* National Health Service patients.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The estimated annual running costs of the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich, for the years 1987-88 to 1989-90 were:

	£ millions
1987-88	26·9
1988-89	26·6
1989-90	21·1

Note: It is not possible to differentiate the costs between service and civilian patients.

The estimated average cost of in-patient stays at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich in 1989-90 was £2,400.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich was opened for use; and how many beds it currently provides.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Queen Elizabeth military hospital was opened by HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother on 1 April 1977. A total of 274 beds are normally available, but this figure is currently subject to alteration due to operational requirements.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* service personnel, *(b)* service dependants and *(c)* national health service patients have been treated as either (i) in-patients or (ii) out-patients at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich during each of the most recent 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The table shows the number of service personnel, dependants and other NHS patients who have been treated as in-patients and out-patients at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital in each of the last 10 years.

Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
Number of in-patients										
Service personnel	3,522	4,170	3,738	3,780	4,120	4,583	4,219	4,667	4,232	4,600
Service dependants	1,066	1,142	1,223	1,307	1,386	1,421	1,227	1,129	1,129	1,163
National health service	2,505	3,131	2,898	3,181	4,024	4,690	4,623	4,722	5,346	6,430
Others	177	160	291	319	304	412	241	203	303	231
Total	7,270	8,603	8,150	8,587	9,834	11,106	10,310	10,721	11,010	12,424
Number of out-patients										
Service personnel	11,403	17,338	17,240	19,284	17,233	18,565	15,853	14,395	13,959	10,924
Service dependants	3,929	5,317	4,222	4,540	4,138	3,839	2,858	2,497	2,429	1,998
National health service	13,456	17,449	17,597	19,083	16,142	17,399	15,777	13,697	14,813	15,821
Others	407	1,252	596	873	731	846	1,280	402	398	250
Total	29,195	41,356	39,655	43,780	38,244	40,649	35,768	30,991	31,599	28,993

Note: Others includes far east prisoners of war and Gurkhas.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he received the surgeon general's review of the future of service hospitals in the United Kingdom; and when he expects to announce a decision on its recommendations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The findings of the Surgeon General's review of service hospitals in the United Kingdom are under consideration at official level and recommendations will shortly be submitted to Ministers. An announcement will be made as early as practicable after a decision has been taken.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the overall bed occupancy rate at the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich, for the most recent four quarters for which figures are available.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Bed occupancy figures, which are based on actual occupancy at midnight each day, are recorded on an annual basis. The occupancy rate for 1989-90, the last year for which figures are available, was 69 per cent., excluding bedded day patients.

Royal Ordnance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the exact date of the conclusion of the explosive propellants and related products agreement between Royal Ordnance and his Department in 1988.

Mr. Alan Clark: My noble Friend the Lord Trefgarne and the then chief executive of Royal Ordnance plc signed the agreement on 28 July 1988.

Al Yamamah Agreement

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central, 19 July, *Official Report*, column *654*, he will state the exact dates in 1985, 1986 and 1988 when the formal understandings on the Al Yamamah agreement were concluded.

Mr. Alan Clark: The dates are 26 September 1985, 17 February 1986 and 3 July 1988 respectively.

Cambodia

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any military assistance has been provided to any Cambodian groups engaged in resistance to the Phnom Penh regime.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) on 7 November 1989, *Official Report*, column *543*.

Service Personnel (Training)

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel received pre-release training in each year since records began.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* Detailed records of the numbers receiving resettlement training have not been maintained since 1985, but we estimate that about 11,000 personnel do so each year. Pursuant to my answer to the hon. Member of 25 July 1990, *Official Report*, column *298*, I should make it clear that the figure of £974 spent per head on pre-release training was based on data from financial year 1984-85. An up-to-date figure is not available.

WALES

Council House Evictions

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people aged 65 years or over have been evicted from council houses during 1989 in each district council area in Wales; and what proportion of the total number of evictions involved persons over the age of 65 years in each case.

Mr. Grist: This information is not collected centrally.

Hospitals (Radioactive Waste)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a list of hospitals in Wales which are licensed to dispose of radioactive waste.

Mr. Grist: A list of premises authorised to dispose of radioactive waste is provided in the DOE/Welsh Office/Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution publication "List of premises in England and Wales currently authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 to dispose of radioactive waste", a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Since publication, one further hospital in Wales, Withybush hospital, Haverfordwest has been authorised and one, Royal Alexandra hospital, Rhyl has had its licence revoked because the work has transferred to Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, Bodelwyddan.

Health Service

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans there are to recruit consultant surgeons to eliminate waiting times for operations in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The responsibility for the recruitment of additional consultant surgeons to meet service needs lies with the district health authorities. Manpower approval has been granted, on the basis of district health authority bids, for the recruitment of additional consultants in specialities with problem lists. These include six posts in trauma and orthopaedics, five in general surgery and four in ophthalmology.

Separately the Welsh Office undertook as part of its treatment centre initiative to fund six additional consultant posts, of which 4·5 whole-time equivalent posts are already in place. Furthermore £1·1 million has been allocated under the 1990-91 waiting times initiative and which includes funding for at least four consultant posts.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he plans to meet health authorities in Wales to discuss with them the waiting times for surgery.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State intends to meet DHA chairmen soon to discuss a number of issues, including waiting times.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet community health councils in Wales to discuss with them their views concerning his plans for changes in the national health service.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has no current plans to do so. The Association of Welsh Community Health Councils has already made known its views on a number of the proposed reforms.

More routine opportunities for CHCs to raise for discussion matters of interest of concern are offered by the regular biannual meetings between the Association and the Director for the NHS in Wales. The latest of these meetings was held on 17 October 1990.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the reasons for the rise in waiting times for patients needing operations for ear, nose and throat problems.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the "Welsh Hospital Waiting List Bulletin 1990; No. 2" which illustrates a variable performance in the light of developing demand and activity levels. During 1989 ear, nose and throat in-patient and day care throughput increased by 5·3 per cent., out-patient throughput rose by 2·2 per cent., with new out-patient attendances up by 8 per cent. In addition, at 31 March 1990: the number of urgent in-patients waiting fell by 54 per cent. over the previous year; and numbers of non-urgent in-patients rose by 8 per cent. and of out-patients fell by 15 per cent. Urgent cases waiting one month or more fell by 47 per cent. over the previous year; non-urgent cases waiting one year or more rose by 45 per cent; and out-patients waiting three months or more fell by 44 per cent.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the number of designated intensive care beds in *(a)* each district health authority in Wales and *(b)* in each district general hospital in Wales and against each of these (i) the number of such beds which are currently subject to temporary closure, (ii) the number which have been proposed or are being considered for temporary closure and (iii) the number which have been proposed or are being considered for permanent closure.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on Monday 22 October. No intensive care beds are proposed for permanent closure in applications currently before the Secretary of State. The temporary closure of beds is a matter for district health authorities.

Menai Straits

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will instruct Welsh Water plc to take steps to protect the public from any possible danger of contamination of the waters in the Menai straits as a result of untreated sewage being carried out from the pathology laboratory at Ysbyty Gwynedd via Pen Rhos Garnedd.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the replies I gave him on 18 and 22 October.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Legal Aid

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General how long the London area of the Legal Aid Board takes to authorise solicitors to appropriate costs which have been agreed and paid in legal aid cases and where only the authority of the Legal Aid Board is needed for solicitors doing legal aid work to transfer such moneys from a client account to an office account.

The Attorney-General: This information is not collected at present and the Legal Aid Board has no immediate plans to collect it.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General how long the London area of the Legal Aid Board takes to pay damages to legally aided litigants where those damages have been deposited with the board.

The Attorney-General: This information is not collected. If the hon. Member has a particular case in mind, perhaps he would write to the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General what is the average time taken by the London area of the Legal Aid Board to pay legal aid bills of costs for which allocaturs and bills have been sent to them.

The Attorney-General: Information is not available in the form requested. The Legal Aid Board monitors the payment of bills according to time targets set out in its annual report. A comparison of the performance of the London area office with the targets is set out in the table.

Time taken between receipt and payment of bills

Legal Aid Board	*4 weeks per cent.*	*6 weeks per cent.*
Target (per cent. of bills paid)	82	95
London area office performance for September 1990	69	90

THE ARTS

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister for the Arts how much was spent by his Ministry on official hospitality in 1989-90.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The Office of Arts and Libraries spent £5,741 on official hospitality in 1989-90.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Duty-free Sales

Mr. Cash: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what he estimates would be the net effect on excise duty, value added tax, corporation tax and national insurance revenues, at 1989 figures, of elimination of EC-related duty free sales; and to what extent that effect has taken into account possible substitution of duty free sales by duty paid sales;

(2) what would be the estimated effect on the United Kingdom balance of payments at current prices and current duty and value added tax rates in other EC member states of elimination of the duty-free system;

(3) what will be the effect on the United Kingdom balance of payments, at 1989 figures, of elimination of EC-related duty-free sales, taking into account the level of United Kingdom excise and value added tax rates by comparison with other EC member states and the likely effect of elimination of EC-related duty-free sales on United Kingdom demand for dutiable goods;

(4) by what percentage United Kingdom domestic demand for alcoholic, tobacco and perfume products is estimated to fall, at current prices, and on the basis of current EC member state duty and value added tax differentials if duty-free status were ended.

Mr. Ryder: No decision has been taken on the future of duty-free sales. The economic effects of abolition have been addressed by some outside observers. These effects are being considered within Her Majesty's Government.

Trade Statistics

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how statistics on trade between Britain and other EEC countries will be collected after 1992.

Mr. Maples: With the abolition of most frontier controls on goods at internal Community frontiers by the end of 1992, the present Customs documentation, which is the current source of intra-Community trade statistics, will disappear. However, both the European Commission and the United Kingdom Government will still need accurate and timely statistics on this trade and new methods are being set up to collect the data. The system for recording trade with other countries will continue unchanged.

The European Commission has prepared revised proposals for the framework of systems to operate in all member states. The overall schemes are relatively complex, but the aim is to provide linked systems which control the collection of VAT on goods traded between member states and generate intra-EC trade statistics. By linking the systems it has been possible to reduce the burdens on small and medium-sized traders. The proposals specify the systems for a transitional period to run from 1 January 1993 to 31 December 1996 when the Commission expects the basis of levying VAT to change, and the definitive systems for the period starting on 1 January 1997.

The Commission's amended proposal for an EC Council regulation on the statistics relating to the trading of goods between member states has been published in the Official Journal. The main features of the proposed transitional system to operate from 1 January 1993 are: that detailed monthly trade figures—including value, volume, eight-digit commodity and country—will be collected from larger traders above a threshold yet to be set; that no separate statistical returns will be required from small and medium traders, but estimates will be made using information from two boxes expected to be added to all VAT returns giving value totals of intra-Community imports and exports; that businesses not registered for VAT will be excluded from any collection.

The Council regulation sets out only the framework of the new systems. It has not yet been agreed with member states and amendments are possible before it is adopted by the Council. Many of the details of the new system will be specified later in Commission implementing regulations. One of the most important components of these will set the level of the statistical threshold. In some of its publicity the Commission has suggested that it may propose one which

requires the largest 20 per cent. of traders to provide detailed monthly returns. In the United Kingdom these traders account for around 96 per cent. of the value of intra-EC trade. Such a threshold would ensure that adequate data are available for macro-economic statistics. Also with coverage as high as 96 per cent. it would allow the collection of detailed statistics for most industries. This new threshold would almost certainly replace the present, mainly low-value consignment, thresholds which mean that there is currently no commodity detail for over 1 per cent. of trade.

Corporation Tax

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much industrial and provident societies have paid in corporation tax for each year since 1982.

Mr. Maude: The amounts of corporation tax paid by industrial and provident societies during financial years 1986-87 to 1989-90 are shown in the table. Figures for earlier years are not readily available and could be prepared only at disproportionate cost. Figures for the most recent years are now published in Inland Revenue statistics.

Financial year	*Amount of corporation tax (£ million)*
1986-87	590
1987-88	624
1988-89	821
1989-90	651

Whisky

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the Scotch whisky industry about the consequences of abolishing duty-free sales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The Scotch Whisky Association has made representations on behalf of the Scotch whisky industry about the effects of abolishing duty-free sales within the European Community. In March my right hon. Friend the Chancellor replied to a letter written on the subject by the association.

The European Commission has made it clear that as a consequence of the completion of the single market duty-free shopping for intra-Community travellers should cease. The Scotch Whisky Association has pointed out that ending duty-free sales within the Community could adversely affect sales of Scotch whisky and remove a useful shop window for promoting its goods.

The Government will examine all the arguments carefully before reaching a decision.

Kleinwort Benson

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which of the Government's privatisations involved the services of the investment banking group, Kleinwort Benson; and what moneys were paid by the Government to that group for services.

Mr. Maude: The table shows the privatisations and in which positions Kleinwort, Benson acted for the Government. Moneys paid to Kleinwort, Benson for their services are a confidential commercial matter.

Role of Kleinwort, Benson in privatisations

Company	*Date of sale*	*Position*
BP[1]	1979	Underwriter
	1983	Underwriter
	1987	Underwriter
British Aerospace	1981	Adviser
		Lead Underwriter
	1985	Joint Lead Underwriter
Cable and Wireless	1981	Adviser[2]
		Lead Underwriter
	1983	Adviser[2]
		Lead Underwriter
	1985	Underwriter
Britoil	1982	Underwriter
	1985	Underwriter
Associated British Ports	1983	Adviser[3]
		Joint Underwriters
Enterprise Oil	1984	Adviser
		Underwriter
British Telecom	1984	Adviser
		Joint Lead Underwriter
British Gas	1986	Underwriter
British Airways	1987	Underwriter
Royal Ordnance	1987	Adviser[4]
British Steel	1988	Underwriter
Water and Sewerage Companies	1989	Underwriter
Regional Electricity	1990	Adviser

Notes:
[1] Sale of Government shares (not privatisation)
[2] With Bank of England
[3] Early stages
[4] Initial study

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent by his Department on official hospitality in 1989-90.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The amount spent by the Treasury on official hospitality was £55,169 in 1989-90.

Mortgages

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his written answer of 17 October on increases in mortgage payments, when he expects most mortgage borrowers to feel the effects of the recent reduction in mortgage rates.

Mr. Maples *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* It will depend on the practices of the lenders concerned. Where lenders have reduced their mortgage rates, new borrowers in most cases have been affected already. Existing borrowers not on annual schemes will in most cases have their mortgage payments adjusted from November.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to have sufficient data to update his reply

to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North of 20 June, *Official Report*, column *558*, on changes in mortgage payments.

Mr. Maples *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* We expect to have sufficient data in the course of November.

Bank Directors

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will list on what occasions Ministers in his Department met directors and/or non-executive directors of banks between Monday 1 October and 10 am on Thursday 4 October, inclusive.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* No.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Infertility

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the most recent figures available showing the number of clinics in Northern Ireland offering *(a)* IVF, GIFT and other procedures and *(b)* GIFT and other procedures but excluding IVF; and if he will also publish the total number of (i) single, (ii) twin, (iii) triplet, (iv) quadruplet, (v) quintuplet and (vi) sextuplet pregnancies following GIFT procedures in each category of clinic.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* There is one specialist infertility clinic in Northern Ireland offering IVF, GIFT and other procedures. The information requested on pregnancies is not available.

Technology Development Group

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if his Department made any investigation into the operations of the Technology Development Group (TDG Limited) of London in advance of its intended purchase of the Lear Fan factory in Northern Ireland in 1989.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The Technology Development Group (TDG) was a shareholder in SRC Composites Ltd. (SRC). The Industrial Development Board always conducts a rigorous investigation of inward investment projects and it was in the initial stages of the appraisal of SRC that the decision not to assist the project was taken in the light of Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice. It was therefore not necessary to conduct an in-depth investigation into TDG as part of this project.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 23 October.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others including one with the Amir of Kuwait. I also attended the arrival of the President of the Italian Republic, President Cossiga. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be attending the state banquet given by Her Majesty the Queen in honour of President Cossiga.

HEALTH

Cancer

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the increases registered in cancer mortality rates in the London borough of Tower Hamlets since 1985.

Mr. Dorrell: The number of deaths from major forms of cancer to residents of the London borough of Tower Hamlets have fluctuated over the years since 1985. The data do not show evidence of an overall upward trend in cancer mortality rates in the borough over these years.

Paracetemol

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to restrict the sale of paracetemol and products containing paracetemol to pharmacies only and to require such products carrying health warnings on the labelling.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. I am advised that paracetemol in recommended dosage is not harmful to the normal population. There are limits on the strength and pack size of paracetemol products which may be supplied without the supervision of a pharmacist. The labelling of all such products is required by law to show clearly that they contain paracetemol. The recommended dosage is shown with a warning that it should not be exceeded and that if symptoms persist a doctor should be consulted.

Births

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the number of booked home deliveries in each health authority for each of the last five years;

(2) if he will list the number of born before arrival cases for each health authority for each of the last five years.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of legal actions taken against *(a)* obstetricians, *(b)* hospital midwives, *(c)* general practitioners in attendance at birth and *(d)* community midwives over the last five years.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We do not hold this information centrally.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision each health authority makes for the training of student midwives in home births.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting—UKCC—is responsible for establishing the standards of training necessary for midwives and for ensuring that the standard of midwifery training programmes meet European Community requirements.

EC directives on the training of midwives require that each student midwife will conduct 40 deliveries during training. There are no specific requirements on where the deliveries should take place.

Each school or college of midwifery reaches agreement locally on the appropriate clinical experience for its midwives. All schools and colleges must be recognised by the relevant national board—of nursing, midwifery and health visiting—which must also ensure that training courses meet UKCC and EC standards.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Eastern Europe

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the emergency aid currently being given to eastern European countries is from the overseas aid budget for the current year or is in addition to it.

Mrs. Chalker: The £500,000 of emergency aid provided to Romania, channelled through WHO, was drawn from the overseas aid budget. Economic assistance to eastern Europe is separate from and additional to the overseas aid budget for developing countries.

Aid Policy

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the policy for targeting aid overseas in such way that it is not wasted and that it is monitored on the ground to allow maximum flexibility.

Mrs. Chalker: Each year the Government review overall aid policy, and the direction of multilateral and bilateral country programmes. This process is carried through into regular discussions with recipient countries on their development plans and priorities and on what assistance the United Kingdom is best able to provide. We have developed rigorous and effective systems for project management. All proposals are subject to technical, economic and financial appraisal before funds are committed. Projects are monitored during implementation, and completion reports are prepared. These provide a basis for further evaluation if required.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Khmer Rouge

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has concerning Chinese supplies of tanks, helicopter gunships, and training of pilots, to the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We are aware that China provides a variety of military hardware to the Cambodian resistance. We have no evidence that the Chinese have supplied helicopters or the associated training.

Lorry Drivers (Spain)

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the position of British lorry drivers stranded in Spain by the Spanish drivers' blockade.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The strike is now over and we understand that vehicles are moving freely across the border in both directions. During the strike our consular staff in Spain visited the scene regularly to give general advice and financial assistance to drivers.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice he is giving relatives of lorry drivers caught in the French-Spanish blockade; and whether a helpline or information number is available for families.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The strike has now ended and vehicles are moving freely across the border in both directions. During the strike no helpline as such was set up. However, the consular department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was in regular touch with the relatives and employers of the drivers involved.

The Gulf

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the crisis in the Gulf.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs intends to make a statement shortly.

USSR (Visas)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will make representations to the Soviet authorities to grant an exit visa to Elena Morgulis of Sverdlovsk so that she can join her husband and son in Israel.

Mr. Waldegrave: We can certainly raise Mrs. Morgulis's case with the Soviet authorities. We have asked her family to provide further details in order to make our representations most effective.

South Africa

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Government of the Republic of South Africa regarding the progress towards ending the policy of apartheid.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had constructive discussions on 14 October with President de Klerk which focused on progress towards negotiations on a new constitution for South Africa and a peaceful end to apartheid. My right hon. Friend welcomed recent positive developments in South Africa and expressed the hope that negotiations will begin soon with all parties concerned.

Non-proliferation Treaty

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the fourth nuclear non-proliferation treaty review conference decisions were discussed at the informal Foreign Ministers Council at Aslo-Venice on 6 and 7 October.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution will be made to the eastern section of Germany, up to the end of 1990, from the European Community PHARE programme on economic assistance to eastern Europe.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The European Community has made available 35 million ecu—£25 million—to the former GDR up to the end of 1990 from the EC PHARE programme. No further PHARE funds will be made available to the former GDR from 1991.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contributions will be made to environmental protection in eastern Europe under the PHARE programme, following the most recent European Council decision.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: From the 1990 PHARE budget of 500 million ecu—£350 million—for economic aid to eastern Europe, a total of 100·5 million ecu—£70 million—has been earmarked for environmental protection.

EMPLOYMENT

Inflation

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the average annual increase in earnings, and the increase in inflation in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Jackson: Average annual increases in earnings in the whole economy and in the retail prices index in the last 10 years are as follows:

	Whole economy average earnings index *Percentage increase*	*Retail prices index* *Percentage increase*
1980	20·7	18·0
1981	12·9	11·9
1982	9·4	8·6
1983	8·4	4·6
1984	6·1	5·0
1985	8·5	6·1
1986	7·9	3·4
1987	7·8	4·2
1988	8·7	4·9
1989	9·1	7·8

Printworkers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the incidence of industrial-related cancer found in printworkers.

Mr. Forth: Although some studies in the past have shown an apparent higher risk among printworkers of various cancers, in particular lung cancer, it has not been established that these excess cancers were attributable to occupation. An independent study part funded by the Health and Safety Executive and which is to be published early next year has found no excess risk for bladder cancer and suggests that the excess risk of lung cancer in printworkers apparent early this century has become less evident in recent years.

Craft Businesses (Conference)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what contribution was made by his Department to the European conference on craft businesses and small enterprises held in Avignon on 11 to 14 October.

Mr. Forth: Three officials from my Department and one from the Office of Arts and Libraries attended this conference, together with 14 representatives of the craft sector in the United Kingdom. The conference was financed by the European Commission with a contribution from the French Government, who hosted the event.

Pregnant Women (EC Directive)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide a list of those he has consulted on the proposal for a new EC directive on the protection of pregnant women stating the date on which he sought these views, the date on which the text of the draft directive was made available in English to those being consulted and the date by which responses have to be received; and whether he will make a copy of the draft directive available to hon. Members.

Mr. Forth: The organisations and individuals consulted were as follows:

ACAS
All 24 members of the Advisory Committee on Women's Employment
Aims of Industry
Alliance of Small Firms and Self Employed People Ltd
Allied Bakeries Ltd
Association of British Chambers of Commerce
Association of Chief Ambulance Officers
Association of Chief Police Officers
Association of County Councils
Association of Directors of Public Health
Association of Directors of Recreation & Tourism
Association of District Councils
Association of Exhibition Organisers
Association of Independent Businesses
Association of Independent Tour Operators
Association of Metropolitan Authorities
Automobile Association
Avon Cosmetics Ltd.
Barclays Group plc Staff Union
Barrow-in-Furness Council
BAT Industries
Bayer UK Ltd.
BEC
BICC plc
Britannia Airways Ltd.
British Airways plc
British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions
British Broadcasting Corporation
British Chemical Engineering Contractors Association
British Coal
British Computer Society
British Council
British Dental Association
British Gas plc
British Glass Manufacturing Confederation
British Hotels, Restaurants and Caterers Association
British Institute of Management
British Junior Chamber
British Medical Association
British Occupational Hygiene Society/Institute of Occupational Hygienists
British Oxygen Company
British Paper and Board Industry Federation
British Rail
British Security Industries Association
British Steel plc

British Telecommunications plc
British Tourist Authority/English Tourist Board
Brook Street London Operations Centre
Building Employers Confederation
Building Societies Association
Business and Professional Women
Cable and Wireless plc
Catering Managers Association
Central Office of the Industrial Tribunals (England and Wales)
Central Office of the Industrial Tribunals (Scotland)
Chemical Industries Association Ltd.
Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association
Child Poverty Action Group
Cinema Exhibitors' Association
Civil Aviation Authority
Commission for Racial Equality
Confederation of British Industry
Contract Cleaning and Maintenance Association
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Council of Managerial and Professional Staffs
Council on Tribunals
Declan O'Dempsey
Department of Economic Development, Northern Ireland
District Nursing Association
Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union
Electricity Association
Employment Appeal Tribunal
Engineering Employers Federation
Equal Opportunities Commission
Euro Bureau
Euroinfocentre
European Information Centre
Faculty of Advocates
Fawcett Society
Federation of Bakers
Federation of Managerial, Professional & General Associations
Federation of Medium and Small Employers
Federation of Recruitment and Employment Services
Fire Brigades Union
Food & Drink Federation
Forum of Private Business
Freemans plc
General Council of the Bar
General Council of British Shipping
Gingerbread
Glaxo Holdings plc
Guild of Cleaners & Launderers
Hairdressing Training Board
Halmark Cards
Health and Safety Commission
ICI Group HQ
ICL
Ilford Ltd
Incomes Data Services Ltd
Independent Broadcasting Authority
Independent Midwives Association
Independent Television Association
Industrial Relations Services
Industrial Society
Institute of Directors
Institute of Economic Affairs
Institute of Employment Rights
Institute of Management Consultants
Institute of Personnel Management
Institute of Radiation Protection
Institute of Safety & Public Protection
Institution of Environmental Health Officers
Institution of Occupational Safety & Health
Institution of Professionals, Managers & Specialists
IOH Services Ltd
John Lewis plc
John Menzies GB Ltd
Kodak Ltd
Kirby College of Further Education
Labour Relations Agency
Ladybrook Nursery
L'Arome (UK) Ltd
Law Centres Federation
Law Society
Law Society of Scotland
League of Jewish Women
Linklaters & Paines
Linton & Hirst Ltd.
Local Authorities Conditions of Service Advisory Board
Local Authorities Employers' Organisation
Logica
London Boroughs Association
London Underground Ltd.
Low Pay Unit
Lord O'Hagan
Mr. W. Manser
Maternity Alliance
Mebon Ltd.
Mecca Leisure Ltd.
Merseyside Chamber of Commerce
Michelin Tyres plc
Midland Bank plc
Nacanco Ltd.
National Alliance of Women's Organisations
National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
National Association of Local Government Women's Committees
National Association of Master Bakers, Confectioners & Caterers
National Chamber of Trade
National Council for Civil Liberties
National Council for One Parent Families
National Council of Hotel Associations
National Council of Women
National Engineering Construction Employers Association
National Farmers Union
National Federation of Retail Newsagents
National Federation of Self Employed and Small Businesses Ltd.
National Licensed Victuallers Association
National Market Traders' Federation
National Power plc
National Union of Journalists
Nera
New Ways to Work
Newspaper Society
Nicholson Chamberlain Colls Group
Norton Rose
Nuclear Electric
Office of Wages Councils
Osborne Clarke
Pannell Kerr & Forster
People's Dispensary for Sick Animals
PepsiCo.
Personal Managers Association
Pilkington plc
Police Federation of England and Wales
Post Office
Radio Rentals
RCN Society of Occupational Health Nursing
Redland Aggregate Ltd
Reed International
Retail Consortium
Richard Shops
Road Haulage Association
Robert Dyas Ltd
Royal Automobile Club
Royal College of Nursing of the UK
Royal College of Physicians
Royal Environmental Health Institution of Scotland
Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
Scottish Council for Single Parents
Scottish Courts Administration
Scottish Grocers' Federation
Showman's Guild of Great Britain
Spreechly Bircham
Society of West End Theatre
Suttons Seeds Ltd
Townswomens Guilds
Trades Union Congress
TSB Group plc

The Union of Independent Businesses
United Cinemas International
Vine Products and Whiteways
Welsh Women's Aid
Whitbreads
W H Smith Ltd
Women's National Commission
Working Mothers Association
Wyatt Company

The consultation letter was issued on 24 September and organisations were asked to respond by 7 November.

The official text of the draft directive is not yet available. An unofficial text was received by my Department on 3 October. A copy has been sent to any organisation on request, and one has now been placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if there are any plans to give preferential treatment to training and enterprise councils in depressed areas as a means of aiding economic regeneration.

Mr. Jackson: The level of resources agreed with each training and enterprise council will take account of a variety of factors such as the numbers of young people, levels of unemployment and of working population, past performance and any special needs identified in the TEC's corporate and business plans.

ENERGY

Industrial Deafness

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimate he has of the number of outstanding applications from retired miners who are seeking compensation for their industrial deafness.

Mr. Baldry: This is a matter for the British Coal Corporation; this Department does not keep a record of such figures.

Nuclear Safety

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when the next operational safety review team from the International Atomic Energy Agency will visit a British nuclear facility; what is the cost to the United Kingdom nuclear programme of such visits; and if he will make a statement on the operation of OSART to date.

Mr. Wakeham: The International Atomic Energy Agency's operational safety and review team—OSART—missions comprise experts drawn from IAEA states, and are designed to subject various features of the operational safety of nuclear power stations to a form of peer review. The United Kingdom commends the valuable contribution which the missions make to improving operational nuclear safety worldwide.

An OSART mission visited Nuclear Electric's Oldbury on Severn station in July last year and reported favourably on the operational safety of the station. There are no plans at present for Nuclear Electric to receive a further OSART mission but the matter is being kept under review. However, I understand that the Scottish Office and Scottish Nuclear Ltd. have been exploring the possibility of an OSART mission to Hunterston B, which might take place around 1996.

Operators are responsible for providing appropriate subsistence to members of OSART missions. Other costs are borne by the IAEA.

Flue Gas Desulphurisation

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if the Government have plans to review their policy on fitting flue gas desulphurisation equipment to fossil fuel power stations, in the light of the estimate in the ECOTEC report that the detrimental effects of acid rain cost £17 billion.

Mr. Baldry: The Government are committed to the reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions of 60 per cent. against 1980 levels, by the year 2003 set out in the EC large combustion plants directive. Flue gas desulphurisation will play an important part in meeting these reductions.

Oil and Condensates

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the amount of oil and condensates produced by each platform in the United Kingdom continental shelf for each month since March 1989.

Mr. Wakeham: The Department does not record the amounts of oil and condensate production on a platform by platform basis. I have placed in the Library a table showing the amounts of production on a field-by-field basis for each month from March 1989 until August 1990, the latest month for which figures are available.

Exploratory Drilling

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if the rate of exploratory drilling in the North sea and other United Kingdom continental shelf sectors has increased since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait; and if he will provide statistics relating to this matter on a monthly basis for the period September 1989 to September 1990.

Mr. Wakeham: The table sets out the numbers of exploration wells started in each of the months from September 1989 to September 1990. Although more wells were started in August and September 1990 than in earlier months, this cannot be attributed to the event referred to, since they had been planned well in advance.

	Number
1989	
September	11
October	9
November	6
December	12
1990	
January	6
February	4
March	11
April	10
May	11
June	14
July	15
August	21
September	19

SOCIAL SECURITY

Severe Disability Premium

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many back-dated claims have been granted to claimants of severe disability premium since the Compton ruling; and what is the total amount paid out in back-dated claims thus far.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) on 15 October 1990.

War Pensions

Mr. Raison: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what proportion of claims for war pensions is accepted by his Department.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In the year to 30 June 1990, a total of 73 per cent. of claims for a war disablement pension and 53 per cent. of claims for a war widows pension were accepted.

Discretionary Fund

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish in the *Official Report* the proportion of applications to the discretionary fund which were successful, partially successful and unsuccessful for each category of award—CCG, BL, CL—and by those aged *(a)* under 18, *(b)* 18 and over but under 25, *(c)* 25 and over but under 60 and *(d)* 60 years and over for each of the first two complete years of the fund's operation.

Mr. Scott: The tables show the proportion of applications that were successful and unsuccessful in 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Information on partially successful applications is not separately available, and such cases are included in the successful category. Information is not available on separate age groups under the age of 60 years.

	Percentage successful		*Percentage unsuccessful*	
	1988-89	*1989-90*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Budgeting loans				
Under 60 years	62	59	38	41
60 years and over	57	42	43	58
Crisis loans				
Under 60 years	90	92	10	8
60 years and over	90	89	10	11
Community care grants				
Under 60 years	48	40	52	60
60 years and over	65	66	35	34

Social Fund Loans

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what percentages of income support claimants aged under 60 years are repaying social fund budgeting loans and/or crisis loans by deductions from their benefit payments in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole; and what is the average repayment in terms of a proportion of their income.

Mr. Scott: The table shows the number of social fund loans being recovered from income support recipients aged under 60 at the end of August 1990 and the percentage of recipients in that age group that the figure represents.

	Number of recoveries	*Percentage of income support recipients under 60*
Greenock	2,163	19·6
Port Glasgow	1,062	32·4
Strathclyde	57,866	28·2
Scotland	83,681	24·0

HOME DEPARTMENT

Haslar Prison

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are now held at Haslar prison and of the total, how many are persons seeking political asylum in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Rumbold: On 14 October, the latest date for which this information is readily available, there were eight prisoners held at Haslar prison and 91 detainees held under Immigration Act powers. There is no central record of how many of those detained had sought political asylum.

Electoral Rolls

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he has any plans to review the sale of electoral rolls by local authorities to commercial undertakings in the light of experience; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he has received any complaints about the sale of electoral rolls to companies;

(3) if he has received any evidence suggesting that the sale of electoral rolls is breaching confidentiality and providing some help to criminals.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Representation of the People Regulations 1986 provide for the publication and supply of the electoral register, including the supply of copies at a prescribed fee. These provisions reflect the fact that the register is a public document which needs to be in wide circulation for electoral purposes; and the conclusion that its use by commercial organisations could not effectively be prevented. I am aware that sale of the register is unpopular with some members of the public, who may not always fully appreciate the reasons for it: we have received a number of complaints on the subject. Since the information contained in the register is already in the public domain, however, sale of the register cannot be held to constitute a breach of confidentiality; and we have no evidence to suggest that the register is used for criminal purposes. There are no current plans for a review of the position.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many staff are currently employed by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board;

(2) what staff increases have occurred in the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board since its inception.

Mr. John Patten: The numbers of staff in post each year since the board's inception are given in the table:

	Number
1964-65	11
1965-66	30
1966-67	40
1967-68	58
1968-69	58
1969-70	65
1970-71	65
1971-72	79
1972-73	99
1973-74	99
1974-75	106·5
1975-76	119·5
1976-77	116·5
1977-78	126
1978-79	132·5
1979-80	156·5
1980-81	155
1981-82	163
1982-83	163
1983-84	182
1984-85	189
1985-86	203·5
1986-87	214·5
1987-88	267
1988-89	312
1989-90	332
Present	380·5

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to improve the rate at which the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board resolves cases.

Mr. John Patten: The measures being taken to improve the board's position and performance are fully described in the Government reply (Cm 1153) to the second report from the Home Affairs Committee Session 1989-90 (HC 92).

In summary, the 60 extra staff requested by the board have been recruited to the board's Glasgow office; the scheme has been amended to allow for more streamlined decision taking; a major computer project was started in March, and a thorough review of the board's staffing and procedures is under way.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average length of time it takes for a case to be considered and resolved by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; and what was the equivalent time in 1984.

Mr. John Patten: Information in this form is not available. Percentages of cases resolved by the board within certain periods of registration are shown in its annual reports, copies of which are in the Library.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases were referred to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in the last 12 months for which records are available and for each of the preceding years going back to 1984.

Mr. John Patten: Applications received by the board in each year ended 31 March since 1984 are as follows:

Year	
1984-85	34,900
1985-86	39,700
1986-87	42,300
1987-88	43,000
1988-89	43,385
1989-90	53,655

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the cost of administering the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Mr. John Patten: The administrative cost of the board in 1989-90 was £9 million.

Prisoners (Injuries)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to have Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons' report into the effectiveness of the prison services policy and procedures for the prevention of suicide and self-injury.

Mrs. Rumbold: I understand that Judge Tumim aims to submit his report in November.

War Plans

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those county councils in Wales that have submitted county and district war plans to date.

Mr. John Patten: County and district war plans have been received from all county councils in Wales.

Emergency Control Centres

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many local authorities in Wales have developed emergency control centres; how many staff have been trained in connection with the centres; and what is the total cost of establishment and maintenance and staff training and employment in connection with each emergency control centre.

Mr. John Patten: Emergency centres conforming to current Home Office specifications have been established by two county councils and seven district councils in Wales. Information on staff training relating specifically to emergency centres is not held centrally.

These centres have been developed over a number of years and details of the expenditure incurred could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The Home Office has no record of maintenance costs for these premises. However, in 1989-90 the total cost per county of the time spent by grant-aided staff on all emergency centre-related activities was as follows:

County	*Cost £*
Clwyd	24,770
Dyfed	9,637
Mid Glamorgan	7,280
South Glamorgan	1,608
West Glamorgan	28,485
Gwent	9,255
Gwynedd	21,667
Powys	10,918

Electoral Registration

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of the population have registered to vote in each of the years since 1979 for which figures are available.

Mrs. Rumbold: A table showing the number of registered electors in England and Wales, and Scotland, the approximate corresponding eligible population at the previous mid-year and the percentage of the population registered to vote, is given in appendix B to "Electoral statistics 1990" published by HMSO on behalf of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (series EL No. 17), a copy of which is in the Library. The table is accompanied by a commentary which suggests reasons for the variation from year to year in the proportion of the population registered to vote.

Emergency Planning Officers

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* emergency planning officers and *(b)* clerical support staff for emergency planning officers are currently employed by each county council in Wales.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is as follows:

As at 30 September 1989

	Emergency planning officers	*Clerical support staff*
Clwyd	10	3
Dyfed	7	2
Mid Glamorgan	6	2
South Glamorgan	5	3
West Glamorgan	7	2·25
Gwent	9·5	2
Gwynedd	7	3
Powys	5	1

Immigration Cases (Malpractice)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what investigations have taken place of malpractice by civil servants dealing with immigration cases over the last 12 months; and what is the nature of any proceedings that have resulted from the investigations.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Officers of the Metropolitan police are investigating possible criminal offences by individuals involved in immigration cases, and one former employee of the immigration and nationality department has been charged with conspiracy to contravene the Immigration Act 1971. Other cases of malpractice not involving criminal acts have been dealt with under the appropriate civil service disciplinary code.

Life Sentences

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the role of his Department in relation to the length of life sentences, including any input into decisions regarding the length of tariffs *(a)* prior to the introduction of the 1983 changes in parole policy and *(b)* since then.

Mrs. Rumbold: Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1967, the Secretary of State may release a life sentence prisoner only if recommended to do so by the parole board and after he has consulted the Lord Chief Justice and the trial judge if available. The period of detention served by a life sentence prisoner is, and always has been, a matter for the Secretary of State to decide.

Until 1983 the date of the first review of a life sentence case under the parole board machinery was decided in the light of advice from a joint committee of the board and the Home Office, which included two senior officials of the Department. Since then that date has been set following consultation with the trial judge and the Lord Chief Justice.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local authorities are receiving funding under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966; and how much money was made available to each such authority during the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Rumbold: The following local authorities received grant (at the rate of 75 per cent. of salary costs) under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 in the financial year 1989-90:

	£
ENGLAND	
County councils	
Avon	914,668
Bedfordshire	1,935,580
Berkshire	1,602,587
Buckinghamshire	919,734
Cambridgeshire	1,189,965
Cheshire	23,254
Cleveland	568,855
Derbyshire	1,431,533
Devon	11,255
Essex	16,362
Gloucestershire	248,541
Hampshire	364,676
Hereford and Worcester	13,246
Hertfordshire	1,285,235
Humberside	214,088
Kent	486,445
Lancashire	5,054,529
Leicestershire	2,940,916
Northamptonshire	1,106,610
North Yorkshire	13,497
Nottinghamshire	1,997,871
Oxfordshire	816,952
Shropshire	66,897
Staffordshire	616,642
Suffolk	107,400
Surrey	86,866
Warwickshire	949,638
West Sussex	186,470
Wiltshire	215,445
West Midlands FCDA	66,737
West Yorkshire FCDA	76,540
METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS	
Greater Manchester	
Bolton MBC	941,881
Bury MBC	230,259
Manchester City C	2,289,058
Oldham MBC	2,190,110
Rochdale MBC	1,024,028
Stockport MBC	47,905
Tameside MBC	575,986
Trafford MBC	276,422
Merseyside	
Liverpool City C	162,946
South Yorkshire	
Doncaster MBC	18,993
Rotherham MBC	265,879
Sheffield MDC	2,028,167
Tyne and Wear	
Newcastle City C	376,583
North Tyneside MBC	48,034
Sunderland BC	74,028
West Midlands	
Birmingham City C	5,797,159
Coventry City C	2,811,273
Dudley MBC	936,302
Sandwell MBC	1,853,833
Walsall MBC	1,597,646
Wolverhampton MBC	2,247,810
West Yorkshire	
Bradford City MC	6,322,274
Calderdale MBC	1,006,667

	£
Kirklees Metro C	2,407,428
Leeds City C	1,695,972
Wakefield MDC	157,204
NON METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS	
Blackburn BC	90,904
Bristol City C	56,508
Derby City C	52,628
Gloucester City C	20,100
Gravesham BC	28,847
Hyndburn BC	4,444
Ipswich BC	23,509
Leicester City C	207,404
Luton BC	29,550
Middlesbrough BC	19,100
Milton Keynes BC	12,032
Nottingham City C	113,365
Oxford City C	24,130
Pendle BC	13,673
Peterborough City C	37,623
Preston BC	4,209
Reading BC	12,073
Redditch BC	10,620
Rugby BC	9,842
Slough Corp	34,798
Scunthorpe CC	11,834
Southampton City C	34,935
St Albans DC	15,454
Wycombe DC	45,362
LONDON BOROUGHS	
Inner London	
Camden	424,671
Greenwich	455,939
Hackney	1,499,707
Hammersmith	142,900
ILEA	21,941,375
Islington	527,806
Kensington & Chelsea	162,496
Lambeth	262,171
Lewisham	332,541
Southwark	270,503
Tower Hamlets	291,460
Wandsworth	309,424
Westminster	73,648
Outer London	
Barking	246,230
Barnet	949,002
Bexley	13,047
Brent	4,646,852
Croydon	1,093,806
Ealing	4,711,527
Enfield	470,294
Haringey	2,988,487
Harrow	568,947
Havering	36,407
Hillingdon	374,464
Hounslow	1,889,641
Kingston	1,210
Merton	441,369
Newham	2,877,460
Redbridge	853,644
Richmond	66,446
Sutton	16,920
Waltham Forest	1,540,411
London Boroughs Grants Unit	18,142
WALES	
South Glamorgan County Council	238,197
Cardiff City Council	17,720
COLLEGES AND POLYTECHNICS	
City of London Polytechnic	3,520
Lancashire Polytechnic	98,179
Luton College of Further Education	59,082
Leeds Polytechnic	15,716

Notes:

[1] Some payments include backdated claims and therefore do not cover solely local authorities' expenditure for the single year in question.

[2] The table also shows the grant paid to three polytechnics and one college of further education, which by virtue of section 211 of the Education Reform Act 1988, may claim section 11 grant direct.

Electoral Statistics

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the tables given in paragraphs 45 and 46 of the Home Office memorandum submitted to the Home Affairs Committee in connection with its report intituled "Redistribution of Seats" (second report Session 1986-87), revised in respect of the latest available figures, showing the total numbers of electors in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested, based on figures for the 1990 electorate, is given in the tables. The tables illustrate two different ways in which equal standards of parliamentary representation throughout the United Kingdom might be achieved, by the introduction of a single electoral quota for the United Kingdom. Table 1 is based on a total of 650 seats; table 2 is based on a total of 799 seats, maintaining the present number of seats in Scotland.

Country	*Electorate*	*Quota*	*Seats*	*Change*
Table 1				
England	36,388,575	67,174	541·71 (542	+19
Scotland	3,936,704	67,174	58·60 (58)	−14
Wales	2,207,542	67,174	32·86 (33)	−5
Northern Ireland	1,130,602	67,174	16·83 (17)	—
Table 2				
England	36,388,575	54,676	665·53 (666)	+143
Scotland	3,936,704	54,676	72·00 (72)	—
Wales	2,207,542	54,676	40·37 (40)	+2
Northern Ireland	1,130,602	54,676	20·68 (21)	+4

Police Personnel

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the ratio of police personnel to the population in the United Kingdom; and what is the comparable figure for the other countries of the European Community.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend is responsible for policing in England and Wales where the police population ratio was 1:404 as at 31 December 1989. Ratios for other European Community countries are not held centrally although the Home Affairs Committee (seventh report volume I table II) published relevant information about population and police numbers. In comparing one country with another one must, of course, have regard to a variety of matters including the responsibilities of particular police organisations and the policing style which is adopted.

Northumbria Probation Service

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional resources have been made available to the Northumbria probation service as a result of the extra demand caused by the dispersal of prisoners following events at Strangeways prison in April 1990.

Mr. John Patten: Chief probation officers in the north of England, including Northumbria, were notified in July of action they should take to deal with this problem. They were advised that if the extra necessary resources could not be found locally, the Home Office would consider the funding of temporary additions to staffing levels. No such applications have been received.

Northumbria Police Authority

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional resources have been provided by his Department to the Northumbria police authority to meet the extra demands caused by dispersal of prisoners following events at Strangeways prison in April 1990.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Police authorities are able to claim the reimbursement of certain extra costs incurred by the police in undertaking tasks which would normally be carried out by the prison service. No such claim has yet been received from the Northumbria police authority.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if his Department will provide figures for each month from May 1990 onwards for the number of remand prisoners and newly sentenced prisoners being held in the police cells in Northumbria police authority area who would normally be housed in Strangeways or Armley prisons;

(2) if his Department will provide figures for each month from May 1990 onwards for the number of remand prisoners formerly imprisoned in Strangeways prison, Manchester, who are now being held in police cells in the Northumbria police authority area.

Mrs. Rumbold: The average numbers of convicted and unconvicted prisoners, who have been held in police cells in the Northumbria police authority area each month since May 1990, are given in the table. All would normally have been held in Strangeways.

	Convicted	*Unconvicted*
May	36	13
June	51	7
July	39	4
August	31	12
September	18	23
October	33	22

This information is not collected in a way that enables the number of newly sentenced prisoners or those held in Strangeways before the April riot to be readily identified separately.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he intends to reply to the letters to him dated 2 May, 25 June and 2 August from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. and Mrs. V. Stringer, 18 Underwood close, Mr. and Mrs. E. Iddon, Walesside house and Mr. and Mrs. R. Graham, 1 Falmer close;

(2) when he intends to reply to the letters to him dated 30 April, 25 June and 2 August from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. I. Neill, 6 Calverley avenue.

Mr. Mellor: I have been asked to reply.

I regret that these letters went astray within the Home Office. The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton has already forwarded to me a copy of his letter of 30 April on behalf of Mrs. I. Neill, and I have replied to him today. If he would make available copies of the other correspondence I will ensure he receives responses straight away.

Football (Arrests)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has regarding the number of arrests inside London football grounds this season.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Arrest figures for Football League matches will not be collated until the end of the season.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how observations from interested persons or organisations should be submitted for consideration by Lord Colville in his report on the operation in 1990 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989.

Mr. Waddington: Written observations should be submitted to Lord Colville, c/o Room 647, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT no later than Friday 21 December 1990.

Harmondsworth Detention Centre

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has yet established an independent body to monitor the welfare of detainees and to advise on the running of Harmondsworth detention centre, as recommended by Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons.

Mr. Waddington: I have appointed 11 members to this body, which is to be known as the Harmondsworth visiting committee. Its inaugural meeting took place on 25 September 1990. I am confident that the committee is well equipped to represent the interests of detainees at Harmondsworth.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Shipstones Brewery, Nottingham

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will meet the chair of Greenall Whitney Brewers to discuss the closure of the Shipstones brewery in Nottingham; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Secretary of State has not received an invitation to meet the chairman of Greenall Whitley Plc, and will not be seeking such a meeting. Any decision to cease production at the Shipstones brewery in Nottingham and in Warrington is one for the commercial judgment of the company.

Information Technology

218. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the future of the British information technology industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department regularly receives representations about many areas of industry, including the IT sector.

Cash Flow Statements

210. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to amend the Companies Acts to require all public limited companies to publish a cash flow statement.

Mr. Redwood: No. In July 1990, the Accounting Standards Committee issued an exposure draft proposing that the statement of source and applications of funds which is presently required by "Statement of Standard Accounting Practice 10" should be replaced by a statement of cash flow. I understand that the Accounting Standards Board will be taking up this issue when the period allowed for comment on the exposure draft has expired.

Accountancy Bodies

216. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to investigate and identify any accountancy firms which market off-balance sheet financing schemes.

Mr. Redwood: No. I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to his questions on 4 and 5 April, *Official Report*, columns *621* and *802*.

Companies (Fixed Assets)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will propose legislation to require all public companies to show market values of their fixed assets.

Mr. Redwood: I have no plans to extend the existing requirements.

Industrial Cost Accounting

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to reduce the influence of historic cost accounting on the financial statements of large limited companies.

Mr. Redwood: No. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 19 March, *Official Report*, column *432*.

Company Legislation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to introduce any legislation to require shareholders to be informed of the company's policy for controlling pollution.

Mr. Redwood: No. It would be burdensome to require companies to provide such information. Companies are best placed to decide, in the light of their individual circumstances, whether such information is likely to be of interest to their members. Interested members may in any case put questions on this subject at the annual general meeting.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to require companies *(a)* to state their environmental policies in their annual report and *(b)* to inform their shareholders of the number of times they have violated any anti-pollution laws.

Mr. Redwood: No. It would be unreasonably burdensome to require companies to provide such information. Companies are best placed to decide, in the light of their individual circumstances, whether such information is likely to be of interest to their members and other users of their reports and accounts. Interested shareholders may in any case put questions on these subjects at the annual general meeting.

Steel Industry

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am confident that the United Kingdom steel industry will continue to perform well now that all of it is in the private sector.

Companies House

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the names of persons and their organisations who are presently members of the Companies House users group.

Mr. Redwood: The current members of the Companies House users' group are Mr. Norman Roberts, FCCA—the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants; Mr. J. M. Steward—the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales; Mr. T. Robinson—Institute of Credit Management; Miss J. Henry and Mr. R. Paton—the Law Society; Mr. G. A. Corderoy—Law Services Association; Mr. R. D. Gilbert—the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators; Mr. B. Palmer—Credit Reporting Agencies; Mr. K. G. Goodchild—the Committee of

London and Scottish Banks; Mr. M. Ryden—Financial Analysts; Mr. M. R. Chettleburgh and Mr. D. Ordish—the Association of Company Registration Agents; Mr. C. Bostle—City Business Libraries; Ms. F. Harrison—National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux; Ms. R. Higgs—Trades Union Congress; Mrs. A. Ronay—Association of British Chambers of Commerce; Mr. T. Williams—the Insolvency Service; and Mr. P. Mitchenson—Trade Protection Agencies.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many postal sales inquiries were satisfied by *(a)* Companies House, Cardiff and *(b)* Companies House, Edinburgh for each year from 1983 to 1989, respectively.

Mr. Redwood: The number of postal searches satisfied by Companies House for the periods were:

	Cardiff	*Edinburgh*
1984	21,000	5,000
1985	30,000	7,000
1986	37,000	5,000
1987	45,000	7,000
1988	47,000	9,000
1989	60,000	7,000

The service was not introduced until December 1983.

Company Records

247. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many microfiches on average are required to carry the records of a single registered company: and what is the material cost of reproducing a single microfiche for the purpose of supplying the record to an inquirer.

Mr. Redwood: The average number of fiches duplicated per search is 4·5. The average material cost—the cost of the duplicate film only—is 8·5p per search; 1·9 per fiche.

Regional Policy

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet his European counterparts to discuss regional policy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: An informal meeting of EC Regional Policy Ministers has been called at Turin on 23 and 24 November 1990. The United Kingdom will be represented at ministerial level.

Textile Industry

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received from the textile industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department has received a number of representations from the textile industry; my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has arranged to meet representatives of the industry on 29 October.

Securities and Investments Board

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board to discuss City regulation.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board to discuss a range of topics concerning the regulation of financial services as frequently as is necessary. No date has been fixed for the next meeting of this sort.

Shares

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the proportion of shares owned by individuals, as opposed to shareholders in general, in 1979 and in 1990.

Mr. Redwood: The stock exchange survey of share ownership carried out in 1981, estimated that in that year 28·2 per cent. of shares were held in the personal sector. Figures for 1979 and 1990 are not available. The value of individuals' holdings has risen substantially over the last decade.

Animal Skins (Export)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of the countries to which United Kingdom-produced animal skins are exported; and what has been the value of that trade in each of the last three years.

Mr. Sainsbury: The only information available is for total United Kingdom exports of raw hides, skins and furskins—SITC division 21. It is published by country in "Overseas Trade Statistics", a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library. These data do not distinguish between United Kingdom-produced goods, and goods previously imported into the United Kingdom.

European Regional Fund

Mr. Shore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what payments were made to the United Kingdom from the European regional fund in 1987, 1988 and 1989; and what is the estimate for funds to be received in 1990.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* United Kingdom payments receipts from the European regional development fund in 1987, 1988 and 1989 were valued at £321 million, £351 million and £386 million, respectively. Payments in 1990 are expected to exceed £400 million.

Industry Council

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Government Minister attended the European Community Industry Council meeting on 21 September.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The Industry Council meeting on 21 September was postponed until 15 October, and I attended that meeting.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the European Community Industry Council meeting held on 21 September.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The Council meeting on 15 October discussed industrial

policy, state aids, steel and textiles, and considered Commission communications to the Council on industrial co-operation with eastern Europe and on the Community aerospace industry.

European Regional Development Fund

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the annual sums of money committed since the inception of the European regional development fund to each recipient local authority by eligible standard planning region and the annual amount paid to each from the fund.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

EC Stocks

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current level of European Community intervention on stocks of beef.

Mr. Curry: A note setting out the volume of poublic intervention stocks and stocks under aided private storage in the EC and the United Kingdom, which includes figures for beef, is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated on a monthly basis.

Live Animals (Exports)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the total numbers of exports of live animals and birds, broken down by species group and point of destination, between *(a)* the European Community, *(b)* elsewhere in Europe and *(c)* further afield, for the last year.

Mr. Curry: The total number of live animals exported from the United Kingdom to the European Community, elsewhere in Europe and further afield during 1989 are listed by species in the table.

United Kingdom exports of live animals in 1989 by area of destination
Number of animals (unless otherwise stated)

	EC	*Rest of Europe*	*Other countries*
Bovine animals	328,951	30	536
Sheep	589,120	146	70
Goats	104	1	90
Swine	109,142	178	5,463
Poultry	10,376,354	1,133,728	2,088,451
Horses	5,655	716	1,028
Asses, mules, hinnies	31	49	—
Domestic rabbits	1,791	96	1,865
Pigeons	178	99	719
Other, chiefly for human consumption	5,922	—	70
Other (tonnes)	1,272	19	77

Source: Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the number of inspections of the conditions of live animals and birds being transported live for export in the last year; and what was the number and type of further action which occurred as a result of such inspections.

Mr. Maclean: During 1989, 801,840 animals (farm animals for slaughter, further fattening or breeding and horses and ponies for breeding, riding or recreational purposes) were exported from Great Britain following veterinary inspection for fitness to travel at export lairages near the ports of departure. A total of 8,030 animals were found at inspection to be unfit for the export journey. These were detained, and given veterinary treatment where necessary, until considered fit to travel to an alternative destination in this country.

In addition veterinary inspections are carried out at premises of origin, in accordance with the health requirements of importing countries, for most breeding livestock, horses and ponies, poultry and other mammals and birds. Records are not kept centrally of the number of these inspections.

Condemned Meat

Mr. McAvoy: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received any representations about the sale of condemned meat in butchers' shops and supermarkets; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: I am aware that there is concern about allegations of illegal trade in unfit meat. I deplore those who seek to pass off such material for human consumption. However, there is already legislation in this area under which action may be taken. The Food Act makes it an offence to sell, hold for sale or prepare for sale for human consumption any material which is unfit for that purpose; the Slaughterhouses Act 1974 requires slaughterhouses and knackers' yards to be licensed by local authorities and there are other detailed controls over the movement and treatment of unfit meat and offal. Nevertheless, we have instituted a full review of the existing controls to see if any improvements are desirable, with particular attention to collection of casualty stock from farms.

Enforcement of the legislation is, of course, a matter for local authorities. However MAFF veterinary officers can and do assist and work closely with local authorities in such cases.

Fur Farms

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has regarding the number of fox and mink farms in the United Kingdom; and what provisions exist for inspection of such farms.

Mr. Maclean: Information is not collected on the number of fox farms in the United Kingdom.

Officers of the state veterinary service make visits to fur farms as they do to other livestock farms to undertake welfare inspections. At these visits, the accommodation and management practices are taken into account when assessing the welfare of the animals.

There were 50 licensed mink farms in the United Kingdom on 20 February 1990. Licenses run for no longer than a year and no licence is issued or renewed without an inspection by the appropriate agriculture department.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if his Ministry's inspectors will conduct a veterinary inspection of the fox fur farm run by Grange Farm Poultry Products in Ovenden Wood, Halifax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: This farm has already been visited as part of a welfare monitoring exercise. It is not the Ministry's policy to divulge specific details of such inspections but I understand that there was no evidence of a breach of the welfare legislation at the time of the visit.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will make it his policy to prohibit the breeding of foxes for use by the fur trade; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what regulations exist on the size and type of cage housing foxes and minks on fur farms; and if there are any proposals to enforce minimum standards.

Mr. Maclean: There are no specific regulations on the size and type of cages for fur animals, other than the provisions of the Mink (Keeping) Regulations 1975 which require cages to be constructed in such a manner as to prevent escapes. All fur farmers are, however, bound by the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968, which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary pain or unnecessary distress to animals on agricultural land.

A recommendation on fur farming has recently been adopted under the Council of Europe convention for the protection of animals kept for farming purposes. This recommendation will come into operation within 12 months and will set minimum welfare standards for fur farms. These include the enrichment of the environment by objects that provide suitable stimuli for the fox to gnaw and to play and a secluded area, such as a nest box and shelf. The recommendation is to be reviewed within five years taking account of further research into the welfare requirements of animals kept for fur.

The Farm Animal Welfare Council has reviewed fur farming and did not recommend that the practice be banned. The Government do not intend to introduce a unilateral ban in this country but will continue to work for welfare improvements on an international basis if further research indicates that these are necessary.

Methane

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if the matter of the control of methane discharge from agricultural activity was discussed at the European Agriculture Council on 15-16 October in Luxembourg.

Mr. Curry: This topic was not on the agenda for this Council and was not discussed.

British Lamb (Compensation)

Mr. Moate: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the latest position in his negotiations with the French Government to secure compensation for losses suffered by British interests as a result of actions by French citizens in the lamb war; and if he will describe the detailed compensation proposals and the principles on which the compensation is to be based.

Mr. Curry: The French Government have confirmed that compensation for losses arising as a direct result of French producer action will be forthcoming, as was the case for similar incidents in 1986. The Department stands ready to assist traders in preparing individual claims for submission to the French Government.

Fishing Vessels (Fuel)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make it his policy to bring forward a temporary scheme to alleviate the price of fuel for fishing vessels while the Gulf crisis continues.

Mr. Curry: No. Other industries and the general public are having to adapt to the higher fuel prices during the Gulf crisis without subsidies. There is no reason to treat the fishing industry differently.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has done into the possibility of hidden subsidies being given by national Governments of some EEC member states to their fishing industry on fuel costs for fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The Department has not investigated any oil subsidies to the fishing industry. Member states are required to notify the European Commission of any such aid. The Commission has responsibility to ensure that it is informed of all state aids and that these aids are compatible with the treaty. If evidence can be produced of fuel subsidies by any member Government of the EC to their fishing industry, I shall pursue the matter vigorously.

Quotas

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy on consultation with interested parties, including fishing organisations, before quota swap agreements with other European Community countries are confirmed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: We consult the principal industry organisations, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation. Also potential quota swaps with other member states are discussed with interested producer organisations and at regular quota management meetings at which representatives from all Fisheries Departments and from the non-sector may be present.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will make a statement on the overfishing of plaice above quota level by Dutch fishermen for the past two years; and what are the implications of this for English east coast fishermen;

(2) what action he proposes to take at the next Council of Fisheries Ministers meeting, to restore confidence in *(a)* the Dutch Government enforcing quotas on plaice and *(b)* the overall regulating and monitoring of each country's plaice quota.

Mr. Curry: Enforcement of Dutch quotas is a matter for the Dutch authorities and the European Commission. Recent events have indicated the seriousness with which this issue is regarded in the Netherlands.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he has taken to establish whether the BSE infective agent present in pig and poultry feed is subsequently present in pig and poultry excretions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 19 October 1990]*: Research into scrapie has found no evidence that the agent is present

in the faeces of infected animals. Studies are planned which will determine the infectivity of the gut both from confirmed cases of BSE and from animals experimentally exposed to the disease.

Nevertheless the Government have already taken steps to ensure that BSE-infected material does not enter the food chain. These include the compulsory slaughter and destruction of all animals suspected of having the disease and a ban on the use in human and animal food of those bovine offals most likely to harbour the BSE agent.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Further Education Qualifications

11. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress made in reforming qualifications for those aged 16 to 19 years.

78. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on progress made in reforming qualifications for those aged 16 to 19 years.

Mr. Eggar: The School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) is currently consulting on principles which would govern A-level and AS syllabuses from 1994. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications is in the lead in the reform of vocational qualifications.

Grant-maintained Schools

12. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the latest number of schools to have applied for grant-maintained status.

Mr. MacGregor: Seventy-two proposals for grant-maintained status have been published following parental ballots. Of these, 66 have so far reached me for decision: I have approved 53, am minded to approve another one and have rejected 12.

15. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the benefits grant-maintained schools gain from opting out.

Mr. MacGregor: Grant-maintained schools have many advantages: they are run by local people who know the schools; they can make their own decisions about how to make the best use of resources, including their share of LEA expenditure on centrally provided services; their governors and heads have greater autonomy than is provided by local management of schools, and they are proving very popular with parents.

28. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools became grant-maintained in September.

Mr. Eggar: Fifteen schools became grant-maintained at the beginning of the autumn term. Altogether 44 grant-maintained schools are now operating. Applications for grant-maintained status from another nine schools have already been approved.

168. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications for grant-maintained school status have been received in each local education authority in England.

Mr. Eggar: To date, applications for grant-maintained status have been published by the governing bodies of 72 schools. My right hon. Friend has approved 53 applications; he is minded to approve one application and has rejected 12. He will make decisions on another six applications shortly. Proposals for grant-maintained status are awaited from a further six schools where parents have voted in favour of an application. The number of applications received from schools in each local education authority is as follows:

Authorities	*Number of applications*
Avon	1
Barnet	2
Bedfordshire	1
Berkshire	2
Birmingham	3
Bolton	1
Brent	1
Bromley	2
Buckinghamshire	2
Calderdale	2
Cheshire	1
Derbyshire	2
Devon	1
Dorset	3
Dudley	2
Essex	1
Gloucestershire	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	1
Hampshire	1
Hertfordshire	4
Hillingdon	1
Kensington and Chelsea	1
Kent	5
Kirklees	2
Lancashire	3
Leicestershire	1
Lincolnshire	8
Liverpool	1
Newham	1
Norfolk	1
Northamptonshire	2
Shropshire	1
Solihull	1
Southwark	1
Surrey	1
Sutton	1
Tameside	1
Wigan	1
Wolverhampton	1

No schools in the remaining authorities in England have applied for GM status.

82. **Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science in how many schools parents and governors have conducted a ballot on grant-maintained status; and what proportion of these ballots have been in favour.

Mr. Eggar: Parental ballots have been held at 107 schools in England. At 79 schools, 74 per cent., parents have voted in favour of an application for grant-maintained status.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he intends to take to increase the number of grant-maintained schools; and what he sees and the principle benefits that will flow to such schools as a result.

Mr. Eggar: From 1 November all maintained primary schools with fewer than 300 pupils will become eligible to

seek grant-maintained status. The result will be a tripling of the number of schools currently eligible and an important extension of parental choice. It is for parents and governors to decise whether to seek grant-maintained status for their schools. I am sure that in coming to a decision they will want to talk to existing grant-maintained schools. The first grant-maintained schools have been operating for over a year. Pupils have benefited from the greater flexibility which is available to governors and staff. The schools are spending more money on books, equipment and teachers and are developing exciting new ways of making the best use of resources.

Bradford CTC

13. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total amount of grant aid provided in the current year to the most recent practicable date for the city technology college in Bradford.

Mr. Eggar: The total grant paid to Bradford city technology college from 1 January 1990 to 30 September 1990 is £4·513 million. This figure covers capital, transitional and recurrent grant.

Education Budget

14. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of the primary and secondary education budget local authorities are retaining for central administration; and if he will make a statement.

52. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will consider taking action against local authorities that hold back funds from schools in order to finance central bureaucracy.

Mr. MacGregor: The published budget statements for 1990-91 indicate that the amount which local education authorities are planning to retain for central administration varies from 2 per cent. to 8 per cent. of the funds available for spending by primary and secondary schools. The average is 3·8 per cent.

I am arranging for the details of each local authority's spending on central administration and on other items to be printed in the *Official Report*. I believe it is essential that as much as possible of the schools budget of local authorities should be given directly to the schools to manage themselves; and I shall be making further proposals to that end later this year.

Table A

1990-91 budgets: Discretionary exceptions and school budgets

LEA ranked by discretionary exceptions percentage of PSB	*Rank*	*Discretionary exceptions per cent.*	*Discretionary exceptions £000*	*Number of schools*	*Average discretionary exceptions per school £*
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*
Cumbria	1	28·79	37,605	361	104,000
Haringey	2	28·67	16,498	90	183,000
Newcastle	3	28·27	21,030	107	197,000
Barking	4	28·17	12,508	67	187,000
Coventry	5	26·97	22,121	131	169,000
Derbyshire	6	26·89	68,649	527	130,000
Cambridgeshire	7	26·43	42,587	314	136,000
Hounslow	8	26·25	15,358	78	197,000
South Tyneside	9	26·23	10,702	78	137,000
Avon	10	26·13	58,857	434	136,000
Westminster	11	26·09	11,651	51	228,000
Kirklees	12	25·96	27,095	203	133,000
St. Helens	13	25·94	13,350	95	141,000
North Yorkshire	14	25·86	43,087	463	93,000
Oldham	15	25·72	16,546	114	145,000
Wolverhampton	16	25·58	18,489	130	142,000
Wakefield	17	25·40	20,968	171	123,000
Barnsley	18	25·33	14,393	124	116,000
Devon	19	25·32	54,804	517	106,000
East Sussex	20	25·16	34,183	259	132,000
Kingston	21	25·10	8,238	46	179,000
Durham	22	24·67	37,597	344	109,000
Merton	23	24·58	9,885	62	159,000
Nottinghamshire	24	24·54	65,781	512	128,000
Humberside	25	24·52	58,145	429	136,000
Isle of Wight	26	24·49	7,034	67	105,000
Oxfordshire	27	24·25	32,474	289	112,000
North Tyneside	28	24·15	13,237	91	145,000
Northumberland	29	24·14	17,851	204	88,000
Bury	30	24·08	10,804	87	124,000
Somerset	31	23·99	25,955	273	95,000
Bromley	32	23·87	15,101	101	150,000
Birmingham	33	23·75	64,915	423	153,000
Doncaster	34	23·62	20,555	163	126,000
Staffordshire	35	23·47	60,397	509	119,000
Gateshead	36	23·38	12,026	104	116,000
Norfolk	37	23·36	40,248	462	87,000
Lancashire	38	23·09	78,055	712	110,000
Sheffield	39	23·04	28,178	224	126,000
Enfield	40	23·03	16,129	87	185,000

LEA ranked by discretionary exceptions percentage of PSB	Rank	Discretionary exceptions per cent.	Discretionary exceptions £000	Number of schools	Average discretionary exceptions per school £
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Cornwall	41	22·90	23,660	288	82,000
Bexley	42	22·89	12,514	86	146,000
Trafford	43	22·76	10,566	100	106,000
Dorset	44	22·66	29,875	258	116,000
Warwickshire	45	22·53	25,310	283	89,000
Richmond	46	22·50	6,906	50	138,000
Cleveland	47	22·49	36,460	264	138,000
Cheshire	48	22·44	55,632	547	102,000
Salford	49	22·40	13,785	113	122,000
Tameside	50	22·37	12,518	103	122,000
Barnet	51	22·25	15,951	112	142,000
Knowsley	52	22·19	10,472	82	128,000
Wiltshire	53	22·18	28,074	339	83,000
Ealing	54	22·03	15,675	105	149,000
Sandwell	55	21·95	19,587	144	136,000
Surrey	56	21·90	45,602	439	104,000
Shropshire	57	21·80	23,696	258	92,000
Wigan	58	21·70	18,123	153	118,000
Gloucestershire	59	21·70	25,793	305	85,000
Harrow	60	21·67	10,056	64	157,000
Sutton	61	21·51	8,130	58	140,000
Rotherham	62	21·51	15,381	135	114,000
Brent	63	21·28	14,876	90	165,000
Dudley	64	21·23	14,791	111	133,000
Solihull	65	20·77	11,289	87	130,000
Buckinghamshire	66	20·70	31,211	341	92,000
Rochdale	67	20·69	11,279	101	112,000
Sunderland	68	20·64	15,941	125	128,000
Redbridge	69	20·61	9,898	71	139,000
Bedfordshire	70	20·47	29,172	292	100,000
Bolton	71	20·14	13,891	124	112,000
Liverpool	72	20·14	27,287	275	99,000
Essex	73	19·82	70,591	696	101,000
Walsall	74	19·60	15,326	131	117,000
Kent	75	19·59	65,607	736	89,000
Leeds	76	19·24	35,235	336	105,000
Bradford	77	19·00	25,806	255	101,000
Northamptonshire	78	18·79	28,182	339	83,000
West Sussex	79	18·66	24,939	285	88,000
Lincolnshire	80	18·64	23,732	363	65,000
Havering	81	18·44	11,419	94	121,000
Suffolk	82	18·31	26,683	339	79,000
Berkshire	83	17·49	28,341	339	84,000
Sefton	84	17·00	12,626	123	103,000

Notes to Table A

1990-91 budgets: Discretionary exceptions and school budgets

Column 1. Rank. Each local education authority is ranked in order of the percentage of planned Potential Schools Budget retained as central spending on discretionary exceptions. Highest percentage is ranked as 1.

Column 2. Discretionary exceptions as a percentage of the Potential Schools Budget.

Column 3. Discretionary exceptions. Planned spending in £000s.

Column 5. Average discretionary exceptions per school. Total discretionary exceptions (column 3) divided by the number of primary and secondary schools in the local education authority (column 4), expressed in £s.

Calderdale, Hampshire and Waltham Forest have not yet published their budget statements.

Table B

1990-91 Budgets: Total LMS spending

Lea	General schools budget (GSB) 000's	Mandatory capital 000's	Exceptions specific grants 000's	Potential schools budget (PSB) 000's	Discretionary exceptions 000's	Aggregated schools budget (ASB) 000's	ASB as per cent of PSB Per cent	Limited exceptions as per cent of GSB Per cent
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Avon	254,188	19,233	9,730	225,225	58,857	166,368	73·87	9·66
Barking	48,959	2,763	1,801	44,395	12,508	31,887	71·83	9·36
Barnet	82,118	6,806	3,613	71,699	15,951	55,748	77·75	7·55
Barnsley	64,857	5,563	2,480	56,814	14,393	42,421	74·67	9·76
Bedfordshire	166,429	16,573	7,327	142,529	29,172	113,357	79·53	8·89
Berkshire	186,750	17,114	7,598	162,038	28,341	133,697	82·51	7·10
Bexley	63,996	7,162	2,161	54,673	12,514	42,159	77·11	9·99
Birmingham	311,649	22,506	15,784	273,359	64,915	208,444	76·25	8·85
Bolton	76,989	3,896	4,128	68,965	13,891	55,074	79·86	6·39

Lea	General schools budget (GSB) 000's (1)	Mandatory capital 000's (2)	Exceptions specific grants 000's (3)	Potential schools budget (PSB) 000's (4)	Discretionary exceptions 000's (5)	Aggregated schools budget (ASB) 000's (6)	ASB as per cent of PSB Per cent (7)	Limited exceptions as per cent of GSB Per cent (8)
Bradford	167,098	18,612	12,637	135,849	25,806	110,043	81·00	6·62
Brent	82,980	8,003	5,072	69,905	14,876	55,029	78·72	7·57
Bromley	72,167	6,723	2,192	63,252	15,101	48,151	76·13	9·61
Buckinghamshire	175,552	18,842	5,945	150,765	31,211	119,554	79·30	7·74
Bury	49,301	2,333	2,092	44,876	10,804	34,072	75·92	8·88
Calderdale	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire	198,894	30,447	7,296	161,151	42,587	118,564	73·57	9·20
Cheshire	272,323	17,840	6,531	247,952	55,632	192,320	77·56	7·81
Cleveland	176,430	8,830	5,490	162,110	36,460	125,650	77·51	8·54
Cornwall	123,669	16,840	3,508	103,321	23,660	79,661	77·10	8·58
Coventry	103,753	16,435	5,285	82,033	22,121	59,912	73·03	8·31
Cumbria	148,681	13,874	4,196	130,611	37,605	93,006	71·21	7·84
Derbyshire	281,816	17,013	9,504	255,299	68,649	186,650	73·11	10.00
Devon	259,039	34,716	7,859	216,464	54,804	161,660	74·68	9·31
Doncaster	91,707	2,739	1,959	87,009	20,555	66,454	76·38	9·06
Dorset	150,463	14,480	4,149	131,834	29,875	101,959	77·34	9·91
Dudley	80,360	7,836	2,863	69,661	14,791	54,870	78·77	8·93
Durham	165,830	7,523	5,911	152,396	37,597	114,799	75·33	9·13
Ealing	75,718	2,130	2,431	71,157	15,675	55,482	77·97	9·70
East Sussex	152,548	12,762	3,920	135,866	34,183	101,683	74·84	9·92
Enfield	97,756	24,679	3,055	70,022	16,129	53,893	76·97	7·89
Essex	394,215	25,729	12,349	356,137	70,591	285,546	80·18	9·45
Gateshead	59,287	5,592	2,267	51,428	12,026	39,402	76·62	9·65
Gloucestershire	132,498	9,273	4,351	118,874	25,793	93,081	78·30	5·80
Hampshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haringey	66,430	5,319	3,561	57,550	16,498	41,052	71·33	9·87
Harrow	52,453	3,947	2,101	46,405	10,056	36,349	78·33	9·52
Havering	71,544	7,247	2,378	61,919	11,419	50,500	81·56	9·79
Hounslow	70,621	8,297	3,821	58,503	15,358	43,145	73·75	9·21
Humberside	262,351	19,380	5,812	237,159	58,145	179,014	75·48	10·00
Isle of Wight	32,386	2,704	962	28,720	7,034	21,686	75·51	9·63
Kent	377,100	32,624	9,493	334,983	65,607	269,376	80·41	8·74
Kingston	38,856	4,847	1,185	32,824	8,238	24,586	74·90	9·76
Kirklees	118,125	7,934	5,822	104,369	27,095	77,274	74·04	9·17
Knowsley	51,385	2,008	2,178	47,199	10,472	36,727	77·81	9·69
Lancashire	389,891	35,985	15,820	338,086	78,055	260,031	76·91	9·74
Leeds	211,636	21,099	7,425	183,112	35,235	147,877	80·76	6·73
Lincolnshire	146,545	16,601	2,648	127,296	23,732	103,564	81·36	8·86
Liverpool	146,077	7,391	3,197	135,489	27,287	108,202	79·86	8·82
Merton	52,327	11,317	792	40,218	9,885	30,333	75·42	7·86
Newcastle	83,105	5,551	3,160	74,394	21,030	53,364	71·73	9·58
Norfolk	185,345	9,534	3,518	172,293	40,248	132,045	76·64	9·47
North Tyneside	59,694	2,782	2,097	54,815	13,237	41,578	75·85	9·82
North Yorkshire	181,033	7,862	6,529	166,642	43,087	123,555	74·14	9·94
Northamptonshire	168,620	13,062	5,593	149,965	28,182	121,783	81·21	9·24
Northumberlaned	82,352	4,970	3,423	73,959	17,851	56,108	75·86	6·82
Nottinghamshire	289,244	12,839	8,384	268,021	65,781	202,240	75·46	9·55
Oldham	72,835	3,114	5,380	64,341	16,546	47,795	74·28	9·90
Oxfordshire	155,280	15,969	5,389	133,922	32,474	101,448	75·75	9·53
Redbridge	56,517	7,801	701	48,015	9,898	38,117	79·39	8·34
Richmond	35,893	3,919	1,282	30,692	6,906	23,786	77·50	9·61
Rochdale	65,145	6,739	3,893	54,513	11,279	43,234	79·31	8·22
Rotherham	77,711	4,004	2,187	71,520	15,381	56,139	78·49	7·29
Sandwell	112,615	8,086	5,300	89,229	19,587	69,642	78·05	10·00
Salford	72,487	8,191	2,762	61,534	13,785	47,749	77·60	8·07
Sefton	81,776	7,265	246	74,265	12,626	61,639	83·00	5·85
Sheffield	138,252	10,135	5,835	122,282	28,178	94,104	76·96	9·96
Shropshire	121,021	7,889	4,456	108,676	23,696	84,980	78·20	9·36
Solihull	61,559	5,040	2,173	54,346	11,289	43,057	79·23	8·98
Somerset	125,560	12,579	4,788	108,193	25,955	82,238	76·01	9·75
South Tyneside	49,393	6,896	1,698	40,799	10,702	30,097	73·77	7·14
Staffordshire	286,997	17,662	12,033	257,302	60,397	196,905	76·53	8·14
St. Helens	59,191	5,915	1,812	51,464	13,350	38,114	74·06	8·98
Suffolk	171,625	20,527	5,389	145,709	26,683	119,026	81·69	7·93
Sunderland	85,708	5,878	2,580	77,250	15,941	61,309	79·36	7·21
Surrey	235,802	21,794	5,748	208,260	45,602	162,658	78·10	5·92
Sutton	47,324	8,341	1,184	37,799	8,130	29,669	78·49	8·59
Tameside	62,562	3,778	2,833	55,951	12,518	43,433	77·63	9·00
Trafford	64,027	15,690	1,908	46,429	10,566	35,863	77·24	6·94
Wakefield	92,050	6,396	3,088	82,566	20,968	61,598	74·60	9·81
Walsall	90,437	7,392	4,857	78,188	15,326	62,862	80·40	7·99
Waltham Forest	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Warwickshire	126,498	8,834	5,321	112,343	25,310	87,033	77·47	7·46

Lea	General schools budget (GSB) 000's (1)	Mandatory capital 000's (2)	Exceptions specific grants 000's (3)	Potential schools budget (PSB) 000's (4)	Discretionary exceptions 000's (5)	Aggregated schools budget (ASB) 000's (6)	ASB as per cent of PSB Per cent (7)	Limited exceptions as per cent of GSB Per cent (8)
Westminster	53,080	5,565	2,864	44,651	11,651	33,000	73·91	8·88
West Sussex	152,463	14,308	4,519	133,636	24,939	108,697	81·34	7·91
Wigan	91,278	4,393	3,385	83,500	18,123	65,377	78·30	9·52
Wiltshire	144,302	12,139	5,563	126,600	28,074	98,526	77·82	9·90
Wolverhampton	82,331	5,872	4,180	72,279	18,489	53,790	74·42	9·48
Averages	—	—	—	—	—	—	77·23	8·76

1990-91 Budgets: Discretionary exceptions as percentage of potential schools budget

LEA	Unlimited items						Limited items			
	Central Admin Per cent (9)	Home to school transport Per cent (10)	School meals Per cent (11)	Transitional items Per cent (12)	Other unlimited items Per cent (13)	Total unlimited items Per cent (14)	Repairs and maintenance Per cent (15)	Other limited items Per cent (16)	Total limited items Per cent (17)	Total discretionary items Per cent (18)
Avon	3·06	1·86	5·15	3·23	1·93	15·23	2·78	8·12	10·90	26·13
Barking	8·20	0·33	4·20	3·37	1·75	17·85	5·16	5·16	10·33	28·17
Barnet	4·67	0·42	547	1·94	1·09	13·59	1·29	7·36	8·65	22·25
Barnsley	2·56	0·18	7·20	3·07	1·18	14·20	0·44	10·70	11·14	25·33
Bedfordshire	3·70	2·04	3·31	0·00	1·04	10·08	2·91	7·47	10·38	20·47
Berkshire	2·55	2·08	0·48	3·33	0·86	9·30	1·97	6·22	8·19	17·49
Bexley	4·38	0·35	4·02	0·81	1·63	11·19	3·30	8·40	11·70	22·89
Birmingham	4·01	0·38	6·11	1·69	1·48	13·66	2·96	7·13	10·09	23·75
Bolton	1·81	0·45	8·48	1·46	0·82	13·01	1·38	5·76	7·13	20·14
Bradford	3·64	0·50	5·36	0·00	1·35	10·85	0·65	7·49	8·14	19·00
Brent	4·53	0·29	5·58	0·00	1·90	12·30	0·00	8·98	8·98	21·28
Bromley	4·24	0·98	2·49	2·20	3·00	12·91	2·42	8·55	10·97	23·87
Buckinghamshire	4·28	2·82	1·04	2·72	0·82	11·69	2·44	6·57	9·01	20·70
Bury	4·35	0·34	6·97	0·00	2·65	14·32	1·47	8·29	9·76	24·08
Calderdale	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire	4·39	2·49	4·48	1·91	1·80	15·08	3·99	7·36	11·35	26·43
Cheshire	4·74	1·49	4·41	2·10	1·12	13·86	3·38	5·20	8·58	22·44
Cleveland	5·15	0·47	6·85	0·00	0·73	13·20	3·08	6·21	9·29	22·49
Cornwall	3·43	2·74	5·00	0·00	1·47	12·63	2·69	7·58	10·27	22·90
Coventry	5·41	0·27	4·90	4·58	1·29	16·45	1·14	9·37	10·52	26·97
Cumbria	3·49	2·76	6·03	4·93	2·66	19·87	0·96	7·96	8·92	28·79
Derbyshire	2·59	1·31	8·41	2·59	0·95	15·86	2·57	8·46	11·03	26·89
Devon	2·75	2·55	4·06	3·52	1·29	14·18	3·90	7·24	11·14	25·32
Doncaster	2·05	0·12	7·79	2·71	1·40	14·07	2·44	7·11	9·55	23·62
Dorset	4·45	2·13	0·60	2·78	1·38	11·35	3·71	7·60	11·32	22·66
Dudley	3·39	0·20	3·86	2·15	1·33	10·93	1·79	8·51	10·30	21·23
Durham	3·94	2·06	6·32	1·00	1·41	14·73	1·24	8·70	9·94	24·67
Ealing	6·04	0·54	3·98	0·00	1·15	11·71	1·81	8·51	10·32	22·03
East Sussex	2·16	1·10	6·35	3·55	0·87	14·02	3·45	7·69	11·14	25·16
Enfield	5·25	0·19	2·99	2·38	1·20	12·01	4·01	7·01	11·02	23·03
Essex	3·92	2·34	1·44	0·80	0·86	9·37	2·79	7·67	10·46	19·82
Gateshead	2·77	0·31	3·88	3·82	1·48	12·26	2·37	8·76	11·13	23·38
Gloucestershire	3·29	2·37	3·90	3·50	2·18	15·24	0·00	6·46	6·46	21·70
Hampshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haringey	5·42	0·00	7·50	2·62	1·74	17·28	0·80	10·59	11·39	28·67
Harrow	5·53	0·67	3·25	0·00	1·46	10·91	1·60	9·16	10·76	21·67
Havering	2·21	0·67	1·74	0·33	2·17	7·13	2·55	8·76	11·31	18·44
Hounslow	4·69	0·24	5·70	3·67	0·83	15·13	1·68	9·43	11·12	26·25
Humberside	3·30	1·21	4·12	2·29	2·53	13·46	4·31	6·75	11·06	24·52
Isle of Wight	4·29	2·81	2·88	2·76	0·90	13·63	1·81	9·05	10·86	24·49
Kent	3·59	2·28	1·46	1·51	0·90	9·74	2·18	7·66	9·84	19·59
Kingston	6·77	0·46	4·08	0·00	2·24	13·54	2·06	9·49	11·56	25·10
Kirklees	3·54	0·73	7·12	3·36	0·84	15·59	1·41	8·96	10·38	25·96
Knowsley	4·81	0·11	4·89	0·00	1·82	11·64	4·04	6·51	10·55	22·19
Lancashire	3·39	1·08	5·16	0·71	1·15	11·86	2·82	8·41	11·23	23·09
Leeds	3·63	0·72	3·76	1·75	1·60	11·46	1·16	6·62	7·78	19·24
Lincolnshire	2·56	2·81	1·62	0·00	1·45	8·44	4·11	6·09	10·20	18·64
Liverpool	3·83	0·22	5·74	0·00	0·84	10·63	0·84	8·67	9·51	20·14
Merton	7·43	0·19	1·29	4·00	1·45	14·35	1·81	8·41	10·22	24·58
Newcastle	5·50	0·33	6·16	3·57	2·00	17·57	1·67	9·04	10·70	28·27
Norfolk	3·71	3·04	5·31	0·00	1·11	13·17	2·70	7·49	10·19	23·36
North Tyneside	4·63	0·13	6·81	0·89	0·98	13·45	2·40	8·30	10·70	24·15
North Yorkshire	3·72	2·98	4·82	2·46	1·08	15·06	0·00	10·80	10·80	25·86
Northamptonshire	3·53	1·95	2·22	0·00	0·71	8·41	1·97	8·42	10·39	18·79
Northumberland	2·72	3·47	2·86	6·01	1·49	16·54	1·34	6·26	7·60	24·14

LEA	Unlimited items						Limited items			
	Central Admin	Home to school transport	School meals	Transitional items	Other unlimited items	Total unlimited items	Repairs and maintenance	Other limited items	Total limited items	Total discretionary items
	Per cent (9)	Per cent (10)	Per cent (11)	Per cent (12)	Per cent (13)	Per cent (14)	Per cent (15)	Per cent (16)	Per cent (17)	Per cent (18)
Nottinghamshire	4·78	1·04	6·32	1·42	0·67	14·23	2·30	8·01	10·31	24·54
Oldham	4·53	0·07	6·42	2·52	0·97	14·51	1·92	9·29	11·21	25·72
Oxfordshire	5·09	2·14	4·77	0·00	1·21	13·20	1·89	9·16	11·05	24·25
Redbridge	4·71	0·51	2·58	0·94	2·06	10·80	2·58	7·24	9·82	20·61
Richmond	6·70	0·36	2·74	0·00	1·46	11·26	2·38	8·86	11·24	22·50
Rochdale	2·36	0·32	7·18	0·00	1·00	10·86	2·78	7·05	9·83	20·69
Rotherham	3·41	0·58	5·95	2·33	1·32	13·59	1·57	6·35	7·92	21·51
Sandwell	3·52	0·36	5·88	0·00	0·70	10·45	3·60	7·90	11·50	21·95
Salford	2·94	0·01	4·35	3·67	1·93	12·90	0·41	9·10	9·51	22·40
Sefton	4·23	0·35	4·73	0·00	1·25	10·56	2·38	4·06	6·44	17·00
Sheffield	3·25	0·17	6·68	0·00	1·69	11·78	2·40	8·86	11·26	23·04
Shropshire	2·29	2·23	5·34	0·00	1·52	11·38	3·56	6·86	10·42	21·80
Solihull	2·31	0·51	5·00	1·62	1·17	10·61	2·15	8·02	10·17	20·77
Somerset	3·28	3·41	4·91	0·00	1·07	12·67	1·77	9·55	11·32	23·99
South Tyneside	3·70	0·04	6·59	5·29	1·96	17·58	0·00	8·65	8·65	26·23
Staffordshire	4·08	1·29	4·77	3·50	0·76	14·39	2·41	6·67	9·08	23·47
St. Helens	3·29	0·57	5·50	4·99	1·27	15·61	1·48	8·85	10·33	25·94
Suffolk	2·62	2·53	1·16	0·94	1·72	8·98	2·03	7·30	9·34	18·31
Sunderland	2·83	0·25	6·52	1·86	1·18	12·64	1·99	6·01	8·00	20·64
Surrey	5·64	1·80	5·38	1·54	0·83	15·19	1·11	5·60	6·71	21·90
Sutton	3·81	0·61	3·15	2·17	1·02	10·76	1·74	9·02	10·75	21·51
Tameside	2·27	0·39	5·05	2·59	2·01	12·31	1·82	8·25	10·07	22·37
Trafford	3·20	0·49	5·62	2·35	1·54	13·19	1·32	8·25	9·57	22·76
Wakefield	2·69	0·35	7·64	1·99	1·80	14·46	3·02	7·91	10·94	25·40
Walsall	3·16	0·30	5·90	0·00	0·99	10·36	0·91	8·34	9·24	19·60
Waltham Forest	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Warwickshire	3·55	1·90	4·87	2·35	1·47	14·13	1·99	6·41	8·39	22·53
Westminster	7·77	0·45	4·76	0·00	2·55	15·53	1·08	9·48	10·56	26·09
West Sussex	1·82	1·46	4·91	0·66	0·79	9·64	2·36	6·66	9·02	18·66
Wigan	3·48	0·32	5·44	0·22	1·83	11·30	0·96	9·45	10·41	21·70
Wiltshire	3·71	2·41	3·09	0·00	1·69	10·89	2·78	8·50	11·28	22·18
Wolverhampton	4·79	0·38	5·15	3·45	1·02	14·79	1·54	9·25	10·79	25·58
Averages	3·77	1·39	4·61	1·71	1·32	12·81	2·29	7·68	9·97	22·77

Notes to Table B

1990-91 Budgets: Total LMS spending and percentages of potential schools budget

Column 4 Potential Schools Budget. The amount potentially available for allocation through the LMS formula. Equal to the General Schools Budget (Column 1) less mandatory exceptions (Columns 2 and 3).

Column 6 Aggregated Schools Budget. The amount planned to be allocated through the LMS formula. Equal to the Potential Schools Budget (Column 4) less discretionary exceptions (Column 5).

Column 8 Limited excepted items as percentage of General Schools Budget. This measures planned spending on limited discretionary exceptions against the limit of 10 per cent. of the General Schools Budget placed on the total of these items.

Column 12 Transitional exceptions. Planned spending on activities subject to compulsory competitive tendering (mainly building cleaning and grounds maintenance). This spending will be allocated through the formula following the expiry of initial contracts.

Column 13 Other unlimited exceptions. Planned spending on advisers and inspectors, dismissals and premature retirements, and governors' insurance. Each item averages under 1 per cent. of the Potential Schools Budget.

Column 14 Total unlimited exceptions. The total of Columns 9 to 13.

Column 16 Other limited exceptions. Planned spending on all limited items other than structural repairs and maintenance (Column 15). Mainly insurances, pupils with statements of special educational need, special units, educational psychologists, education welfare officers, peripatetic teachers, pupil support, LEA initiatives, supply teaching, teachers' safeguarding allowances and contingency funds. Each item averages under 1 per cent. of the Potential Schools Budget.

Column 17 Total limited exceptions. The total of Columns 15 and 16.

Column 18 Total discretionary exceptions. The total of Columns 14 and 17.

NB.—Where percentages are totalled, slight differences may occur due to rounding.

Calderdale, Hampshire and Waltham Forest have not yet published their budget statements.

Comparisons: problem areas

Comparisons between authorities will indicate variations due to policy decisions (for example, whether to delegate or retain funds centrally) and the diversity of LEAs' areas (for example, a rural county is likely to have higher home to school transport costs than a London borough). But there will also be differences which are due purely to LMS treatment or accounting practices adopted. The following are the areas most significantly affected:

1. *The scope of the General Schools Budget.* There is no detailed legal definition of what items are to be included in the GSB. Circular 7/88 indicates the general principle that it should include not only direct institutional costs of schools but also indirect costs for services used by them or attributable to them.

2. *Capital spending.* The GSB includes spending on capital works. This item is large and will fluctuate widely from year to year and from LEA to LEA. Use of the Potential Schools Budget as the base line, rather than the GSB, largely removes any distortion.

3. *Central administration.* Although accounting principles recommend that all administration costs should be allocated to front-line services, authorities are free to use a variety of bases for such allocation. Judgment is required—to decide for instance what proportion of costs of central departments such as finance and personnel is attributable to education, and what proportion of the Chief Education Officer's salary relates to LMS schools. There is a large range for spending on central administration—2 per cent. to 8 per cent. of the PSB—but it is unclear how much this range reflects real differences in central bureaucracy and how much merely different accounting judgments.

4. *Transitional excepted items.* There are two possible methods of treating costs of contracts already let for activities subject to competitive tendering. Some LEAs have allocated funds through the formula but schools remain bound by existing contracts; others have retained the costs as an excepted item for the duration of these contracts. Different treatment will not affect schools' freedom but will distort comparisons.

Teacher Recruitment

16. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress made in teacher recruitment; and if he will make a statement.

22. **Mr. Haselhurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the level of teacher recruitment at the start of the new school year.

41. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress made in teacher recruitment.

69. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress made in teacher recruitment.

Mr. Fallon: The Department's September survey of teacher vacancies showed that LEAs and schools were very successful in filling teaching posts this summer. Teachers are broadly available in sufficient numbers to fill posts. Nevertheless, it is clear that there continue to be difficulties in certain parts of the country and in certain subjects. We shall continue with our range of measures to improve teacher supply.

20. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are his estimates of the number of unfilled teaching posts in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in London at the beginning of the autumn term of the current year.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend published on 5 October the results of the Department's survey of teacher vacancies at the beginning of September. A copy is in the Library. On 3 September LEAs in Greater London reported 311 unfilled posts in primary schools, and 245 unfilled posts in secondary schools. This is very much fewer than the vacancy levels reported in January. These results reflect the good work and determination of authorities to fill their vacancies and show that our measures to improve teacher recruitment and retention are working.

Church Schools

17. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy towards the provision of free transport to and from voluntary aided church schools by local education authorities.

Mr. Fallon: The Government's view on the provision of school transport for pupils attending denominational schools was given in a circular letter on school transport and choice of school that was sent to all local education authorities in December 1981. That advice remains current. A copy of the letter is in the Library of the House.

Scottish Education

18. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he next expects to meet the University Funding Council to discuss the funding of Scottish education.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman and members of the UFC from time to time. Our discussions range over various matters bearing on the council's funding of universities throughout Great Britain. Other aspects of Scottish education are for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

School Premises Regulations 1981

19. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he intends to review the School Premises Regulations 1981.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend announced on 2 October that the DES and the Welsh Office are to conduct a review of the School Premises Regulations.

Schools (Maintenance)

21. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the current backlog in repairs and maintenance of schools; and if he will make a statement.

73. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the current backlog in repairs and maintenance of schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: The Department keeps no detailed data on the state of school buildings, which are the responsibility of local education authorities and governors of voluntary aided schools.

A realistic estimate of the cost of remedying deficiencies, based on a survey of school buildings in 1986, is about £2 billion at 1990 prices. Some £2·6 billion at 1990 prices is estimated to have been spent on school building between 1986-87 and 1989-90, mostly on new school places and reorganisation schemes to remove surplus capacity. A substantial proportion will, however, have gone towards remedying deficiencies.

66. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to improve the physical condition of schools.

Mr. Fallon: The physical condition of maintained schools is the responsibility of local education authorities, shared in the case of voluntary aided schools with governing bodies. It is for them to decide their spending priorities. We are making significant resources available. Annual capital guidelines for capital expenditure on schools and colleges in England are £485 million this year compared with £352 million under the old system of allocations for 1989-90. Local authorities are free to spend above that level by using capital receipts and other sources of income including revenue. In addition, £109 million of grant is available for voluntary schools compared with £86 million available last year.

71. **Mr. Crowther:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the backlog in repairs and maintenance in schools.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend has received a number of letters and other representations from local education authorities, hon. Members and others about the repair and maintenance of school buildings.

72. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will arrange to visit maintained schools in Bradford in need of renovation and repair.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend plans to visit Bradford on 31 October when he will be shown round Thornbury County first school before going on to open the new city technology college.

Education, Inner London

23. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment has been made so far by his Department of changes in the provision of education in inner London following the abolition of the Inner London education authority.

Mr. Eggar: The new inner London LEAs are making progress towards developing a more effective education service in inner London. They have recruited teachers to fill classroom vacancies, and many are consulting on the reorganisation of school provision.

Local Management of Schools

24. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a further statement on the operation of local management of schools; and whether he has any plans to change the operation of local management of schools for the future.

Mr. Fallon: Eighty-seven local education authorities introduced schemes of local management of schools in April. Most head teachers and governors welcome the prospect of greater autonomy in the running of their schools. We are monitoring and reviewing all aspects of local management of schools and will consult later this year on proposals, including proposals to increase the proportion of resources available for schools to manage themselves.

30. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received regarding local management of schools; and if he will make a statement.

48. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received regarding school budgets under the local management of schools proposals.

Mr. Fallon: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) on 15 October 1990, *Official Report*, column *642*.

43. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he had made of the impact of the financial controls associated with local management of schools on small first schools and primary schools.

Mr. Fallon: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike).

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a list giving the amount of holdback each local education authority is making in the context of local management of schools, with an indication showing the political control of each such authority; if he will give details of the action he is taking to reduce the amount of holdback; and if he will further set out in the list the amount that would be available for schools if the authority was at the average level of holdback.

Mr. Fallon: The following table provides the relevant information. My right hon. Friend is considering the scope for increased delegation of resources to schools and expects to consult later this year.

1990-91 Budgets: Discretionary exceptions and school budgets

LEA ranked by discretionary exceptions per cent. of PSB	*Rank*	*Political control*	*Discretionary exceptions per cent.*	*Discretionary exceptions £000*	*Number of schools*	*Average discretionary exceptions per school £*	*Amount available at schools if LEA at average discretionary exceptions per cent. £*
	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*	*(6)*	*(7)*
Cumbria	1	NOC	28·79	37,605	361	104,000	22,000
Haringey	2	LAB	28·67	16,498	90	183,000	38,000
Newcastle	3	LAB	28·27	21,030	107	197,000	38,000
Barking	4	LAB	28·17	12,508	67	187,000	35,000
Coventry	5	LAB	26·97	22,121	131	169,000	26,000
Derbyshire	6	LAB	26·89	68,649	527	130,000	20,000
Cambridgeshire	7	CON	26·43	42,587	314	136,000	19,000
Hounslow	8	LAB	26·25	15,358	78	197,000	26,000
South Tyneside	9	LAB	26·23	10,702	78	137,000	18,000
Avon	10	NOC	26·13	58,857	434	136,000	17,000
Westminsyter	11	CON	26·09	11,651	51	228,000	29,000
Kirklees	12	LAB	25·96	27,095	203	133,000	16,000
St. Helens	13	LAB	25·94	13,350	95	141,000	17,000
North Yorkshire	14	NOC	25·86	43,087	463	93,000	11,000
Oldham	15	LAB	25·72	16,546	114	145,000	17,000
Wolverhampton	16	LAB7	25·58	18,489	130	142,000	16,000
Wakefield	17	LAB	25·40	20,968	171	123,000	13,000
Barnsley	18	LAB	25·33	14,393	124	116,000	12,000
Devon	19	CON	25·32	54,804	517	106,000	11,000

LEA ranked by discretionary exceptions per cent. of PSB	Rank	Political control	Discretionary exceptions per cent.	Discretionary exceptions £000	Number of schools	Average discretionary exceptions per school £	Amount available at schools if LEA at average discretionary exceptions per cent. £
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
East Sussex	20	CON	25·16	34,183	259	132,000	13,000
Kingston	21	NOC	25·10	8,238	46	179,000	17,000
Durham	22	LAB	24·67	37,597	344	109,000	8,000
Merton	23	LAB	24·58	9,885	62	159,000	12,000
Nottinghamshire	24	LAB	24·54	65,781	512	128,000	9,000
Humberside	25	LAB	24·52	58,145	429	136,000	10,000
Isle of Wight	26	L/D	24·49	7,034	67	105,000	7,000
Oxfordshire	27	NOC	24·25	32,474	289	112,000	7,000
North Tyneside	28	LAB	24·15	13,237	91	145,000	8,000
Northumberland	29	LAB	24·14	17,851	204	88,000	5,000
Bury	30	LAB	24·08	10,804	87	124,000	7,000
Somerset	31	CON	23·99	25,955	273	95,000	5,000
Bromley	32	CON	23·87	15,101	101	150,000	7,000
Birmingham	33	LAB	23·75	64,915	423	153,000	6,000
Doncaster	34	LAB	23·62	20,555	163	126,000	5,000
Staffordshire	35	LAB	23·47	60,397	509	119,000	4,000
Gateshead	36	LAB	23·38	12,026	104	116,000	3,000
Norfolk	37	CON	23·36	40,248	462	87,000	2,000
Lancashire	38	LAB	23·09	78,055	712	110,000	2,000
Sheffield	39	LAB	23·04	28,178	224	126,000	1,000
Enfield	40	CON	23·03	16,129	87	185,000	2,000
Cornwall	41	NOC	22·90	23,660	288	82,000	500
Bexley	42	CON	22·89	12,514	86	146,000	1,000
Trafford	43	CON	22·76	10,566	100	106,000	—
Dorset	44	CON	22·66	29,875	258	116,000	—
Warwickshire	45	CON	22·53	25,310	283	89,000	—
Richmond	46	L/D	22·50	6,906	50	138,000	—
Cleveland	47	LAB	22·49	36,460	264	138,000	—
Cheshire	48	NOC	22·44	55,632	547	102,000	—
Salford	49	LAB	22·40	13,785	113	122,000	—
Tameside	50	LAB	22·37	12,518	103	122,000	—
Barnet	51	CON	22·25	15,951	112	142,000	—
Knowsley	52	LAB	22·19	10,472	82	128,000	—
Wiltshire	53	NOC	22·18	28,074	339	83,000	—
Ealing	54	CON	22·03	15,675	105	149,000	—
Sandwell	55	LAB	21·95	19,587	144	136,000	—
Surrey	56	CON	21·90	45,602	439	104,000	—
Shropshire	57	NOC	21·80	23,696	258	92,000	—
Wigan	58	LAB	21·70	18,123	153	118,000	—
Gloucestershire	59	NOC	21·70	25,793	305	85,000	—
Harrow	60	CON	21·67	10,056	64	157,000	—
Sutton	61	L/D	21·51	8,130	58	140,000	—
Rotherham	62	LAB	21·51	15,381	135	114,000	—
Brent	63	NOC	21·28	14,876	90	165,000	—
Dudley	64	LAB	21·23	14,791	111	133,000	—
Solihull	65	CON	20·77	11,289	87	130,000	—
Buckinghamshire	66	CON	20·70	31,211	341	92,000	—
Rochdale	67	LAB	20·69	11,279	101	112,000	—
Sunderland	68	LAB	20·64	15,941	125	128,000	—
Redbridge	69	CON	20·61	9,898	71	139,000	—
Bedfordshire	70	NOC	20·47	29,172	292	100,000	—
Bolton	71	LAB	20·14	13,891	124	112,000	—
Liverpool	72	LAB	20·14	27,287	275	99,000	—
Essex	73	CON	19·82	70,591	696	101,000	—
Walsall	74	LAB	19·60	15,326	131	117,000	—
Kent	75	CON	19·59	65,607	736	89,000	—
Leeds	76	LAB	19·24	35,235	336	105,000	—
Bradford	77	LAB	19·00	25,806	225	101,000	—
Northamptonshire	78	NOC	18·79	28,182	339	83,000	—
West Sussex	79	CON	18·66	24,939	285	88,000	—
Lincolnshire	80	CON	18·64	23,732	363	65,000	—
Havering	81	NOC	18·44	11,419	64	121,000	—
Suffolk	82	CON	18·31	26,683	339	79,000	—
Berkshire	83	NOC	17·49	28,341	339	84,000	—
Sefton	84	NOC	17·00	12,626	123	103,000	—

(Key:—CON = Conservative; LAB = Labour; L/D = Liberal Democrat; NOC = No overal control).

Teachers' Pay

25. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects his proposals for new long-term negotiating machinery on teachers' pay to be operative.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend has made it clear that he intends to introduce legislation at the earliest opportunity to establish new permanent pay negotiating machinery for teachers.

38. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the average earnings for teachers in *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* higher and further education in each major EEC country for the latest year for which statistics are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Some information on EC teachers' salaries in 1985 is published in a detailed research report "The Conditions of Service of Teachers in the European Community", published by the European Commission in 1988 (pages 133 to 160). A copy is available in the Library.

60. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received regarding teachers' pay.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend receives frequent representations from the teacher unions and others about teachers' pay and conditions.

84. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the response from interested parties to his proposals for local authority discretion in teachers' pay bargaining, announced on 23 July.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received in response to his proposals for a new pay negotiating machinery for teachers.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from the teacher unions and others commenting on aspects of his proposals to establish new pay determination machinery for teachers.

Special Needs Education

26. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received regarding local management of schools and children with special educational needs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations concerning provision for pupils with special educational needs in schools covered by schemes of local management. In response we have confirmed our concern that appropriate and effective provision should be made for pupils with special educational needs. The introduction of LMS does not alter authorities' responsibilities for pupils with special educational needs and should have no adverse effect on provision for such pupils.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether formula funding arrangements under local management of schools will take account of resources needed in schools to prevent statementing when calculating special needs provision.

Mr. Fallon: Local management of schools offers local education authorities the flexibility to take account of the resources needed in schools to support all pupils with special educational needs.

City Technology Colleges

27. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent developments there have been in the city technology college programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: The CTC programme is making substantial progress. Four colleges opened last month bringing the total of operational colleges to seven. Seven more are planned to open in 1991. My right hon. Friend has this month initiated consultation on proposals from the Wolfson Foundation and Cable and Wireless plc for a further college to serve the city of Bristol. If established the Bristol CTC will open in 1992.

55. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what interest has been expressed by parents in the establishment of city technology colleges.

Mr. Fallon: Parents are expressing their confidence in the city technology college programme by seeking places for their children in overwhelming numbers. All the colleges which are open have been oversubscribed in applications for places, both in initial and in subsequent years.

Student Accommodation

29. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on student accommodation.

37. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on student accommodation.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths).

School-Business Links

31. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools have links with local businesses.

Mr. Fallon: A recent survey by the Department indicated that around 90 per cent. of secondary schools and 54 per cent. of primary schools have links with local businesses. The findings of the survey were published in August as a DES Statistical Bulletin, a copy of which is in the Library.

80. **Mr. Robert B. Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what initiatives he is pursuing to ensure schools have closer links with industry.

Mr. Fallon: The Department is working with other Government Departments, links bodies and employers in

a range of initiatives designed to further the growth of links between schools and industry. In particular, we are taking forward an initiative to support local education business partnerships which will have a broad balance of membership from local business, education and community interests. The Department also selectively funds individual projects and organisations, publishes and distributes information and guides to good practice, and encourages the incorporation of economic and industrial dimensions into the school curriculum.

Language Learning

32. **Sir Hal Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that young people have an effective grounding in a modern foreign language.

68. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what importance he places on langague learning.

Mr. Eggar: The Government are concerned to increase both the number of pupils continuing to study a modern foreign language until age 16 and beyond, and their standards of language competence. That is why the national curriculum includes a modern foreign language as a foundation subject to be studied by all pupils aged 11 to 16 in maintained secondary schools. My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales will be publishing shortly their proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study for modern foreign languages in the national curriculum, together with the final report of the working group for modern foreign languages, on whose recommendations my right hon. Friends' proposals are based. We aim to start implementing the attainment targets and programmes of study in schools from autumn 1992.

Student Loans

33. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the operation of the student loans scheme and access funds.

53. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the operation of the student loans scheme and access funds.

64. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the operation of the student loans scheme and access funds.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling).

47. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many representations he has received in the current year about student loans.

Mr. Alan Howarth: We have received a substantial number of representations about the introduction of student loans and related aspects of the Government's student support policy.

Hackney (Financial Aid)

34. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what further financial assistance he intends to give the London borough of Hackney.

Mr. Eggar: We shall give careful consideration to Hackney local education authority's bids for funding for capital expenditure and for activities within the combined grants for education support and training programme for 1991-92, alongside those received from other LEAs.

Research Councils

35. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total amount of money currently allocated to each of the research councils; and what was the comparable figure in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1985.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The figures are as follows:

£ million (cash)

	1979-80	*1985-86*	*1990-91*
AFRC	29·5	52·7	86·2
ESRC	16·8	23·6	36·2
MRC	68·0	122·3	185·7
NERC	36·6	67·9	136·0
SERC	175·6	298·4	437·4

In real terms the total allocation to the research councils increased by 26·5 per cent. over the period.

Under-fives

36. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on public funding of playgroups and nurseries for under-fives.

Mr. Eggar: Playgroups and other forms of sessional and day care are the responsibility at national level of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health. However, my Department makes an annual grant, currently £179,000, to the Pre-school Playgroups Association for activities contributing to the educational improvement of playgroups. In 1991-92 the Department will support under the grants for education support and training arrangements a total of £2·5 million of expenditure by local education authorities on improving the planning and co-ordination of provision for the under-fives; this includes work in educational settings and the educational component of playgroups.

39. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to increase the number of nursery education places for three and four-year-olds.

45. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on local authority provision for the under-fives.

65. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to increase the number of nursery education places for three and four-year-olds.

81. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to increase the number of nursery education places for three and four-year-olds.

Mr. Eggar: The Government believe in a diversity of provision for the under-fives, and considers that local authorities are best placed to determine the extent and range of provision in their area. Over the last decade, the

numbers of under-fives attending nursery or primary classes in England have increased by nearly 35 per cent. Provisional data for 1990 show that in the last year the numbers rose from 548,000 to 577,000 and the age participation rate from 45 per cent. to 47 per cent.

Parental Choice

40. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has considered the implications for his policy on parental choice of the Greenwich judgment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend is aware of the Greenwich judgment, and will be looking closely at its effect on the pattern of school admissions.

Science Budget

42. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met the Advisory Board for the Research Councils to discuss the science budget for 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend met and discussed the science budget with the board on 24 July 1990.

Primary Schools, Staffordshire

44. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much was spent per pupil at primary schools in Staffordshire in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what was the comparable figure in 1978-79 at constant prices.

Mr. Fallon: Staffordshire spent some £1,050 per nursery and primary pupil in 1988-89. At 1988-89 prices the figure for 1978-79 was some £820. This represents an increase of some 28 per cent.

Surplus School Places

46. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the current number of surplus places in schools.

58. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the number of surplus places in schools.

Mr. Fallon: The latest estimate is that in January 1989 there were approximately 830,000 surplus primary school places and 950,000 surplus secondary school places in England. Local education authorities have removed about 100,000 surplus places over each of the past five years, although this reduction has been offset to some extent by the need to provide additional places in areas of population growth. We have repeatedly enjoined LEAs to do more to save money by rationalising their school provision.

Erasmus Project

49. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students in the academic year 1990-91 have applied and how many have been accepted to take part in the Erasmus project.

56. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students in the academic year 1990-91 have applied, and how many have been accepted, to take part in the Erasmus project.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) on 15 October 1990, *Official Report*, col. 640.

Rural Schools

50. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to help small rural schools implement the national curriculum.

Mr. Eggar: The Government are giving local education authorities specific grant support for the introduction of the national curriculum. Grants will support some £120 million LEA expenditure in England this financial year, rising to nearly £170 million expenditure next financial year. This is in addition to general revenue support grant funding for local authority spending. It is for individual authorities to decide, in the light of local needs and priorities, how much to spend to help small rural schools to deliver the national curriculum.

Teacher Supply

51. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on teacher supply.

61. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the current level of teacher supply.

62. **Ms. Harman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the current level of teacher supply.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend published on 5 October the results of the Department's survey of teacher vacancies at the beginning of September. A copy is in the Library. The results show that LEAs and schools were very successful in filling teaching posts this summer and that teachers are broadly available in sufficient numbers to fill posts. Nevertheless, it is clear that there continue to be difficulties in certain parts of the country and in certain subjects. We shall continue with our range of measures to improve teacher recruitment and retention.

School Books

54. **Mr. McWilliam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the supply of books in schools.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend has received representations from educational publishers and from some schools and LEAs about the supply of books, including school books, to support the introduction of the national curriculum. In response to these representations, my right hon. Friend has announced a new activity within the grants for education support and training programme for 1991-92 which will support £15 million expenditure on books for the national curriculum. The representations are also being taken into account in considering the 1991-92 local authority grant settlement.

Haringey (Education Quality)

57. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the quality of education in Haringey; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: Her Majesty's inspectorate routinely provides reports on education provision in Haringey as part of its normal inspection programme. The London borough of Haringey also provides information to the Department as requested from time to time on a number of aspects of educational provision.

Seven-year-olds (Testing)

59. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his deliberations about standardised testing for seven-year-olds.

79. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on his deliberations about standardised testing for seven-year-olds.

75. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received regarding standard assessment tests for seven-year-olds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) and my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes).

AIDS

63. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met the chairman of the Medical Research Council to discuss research into AIDS.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend is kept fully informed about the progress of the council's programme of research into AIDS, and received a presentation on this in March.

Teacher Training

67. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to reform teacher training.

Mr. Fallon: The Government's aim is constantly to improve the quality of teacher training. Recent innovations have included the introduction of revised criteria for the approval of initial teacher training courses; shortened BEd courses; extended PGCE courses in shortage subjects; the licensed teacher scheme for mature entrants to teaching; and school-based articled teacher schemes, starting this autumn. The effectiveness of these arrangements is being kept under review and further improvements will be introduced as necessary.

National Curriculum

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on progress on the implementation of the national curriculum.

70. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the implementation of the national curriculum.

Mr. Eggar: There is welcome evidence from Her Majesty's inspectorate that most schools are making satisfactory or good progress in implementing the national curriculum. My right hon. Friend is taking steps to ensure that the new requirements are phased in gradually over a number of years, subject by subject, to make implementation more manageable for teachers.

Mature Students

74. **Mrs. Heal:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what impact the access funds have had on mature students.

Mr. Alan Howarth: It is too early to say. The access funds scheme has only just started.

Classrooms (Toxic Substances)

76. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to ban the use of typewriter correcting fluid and other similar toxic substances in school classrooms.

Mr. Fallon: Many substances which have useful applications in schools may be toxic if they are misused. For this reason the national curriculum requires that all young people should be educated about the dangers of solvent and other substance misuse in science and technology; and the Department of Education and Science has issued guidance to LEAs and schools on the safe handling of volatile substances. My right hon. Friend has no powers to take further steps.

Disabled People

77. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to launch a full survey on disabled access to *(a)* colleges of further education, *(b)* colleges of higher education and *(c)* universities in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Education, Outer London

83. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on trends in educational standards in outer London boroughs.

Mr. Eggar: The following table indicates trends in public examination results for school leavers in the outer London boroughs since 1982. The national curriculum assessment system, when fully in place at all key stages, will, when combined with improved methods of collecting and reporting data on examination results, provide a fuller and more accurate picture.

Outer London local education authorities maintained/schools
Percentage of school leavers at a range of levels of achievement

Local education authority	No graded result			5+ grades A–C/1 GCSE/O/CSE			1+ A-levels		
	1982-84	1984-86	1986-88	1982-84	1984-86	1986-88	1982-84	1984-86	1986-88
Barking and Dagenham	17·9	18·3	18·3	11·8	9·7	11·8	9·2	6·9	8·3
Barnet	8·4	5·8	8·4	36·5	39·9	41·5	27·9	30·0	30·7
Bexley	8·0	8·2	10·0	26·4	26·9	27·8	15·6	16·2	17·0
Brent	14·2	14·1	11·5	17·3	18·0	19·1	12·6	12·8	13·1
Bromley	8·5	9·3	6·6	30·3	30·1	32·0	19·3	20·3	20·3
Croydon	10·2	9·2	10·8	25·7	24·9	22·7	16·1	14·7	13·6
Ealing	12·8	12·2	14·5	20·1	19·8	19·1	13·6	12·9	12·9
Enfield	10·8	9·8	9·3	22·2	24·3	24·8	14·6	17·5	17·7
Haringey	20·9	19·4	15·6	15·0	16·8	17·3	9·7	10·9	12·4
Harrow	5·9	5·5	5·2	37·3	38·9	38·3	26·0	27·1	15·4
Havering	6·0	8·8	10·2	26·8	26·3	23·3	17·5	16·9	13·6
Hillingdon	9·3	9·0	7·3	22·3	22·7	20·0	14·6	14·6	13·3
Hounslow	14·1	16·4	14·4	21·9	20·9	21·5	17·2	14·7	13·1
Kingston-upon-Thames	7·6	8·6	9·4	33·7	35·8	34·1	23·5	22·1	20·1
Merton	13·5	12·1	14·6	26·0	26·2	23·4	16·3	15·9	13·9
Newham	24·7	23·6	21·7	11·7	11·7	14·3	8·3	7·4	9·0
Redbridge	9·4	10·6	12·2	26·8	25·3	26·6	19·2	18·0	19·7
Richmond-upon-Thames	13·2	10·8	8·5	23·9	24·1	29·6	0·0	0·0	0·0
Sutton	7·5	5·7	5·9	34·6	31·3	34·9	23·8	22·6	25·3
Waltham Forest	15·3	16·3	15·9	16·1	13·7	11·3	11·6	9·5	8·2
ENGLAND (ALL)	10·4	10·0	10·0	23·3	23·7	24·4	14·3	14·0	14·2

Notes:

A large proportion of 1+ A-level achievers are also counted in 5+ grades A–C/1.

Richmond-upon-Thames provides all A-level teaching through a tertiary system. Other local education authorities have adopted alternative modes of tertiary provision and this may well have a bearing on A-level figures.

The above data is based on a 10 per cent. survey. Since figures from small local education authorities are subject to relatively large levels of sampling error, figures are taken over a three year period.

Source: Statistics of Education—School Leavers (DES) 1984-88.

Education Reform

85. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to meet local authority associations to discuss progress of the Education Reform Act.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend meets the local authority associations from time to time to discuss various aspects of the Government's educational reforms and other issues.

GCSE

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what average grade has been achieved by pupils sitting GCSE in recent years in each of the core and foundation subjects established by the Education Act.

Mr. Fallon: The table shows, for 15-year-old pupils in England in 1988-89, the percentage of those attempting each national curriculum subject who gain a grade A-C or D-G. The only year for which information is available in this form is 1988-89.

	15-year-old pupils		
	Attempting (000s)	Gaining grades A-C (per cent.)	Gaining grades D-G (per cent.)
English	557·11	50·4	48·0
Mathematics	532·26	39·9	52·9
Science	496·52	41·3	53·7
Technology	194·83	38·4	53·3
Modern foreign language	302·89	49·8	48·1
Geography	262·03	45·4	49·2
History	218·38	47·6	46·8
Art	59·71	45·0	51·9
Music	31·58	55·7	40·4
P.E.	26·05	31·7	61·7

Truancy

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he is taking to reduce truancy.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend is providing funds, through education support grant, for projects designed to improve attenance in designated schools in a total of 31 local education authorities. Last year the Department published a survey report by Her Majesty's inspectorate which reviews school attendance and calls attention to examples of good practice in schools and local education authorities.

My right hon. Friend is considering the need for additional measures to secure improvements in the vital area of school attendance.

Schools (Fire Damage)

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the number of schools, and of what type, which have been extensively damaged by fire during the last 12 months and on the comparable figure for 1980.

Mr. Fallon: The Department does not maintain records of the number of schools damaged by fire.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance is given to local education authorities in respect of the desirability of insurance against fire of school premises and the type of security provided against fire and arson in school premises; and what plans he has to review the guidance.

Mr. Fallon: The Department does not issue guidance to local education authorities on the desirability of insurance against fire of school premises. Guidance on precautions against fire, including arson attacks, is published in the Department's building bulletins. This guidance is under constant review.

School Discipline

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what evidence he has received indicating trends in the level of school discipline.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend has received no recent evidence about trends in the level of school discipline. The report of the committee of inquiry into discipline in schools, chaired by my noble Friend Lord Elton, did however include the findings of a large-scale survey of school discipline. That survey, conducted in nearly 500 schools in autumn 1988, identified persistent low-level disruption as the most common disciplinary problem.

Education Spending

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was education spending per pupil in 1990-91, 1984-85 and 1979-80; and if he will set out the figures by reference to primary schools and secondary schools.

Mr. Fallon: The latest available figures on outturn recurrent spending in schools relate to 1988-89. The table shows school-based spending per pupil in that year, compared with spending in 1979-80 and 1984-85. The spending returns group nursery schools with primary schools.

	Nursery and primary	*Secondary*
	£	£
1979-80	430	605
1984-85	765	1,085
1988-89	1,100	1,690

The figures are in cash terms. They do not include spending on central LEA services such as transport and administration, or any capital spending.

Class Sizes

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the average size of secondary and primary school classes in 1979-80, 1984-85 and 1990-91.

Mr. Fallon: Information for 1990-91 is not yet available. The average class sizes in 1979-80, 1984-85 and 1989-90 in maintained primary and secondary schools in England were as follows:

	[1] *1979-80*	[1] *1984-85*	[1] *1989-90 provisional*
Primary[2]	25·4	24·9	25·9
Secondary[2]	20·9	20·4	20·0

[1] January 1980, 1985 and 1990 respectively.
[2] Includes middle schools as deemed.

The average class sizes relate to those taught by one teacher during a selected period on the day of the schools census in January and do not necessarily represent the pattern of classes for the academic year as a whole.

Further Education

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the percentage of young people who stay on at school after age 16 years; and what steps are being takken to increase the number.

Mr. Eggar: The Government have achieved a substantial increase in the number participating in post compulsory full-time education. In 1989-90 35 per cent. of 16-year-olds were attending school compared with 28 per cent. in 1979-80. In addition, 20 per cent. were in full-time education in FE colleges compared with 14 per cent. in 1979-80. Our examination reforms and the Education Reform Act will raise standards and give more young people the qualifications and motivation to stay on at school.

Schools (Political Bias)

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many complaints have been made in each year since the bringing into force of section 45 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986.

Mr. Eggar: The Department's records do not distinguish between complaints made under sections 44 and 45 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986. Since the 1986 Act came into force, the Department has received a total of 37 complaints about political indoctrination in schools. Some have named a particular school or LEA; others have simply expressed concern about the availability of teaching materials alleged to be biased. The total number of complaints received each year is set out in the table.

	Complaints in which LEA or school is named	*Other complaints*
1986	2	1
1987	7	1
1988	7	0
1989	0	8
1990 to date	1	10
Total	17	20

Higher Education

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the number of students entering higher education in the academic year 1990-91.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department's projection published in April was that, at over 208,000, the number of home students entering full-time higher education this autumn would be more than 4 per cent. above last year's record level. That projection, which my right hon. Friend has said may be too low, is currently being revised in the light of the latest information.

Housing Benefit

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how far the access funds made available to education establishments in the current year are to be used to replace housing benefit to students; and how access funds will be administered with the academic and financial years beginning at different times.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The purpose of the new student support system, comprising maintainence grants, loans and access funds, is to make it unnecessary for students to rely on social security benefits. Access funds are paid at the discretion of the educational institutions concerned to help students with particular difficulties to meet their living costs.

Funds provided in the current financial year are for the current academic year, and up to 15 per cent. of an institution's allocation may be paid to students in the summer term.

Education Support Grants

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which teacher unions he consulted over the introduction of grants for education support and training, how long unions were given to respond to consultation; and how many unions have responded to any GEST proposals.

Mr. Fallon: The grants for education support and training (GEST) programme, which brings together the existing education support grants and LEA training grants, was introduced following a review undertaken as part of the efficiency unit's scrutiny programme. Copies of the scrutiny report, and a statement setting out the Government's initial response, were sent on 12 February to a range of organisations, including the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, the National Association of Head Teachers, the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, the National Union of Teachers, the Professional Association of Teachers and the Secondary Heads Association. The same unions were also sent copies of the draft circular issued on 20 July 1990 inviting local education authorities to submit applications for funding in 1991-92 under the revised GEST arrangements. In neither case was a specific deadline set for comments. Comments on the draft circular were received from the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association.

SCOTLAND

Greater Glasgow Health Board (Contracts)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what variation orders have been issued by Greater Glasgow health board in respect of the contracts for domestic, catering, portering and associated services provided by private contractors.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None. Variation orders are not applicable to staff employed by private contractors.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the turnover of staff in each of the premises where domestic, catering portering and associated services have been subjected to competitive tendering in Greater Glasgow health board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not collected for each of the premises. The board would consider staff turnover if there were concerns over the delivery of a particular service.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what specific provisions are made for training in the contracts for domestic, catering, portering and associated services that have been subjected to competitive tendering.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Tender specifications require service providers to satisfy health boards as to their ability to recruit, retain and train staff to enable the service to be delivered to the required standard.

Prisoners (Convictions)

Sir Russell Johnston: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of those serving prison sentences of more than two years were convicted of crimes not involving violence or child molestation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Information is not available in the form requested. Provisional figures for receptions to Scottish prisons in 1989 indicate that the proportion of those received with sentences of more than two years who were convicted of crimes not involving violence or child molestation was 36 per cent.

Passenger Transport

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of passengers per annum carried by *(a)* bus, *(b)* rail, *(c)* private car and *(d)* aircraft in Scotland in each of the years from 1984 to date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is set out in the tables:

Million passengers

	Bus	*Air*
1984	727	6·9
1985	726	6·9
1986	702	7·2
1987	706	7·8
1988	712	8·5
1989	[1]	9·2

[1] Bus passengers statistics for 1989 are not currently available.

Million passengers

	Rail
1984-85	64·1
1985-86	57·1
1986-87	53·1
1987-88	54·1
1988-89	54·0
1989-90	51·8

It is not possible to estimate with any degree of accuracy the number of passengers per annum carried by private car.

Pensioners

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of male and female retirement pensioners in each parliamentary constituency in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I regret that the information is not available in the form requested.

Apprenticeships

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of apprenticeships for people in *(a)* Shettleston constituency, *(b)* Glasgow district, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The table provides information on the number of manufacturing apprentices, and other trainees in Scotland in March 1989, the latest available date. Figures for Glasgow district and Strathclyde region are not readily available and have not been provided due to disproportionate costs. Figures for Shettleston constituency are not available.

Manufacturing apprentices and other trainees

	Apprentices	*Other trainees*	*Total*
March 1989			
Scotland	4,900	2,300	7,200

Education Bursaries

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the monetary value in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990 of *(a)* a full-time further education bursary and *(b)* a part-time further education bursary; and if he will make a statement explaining the reasons for any variations in value for each year.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Education Authority Bursaries (Scotland) Regulations 1988 prescribe the conditions subject to which bursaries may be provided by education authorities. Authorities have discretion whether or not to offer bursaries to individuals resident in their areas and to regulate the value of bursaries. Bursary awards may vary according to the particular circumstances of the individual and to the level of support which the education authority is prepared to provide. Information on monetary values of bursary awards is not available centrally.

Glasgow East End

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will appoint a member of the Glasgow east end strategy group to the Greater Glasgow health board as it is constituted now or will be after April 1991.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Members of health boards are not appointed as representatives of particular organisations or sections of the community but for the personal contribution which they can make to their board's work.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the number of houses in the east end of Glasgow which are below minimum required standards.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The minimum required standards are set out in the tolerable standard for housing in section 86 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Each local authority provides the Scottish Development Department with annual estimates of the number of houses in its district as a whole which are below the tolerable standard. However, information is not provided for particular areas within those districts.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what efforts his Department is currently making to attract and create jobs in the east end of Glasgow.

Mr. Lang: Locate in Scotland actively pursues the attraction of inward investment for Scotland as a whole, including the east end of Glasgow.

However, jobs are created by market forces not by Governments. The Government, through the Scottish Development Agency, continue to support the East End Executive, which provides a range of services, including business advice and training, with the aim of stimulating and protecting employment in the area.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money has been spent in the east end of Glasgow by *(a)* the Scottish Development Agency, *(b)* Greater Glasgow health board, *(c)* the Scottish Special Housing Association, *(d)* the Housing Corporation, *(e)* Scottish Homes and *(f)* the MSC since the ending of the GEAR project in March 1987.

Mr. Lang: The information relating to Greater Glasgow health board and the MSC is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

The expenditure figures for the remaining organisations are as follows:

	£ *million*
Scottish Development Agency (1 April 1987–31 March 1990)	6·7
Scottish Special Housing Association (1 April 1987–31 March 1989)	4·5
Housing Corporation in Scotland (1 April 1987–31 March 1989)	10·9
Scottish Homes (1 April 1989–31 March 1990)	10·75
(1 April 1990–31 March 1991[1])	12·7

[1] Estimated.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total amount of Government money spent in the east end of Glasgow during the lifetime of the GEAR project and since then.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the projects in the east end of Glasgow in which the Scottish Development Agency is currently involved.

Mr. Lang: The table gives details of projects currently under way, and of those not yet under way but in respect of which agency funding has been committed. Other projects under consideration, but not yet committed, are not included.

Project title	Description
Claythorn Street, Gallowgate	The construction, on a derelict site, of 15 flatted dwelling units for sale.
Kerr Street, Bridgeton	The construction, on a derelict site near Bridgeton Cross, of 82 flatted dwelling units for sale.
Laird Business Centre, Dalmarnock	The redevelopment of the former DRG Lairds Packaging factory in Carstairs Street to provide some 140,000 square feet of small office, workshop and storage space for rent.
Paton Street/Duke Street	The redevelopment of a site adjacent to Duke Street railway station to provide 20 flatted dwelling units for sale and two shop units for rent.

Glasgow East End

111. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the community projects using central Government finance currently existing in the east end of Glasgow, the authority or body involved, the number of employees in each and the total cost of each such project.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The information relating to community projects in the east end of Glasgow currently in receipt of central Government finance through the urban programme is as follows:

Urban Programme Community managed projects East End of Glasgow

1990-91

Project Title *Managing Organisation*	*Employees* *Full time*	*Part time*	*Urban Programme Funding* *Capital*	*Current*
Dalmarnock Youth Project Dalmarnock Youth Committee	2	1	0	38,167
Barrowfield Youth Project South Camlachie Community Council	1	0	0	18,866
Reidvale Adventure Playground Reidvale Adventure Play Association	4	0	98,425	50,656
Centre for Disabled—Bridgeton West GEAR Disability Forum	1	1	129,400	13,443
East End Money Advice and Information Centre East End Advice Centre Management Committee	3	1	35,945	35,427
Alcohol Counselling/Lodging Houses, GEAR Glasgow Council on Alcoholism	2	0	0	2,351
Orr Street Day Centre, GEAR Calton Elderly Working Party	0	0	0	1,780
Dalmarnock Neighbourhood Office Dalmarnock Community Council	0	0	0	56,992
Bridgeton Community Hall Bridgeton Centre Executive Committee	4	0	0	56,202
Dalmarnock After School Care Dalmarnock Women's Health Group	1	0	0	18,156
Barrowfield Family Flat Barrowfield Family Flat Management Committee	2	0	0	35,407
GEAR Community Arts Project GEAR Community Arts Project Council	2	1	0	33,033
Rape Crisis Centre Support Project (Womens Support) Strathclyde Rape Crisis Centre	1	0	2,820	36,547
Bridgeton Unemployed Group Bridgeton Unemployed Group	0	0	0	1,557
Dalmarnock Community Centre Dalmarnock Community Association	3	1	0	9,242
Gallowgate Tenants Hall Gallowgate Tenants Hall Steering Committee	2	3	0	45,855
East End Resident Advisors East End Management Unit	2	0	0	26,215

Project Title / Managing Organisation	Employees Full time	Employees Part time	Urban Programme Funding Capital	Urban Programme Funding Current
Dalmarnock Project Co-ordinator Dalmarnock Community Council	4	2	0	66,652
Dalmarnock Neighbourhood Advice/Resources Project Dalmarnock Community Council	2	0	0	21,048
Lilybank/Cuthelton Neighbourhood Project Lilybank/Cuthelton Area Working Group	11	1	136,467	118,196
Base for Whiterose Tenant Management Co-operative Whiterose Co-op	0	2	0	26,972
East End Drugs Initiative East End Drug Forum	8	2	34,734	263,739
Shettleston Resource Centre and Community Hall Shettleston Housing Association/Shettleston Community Council	2	2	0	55,634
Disabled Transport Project Haghill Area Profile Group (Good Neighbours Club)	0	0	0	4,785
Money Advice Worker, Haghill Haghill Area Profile Group	2	1	3,448	32,913
Bluevale Neighbourhood Centre, Haghill Bluevale Community Association	5	4	0	74,921
Project Co-ordinator Haghill Haghill Area Profile Group	2	1	0	40,959
Haghill Hall Development Officer Haghill Hall Committee	1	0	0	33,334
Helenslea Hall Helenslea Hall Management Committee	1	1	0	40,297

Buses

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many bus services were operating in *(a)* the city of Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde region and *(c)* Scotland in 1984; and what are the current totals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were employed in the bus manufacturing industry in Scotland in 1984; and what is the current total.

Mr. Lang: No reliable information has been compiled and the cost of doing so would be disproportionate.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the number of male and female sufferers of Alzheimer's disease in each parliamentary constituency in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No estimates have been made on the basis specified.

Labour Statistics

Mr . David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the percentage rate of unemployment among *(a)* adult males, *(b)* adult females, *(c)* young males and *(d)* young females in (i) the Shettleston constituency, (ii) Glasgow district, (iii) Strathclyde region and (iv) Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Unemployment percentage rates are only available for *(a)* all unemployed males and *(b)* all unemployed females in (i) Strathclyde region and (ii) Scotland.

Where rates are not available for the requested areas we have given the appropriate level of unemployment. The most reliable figures on unemployment among young people are available only on a quarterly basis, and hence the July 1990 figures are shown. Young people are defined as being between 18 and 24 years old.

Numbers and percentage rates of unemployed claimants

		September 1990 Males	September 1990 Females	July 1990 Young Males	July 1990 Young Females
Shettleston	Number	3,467	899	1,017	405
	Percentage	—	—	—	—
Glasgow district	Number	36,735	10,684	10,680	4,774

		September 1990 Males	Females	July 1990 Young Males	Young Females
	Percentage	—	—	—	—
Strathclyde region	Number	83,390	27,091	25,091	11,035
	Percentage	13·1	5·8	—	—
Scotland	Number	143,881	51,197	42,292	20,217
	Percentage	10·0	4·8	—	—

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of long-term unemployed males and females in *(a)* Shettleston constituency, *(b)* Glasgow district, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The table provides long-term unemployment figures, for both males and females, for Shettleston, Glasgow, Strathclyde and Scotland, for July 1990, the latest date for which the most accurate figures are available. The long-term unemployed are defined to be those persons who have been unemployed claimants for in excess of 52 weeks.

Number of long-term unemployed claimants

	July 1990 Male	Female
Shettleston	1,790	333
Glasgow district	18,353	3,946
Strathclyde region	36,443	8,388
Scotland	57,487	14,615

Legionnaire's Disease

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases of Legionnaire's disease there have been in Glasgow royal infirmary since 1982; how many people have died as a result; and if he will make a statement on the current situation.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Between January 1982 and September 1990 there have been 21 cases of Legionnaires' disease at Glasgow royal infirmary, resulting in eight deaths. In 1990, up until September, there have been two cases resulting in one death. I have called for a full report from Greater Glasgow health board on the cases contracted in 1990 and this is awaited.

Disability

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of *(a)* disabled males and females, *(b)* blind males and females, *(c)* deaf males and females, *(d)* dumb males and females and *(e)* geriatric males and females living in (i) Shettleston constituency, (ii) Glasgow district, (iii) Strathclyde region and (iv) Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information on the number of persons in particular disability categories is not held centrally in the detailed form requested.

More general information on the numbers of disabled people in Scotland with different levels of severity of disability, is contained in the report of a survey of disability in Great Britain carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and published by HMSO in 1988: a copy of this is available from the Library.

Epilepsy

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which hospitals in Scotland possess or are about to possess video telemetry equipment for investigation and possible surgery in cases of epilepsy.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am aware of only two hospitals which have this equipment—the royal infirmary, Edinburgh and the royal infirmary, Dundee. It is for health boards to decide on their equipment needs.

Fishery Protection Aircraft

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will replace the fishery protection aircraft; and what type of aircraft he intends to purchase.

Mr. Rifkind: Following the loss of one of the fisheries protection aircraft in May, my Department has leased a Cessna Caravan II to assist in providing aerial surveillance of fishing grounds until a permanent long-term replacement aircraft can be acquired. Consideration of options for permanent replacement is not complete, and therefore no decision has yet been taken.

Taxis

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to amend the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 in respect of applications for tariff increases for the taxi trade where emergency situations affect the price of fuel.

Mr. Lang: The 1982 Act already allows for adjustment of taxi fare scales. As part of the current review of the Act we shall be considering whether, in exceptional circumstances, more accelerated procedures for fare adjustment are needed.

Public Service Vehicles

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the average age of a public service vehicle in 1984 in Scotland; and what it is at the present time.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In Scotland the average age of public transport vehicles was 5·7 years in 1984 and 6·8 years in 1988, the latest date for which figures are available centrally.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many public service vehicles were registered in Scotland in 1984; and what is the current total.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At 31 December 1984, 14,315 public transport vehicles were licensed in Scotland. At 31 December 1988, the latest date for which information is available centrally, the figure was 15,569.

Passenger Transport

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were employed in the road passenger transport industry in Scotland in 1984; and what is the current total.

Mr. Lang: According to census of employment information, the number employed in the road passenger transport industry in Scotland was 19,432 in September 1984. The latest available figure, for September 1987, is 19,506.

Sheltered Housing

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of males and females living in sheltered housing accommodation, and on the waiting lists for such accommodation in each parliamentary constituency in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Office does not make such estimates. Information on the public sector provision of sheltered housing is collected annually from district councils and published by the Scottish Development Department; the 1989 figures are contained in table 12 of Statistical Bulletin HSU No. 11: "Housing Trends in Scotland, quarter ended 30 June 1989", which was published in January 1990. A copy of this was sent to the hon. Member on publication, and further copies are available in the Library.

AIDS

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the number of male and female cases of *(a)* AIDS and *(b)* drug users in each health board area in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The cumulative total of people diagnosed with AIDS who have been reported to the Communicable Diseases (Scotland) Unit to 30 September 1990 is 178, of whom 157 are males and 21 are females. Of the number of males, Greater Glasgow, Lothian and Tayside health boards have 53, 79 and 10 cases, respectively. The remaining male cases, fewer than 10 in each instance, are in the Argyll and Clyde, Ayrshire and Arran, Fife, Forth Valley, Grampian, Highland and Lanarkshire health board areas. In Lothian 12 female cases have been reported with the remainder in Argyll and Clyde, Fife, Greater Glasgow, and Tayside, respectively. In accordance with established practice, where the number of cases in individual health board areas is under 10, separate figures are not published so as not to jeopardise medical confidentiality.

Because of the illicit nature of drug taking it is very difficult to be precise about the number of drug misusers. Information is not available centrally for each health board area, but current estimates of the number injecting drug misusers in Strathclyde, Lothian and Tayside regions are as follows:

	Number
Strathclyde (mainly Glasgow)	8,000 to 12,000
Lothian (mainly Edinburgh)	2,500 to 4,000
Tayside (mainly Dundee)	1,500 to 2,000

Wheel Clamping

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to make car wheel clamping illegal in certain situations in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has no such plans.

British Rail

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many passenger miles of track were operated by British Rail in Scotland in 1984; and what is the current total.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: British Rail operated 1,707 route miles of track for passenger traffic in Scotland in 1984 and currently operates 1,697 route miles.

Kingston Bridge, Glasgow

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to consider repairs to the Kingston bridge in Glasgow as a special case necessitating additional allocation of Government funding; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is for the local authority to identify its needs in the production of its transport policies and programme statement and financial plans. These will then be taken fully into account in determining capital allocations.

Independent Schools

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to make regulations in respect of independent schools which take into account the principles given in consultation document No. 8 to the Children Act 1989 produced by the Department of Health.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Section 87 of the Children Act 1989 on the welfare of children living in independent residential schools does not extend to Scotland. The recently published report of the child care law review (copies of which are in the Library) recommends that similar duties should be placed on proprietors and similar responsibilities on local authorities in Scotland. I have invited views from a wide range of organisations and individuals before deciding what action to take on the recommendations.

Primary Schools, Central Region

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to respond to the proposals by the Central regional council for the reorganisation of primary school education in the Denny and Dunipace area, including provision of a replacement school for Dunipace primary school; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No proposals for the reorganisation of primary school education in the Denny and Dunipace area have been referred to my right hon. and learned Friend. Central regional council has, however, lodged an appeal with him against a condition of a planning permission granted by Falkirk district council for

the construction of a new primary school at Tygetshaugh, Denny. Arrangements will shortly be made for a public local inquiry into that appeal and objections to a related compulsory purchase order.

Community Projects

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the community projects, using central Government funds, which currently exist in *(a)* Glasgow and *(b)* Strathclyde, the authority, agency or associations involved, the number of those gainfully employed in each and the total cost of each scheme.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will intervene in the matter of the refusal of grant funding to the multiple sclerosis therapy centre in Glasgow by Greater Glasgow health board; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 15 October 1990]:* This is a matter for the health board. I understand that the grant paid by Greater Glasgow health board to the multiple sclerosis therapy centre was explicitly for one year only.

Breathalysers

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what advice his Department will be offering to publicans and hoteliers considering installing do-it-yourself breathalyser kits in their establishments;

(2) what record the Scottish Home and Health Department has of licensed establishments which have installed any form of do-it-yourself breathalyser kits;

(3) whether the Scottish Home and Health Department has received any representatives for the Licensed Trade Association about the possible installation of do-it-yourself breathalyser kits in licensed premises.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* The Department has not received any representations from the Scottish Licensed Trade Association about the installation of do-it-yourself breathalyser kits and has no record of licensed premises which have installed such kits.

The Government have campaigned vigorously against drinking and driving and are strongly opposed to any arrangements which might encourage drivers to drink up to the legal limit in the assumption that it will still be safe for them to drive. The safe course for any driver is not to drink at all. My advice to anyone considering acquiring such kits would therefore be that they will do nothing to contribute to road safety and may simply mislead individuals into thinking that they are fit to drive.

School Boards

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the amount of money spent by the Scottish Office separate from that used by regional and islands' councils, on publicising school boards since their creation.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 18 October 1990]:* The total expenditure on public information about school boards since the first boards were established in October 1989 is £107,300. This relates to expenditure on publicity for school board by-elections held in late 1989 and early 1990.

Dounreay Research

108. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of research *(a)* under way and *(b)* planned at Dounreay into the safe destruction of PCBs, pesticides and solvents; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* I understand that the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority at Dounreay has a research project into the electrochemical incineration of certain substances including PCBs and pesticides. Should the project be developed on a commercial basis it will become subject to control by the relevant regulatory authority.

Further information about the project may be obtained by the hon. Member if he writes to AEA Technology at Dounreay.

ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Finance

Mr. Barry Fields: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applications have been lodged with the valuation and community charge tribunals about the community charge; and what were the comparable figures for objections to domestic rates.

Mr. Portillo: Some 4,230 community charge appeals have so far been lodged this year with valuation and community charge tribunals. Figures for appeals against the rateable values of domestic properties were not separately recorded, but the volume of appeals against all types of rating proposals in the past five years are set out in the table:

	Number
1985	152,362
1986	172,528
1987	182,335
1988	150,647
1989	178,078

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if local authorities facing major losses of business rate income in their area in the course of a year will be required to make good the shortfall of increased poll tax in the following financial year.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The cost of any non-domestic rates which are written off by charging authorities as irrecoverable will, subject to audit, be borne by the national non-domestic rate pool. The cost of failure by an authority to collect rates efficiently will fall on the authority. Conversely, if the authority collects more than the amount assumed when its contributions to the pool were fixed, its cash flow will benefit.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assumptions on poll tax collection rates he intends to use in setting central Government grant levels for 1991-92; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* No assumptions about community charge collection rates are needed when setting central Government grant levels.

Barkby Thorpe Landfill Site

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate the reasons for the postponement of the public inquiry into the Barkby Thorpe, Leicester, site, stating *(a)* who applied for the deferral and *(b)* how long the deferral will be.

Mr. Atkins: The inquiry was postponed at the request of the appellants, supported by the local planning authority, to allow gas generation from the appeal site to be monitored and the results to be analysed. It is not yet clear how long this will take.

Coastline Review

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to instigate a comprehensive review of the coastline of England and Wales.

Mr. Trippier: We have no plans at present to instigate a review of the coastline.

Atmospheric Pollution

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any recent representations seeking wider controls on atmospheric pollution.

Mr. Trippier: I regularly receive representations regarding atmospheric pollution and its control.

YT Trainees

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had on behalf of YT trainees with special needs who have to pay the poll tax out of their youth training wage; what reply he has sent; if he will now reconsider the imposition of the tax in these cases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have received a number of letters suggesting that YT trainees with special training needs endorsements should be made exempt from the community charge. It is a fundamental principle of the community charge that almost all adults should make some level of contribution. Many YT trainees, including those with special needs, are eligible for substantial reductions through the community charge benefit scheme as are others with low incomes. There is no justification for an exemption in this case.

Local Authority Superannuation Funds

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will clarify the position of local authorities who delegate superannuation fund investment decisions to external fund managers.

Mr. Portillo: Government officials have had discussions with local government representatives, regulatory bodies and those representing fund managers. I intend to propose amendments to the Local Government Superannuation Regulations expressly to authorise authorities to delegate superannuation fund investment decisions to outside managers subject to certain conditions. I am circulating proposals to local authorities in England and Wales and other interested parties for their comments. Subject to the necessary statutory and parliamentary procedures I would intend the amended regulations to come into force before the end of the year.

Environmental Conference

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he, or officials of his Department, have been invited to participate in the conference on environmental assessment: theory and practice, to be held in London on 8-9 November, organised by International Business Communications.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* A member of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has been invited to address the conference.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received regarding the operation of the test of financial resources for a mandatory disabled facilities grant, under the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Mr. Key *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* Since the test of financial resources for the new disabled facilities grants came into effect on 1 July, my Department has received five representations from hon. Members and six representations from local authorities and others.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on families choosing to discontinue the domiciliary care of an elderly or disabled member because of an inability to meet the financial contribution required as a result of the test of financial resources necessary for the provision of a mandatory or discretionary disabled facilities grant.

Mr. Key *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* None.

Humberside

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to receive the final report from the Local Government Boundary Commission regarding the future of the county of Humberside.

Mr. Key *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The commission's programme of work is for it to determine with the resources at its disposal. I understand that the review is taking rather longer that was hoped. Although the commission is making good progress in dealing with the representations it has received, this review is not expected to be completed before the end of the year. I regret that I cannot give a firmer forecast.

Advertising (Complaints)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many complaints have been received by his Department and by the Advertising Standards

Authority and Independent Broadcasting Authority regarding environment-friendly claims by product manufacturers in both 1989 and 1990.

Mr. Redwood: I have been asked to reply.

My Department has not directly received any complaints about specific environment friendly claims by product manufacturers. I am informed that the Independent Broadcasting Authority does not keep complaints in this form, but the figures for the Advertising Standards Authority are as follows:

	Number
1989	194
1990	[1]100

[1] January to October.

Rents into Mortgages Scheme

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what action his Department is taking to promote the trial rents into mortgages scheme for Basildon new town tenants;

(2) what is the length of the experimental period of the trial Basildon new town corporation rents into mortgages scheme.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I have invited the Commission for the New Towns to operate an experimental rents-into-mortgages scheme for its tenants at Basildon. This is an important and exciting experiment which marks a new stage in our commitment to extending opportunities for home ownership.

It will be aimed at tenants who would like to buy their home and can pay their full rent, but cannot afford the right to buy. The Commission will offer tenants the opportunity to buy their home for an initial payment which much be at least the amount which they could borrow on a mortgage, with repayments equivalent to their rent. This initial payment will attract discount in accordance with the right-to-buy rules; tenants paying half the right-to-buy price will get half their right-to-buy discount.

The Commission will retain a charge over that part of the value of the property not covered by the tenant's payment and discount. The charge must be redeemed on the resale of the property or the death of the purchaser, but the purchaser will be free to make further payments to redeem or reduce the charge at any time. The amount needed to redeem the charge will be the appropriate proportion of the property's value at the time of redemption, less a discount of 20 per cent.

There is no set end-date for the scheme. Its progress will be monitored regularly.

Rents into Mortgages Scheme

180. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what monitoring he is undertaking of the response of Basildon district council following the announcement of the trial rents into mortgages scheme for Basildon new town tenants;

(2) what powers he has to prevent local authorities from campaigning against rents into mortgages schemes.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend has no powers to prevent local authorities from campaigning on any question. Local authorities must, however, have regard to the code of recommended practice on local authority publicity, which says that publicity material should be

"objective, balanced, informative and accurate".

I understand that Basildon district council has passed a resolution which gives a guarded welcome to the scheme.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 24 October 1990

HOME DEPARTMENT

Electoral Registration

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has for increasing the level of electoral registration; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to his question on 18 October at column *867*.

Liquid Gold

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate the content and availability of a chemical sold under the title Liquid Gold with a view to its registration as a controlled substance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Liquid Gold is the brand name of a type of chemical product sometimes known as a "popper". The active ingredient of these products is amyl nitrite, one of a group of chemicals known as the alkyl nitrites. The misuse of alkyl nitrites was considered by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs in 1987. The council found at that time that, although the substances posed a limited health hazard when misused, they were not dependence-producing and did not give rise to any social problems sufficient to justify their control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. We are monitoring the situation closely to see if any change in this policy is necessary.

Special Constables

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which five counties have the most special constables proportionate to the population; which five counties have the fewest; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Proportionate to the population, the City of London, Devon and Cornwall, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire police forces have the most special constables; Greater Manchester, Gwent, Merseyside, the Metropolitan police and South Wales have the fewest.

County Police Forces

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve the management and efficiency of county police forces following the Audit Commission report.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Audit Commission is producing a series of reports on police issues. These are being considered as they appear. In the main, the recommendations will be followed up locally by police authorities and chief constables and in the context of audits carried out by district auditors. They may also be followed up in the course of inspections by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary.

Deportation

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women are currently held in British prisons awaiting deportation; what is the average time spent in prison; and on what grounds the women are being held.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: None. Three women are, however, held solely under Immigration Act powers in the immigration detention accommodation at Harmondsworth awaiting deportation. The length of their detention on 19 October averaged 69 days. They are detained on the ground that they would otherwise fail to maintain contact with the Department.

Police Complaints Authority

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any new appointment has been made to the Police Complaints Authority.

Mr. Waddington: Mr. Gerald C. Warner, who retired from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in October 1990, has accepted my invitation to serve as a member of the Police Complaints Authority. He will take up his post on 14 November 1990. The appointment is being made to fill a vacancy created by the departure of one of the members from the authority whose term of appointment has expired.

WALES

Valleys Initiative (Roads)

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many road schemes identified in the valleys initiative have been put out to tender; and whether he will list the successful applicants;

(2) what assessment he has made of the number of local jobs created by the road schemes identified in the valleys initiative; and which have been completed and which are under construction.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Of the county road schemes shown in "The Valleys": A Programme for the People" the A4067 Glais-Pontardawe improvement, Neath inner urban bypass, A467 Abertillery Brynmawr improvement and A4119 mid-Rhondda access schemes have been completed; the A473 Talbot Green bypass is under construction. Phase I of the A4060 Pentrebach-Dowlais trunk road scheme has also been completed. Tenders have been invited by the Welsh Office for phase II of the A4060 scheme and West Glamorgan county council has invited tenders for the A4067 Pontardawe-Ynysmeudwy scheme. It is too soon to know who the successful applicants might be. No assessment of jobs created has been undertaken.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received any reports from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution on the plans by Rechem International in Gwent to import toxic waste from Italy.

Mr. Grist: No. My right hon. Friend receives notification of hazardous waste imports in accordance with the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988.

Bus Journeys

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what correspondence he has received concerning *(a)* the journey time and *(b)* pricing policy for bus journeys between north-west and south Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: I have received no such correspondence. These are commercial matters for the bus company.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Mortgages

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has on the number or percentage of mortgages which are adjusted *(a)* monthly, *(b)* annually and *(c)* other categories.

Mr. Maples: Only partial information is available. Over 40 per cent. of building society mortgage payments are adjusted annually. No precise information is available on the extent of annual review schemes operated by banks and other mortgage lenders.

Community Charge

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish by valuation office and sub-office the comparable figures for objections to domestic rates and to community charge tribunals.

Mr. Key: I have been asked to reply.

In the table figures for objections to domestic rating proposals include those for both domestic and non-domestic properties. No separate figures are available for domestic properties alone.

Valuation and Community Charge Tribunal Offices	*Community charge appeals to 30 September 1990*	*Objections to rating proposals from 1 January 1989 to 31 December 1989*
Avon and Gloucestershire	94	4,853
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	166	6,647
Berkshire	43	1,779
Birmingham	4	5,532
Buckinghamshire	6	1,929
Cambridgeshire	27	1,457
Cheshire	107	3,997
Cleveland and Durham	300	4,187
Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire	29	3,379
Cumbria	73	1,249
Derbyshire	57	1,856
Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	168	4,823
Dorset and Somerset	153	2,833
Essex	201	3,956
Hampshire North and Wiltshire	62	2,757
Hampshire South and Isle of Wight	71	2,367
Hereford and Worcester	36	1,956
Humberside	677	3,183
Kent	188	3,715
Lancashire	169	3,966
Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire	81	4,699
Lincolnshire	90	1,257
Central London	11	18,073
London North East	54	6,707
London North West	27	7,453
London South East	30	5,085
London South West	64	5,460
Manchester North	102	5,379
Manchester South	18	7,227
Merseyside	133	5,776
Norfolk	81	1,203
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	248	8,802
North Yorkshire	195	2,185
Oxfordshire	60	3,971
South Yorkshire	57	4,041
Staffordshire and Shropshire	24	3,971
Suffolk	75	1,498
Surrey	48	3,711
East Sussex	56	3,312
West Sussex	21	2,096
West Midlands	26	5,318
West Yorkshire	98	4,433
Total	4,230	178,078

TRANSPORT

Port of London Authority

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement concerning the future organisation and functioning of the Port of London Authority, listing those activities, responsibilities and properties which will remain its public statutory responsibility and those which he envisages will cease to remain in public ownership.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend has decided to build on the benefits which have already appeared from the abolition of the dock labour scheme by bringing forward legislation as soon as he can to enable the Port of London Authority to sell the docks and commercial undertaking of Tilbury into private ownership. The Port of London Authority would retain its existing conservancy responsibilities. It is too early to be more precise about the eventual division of activities, responsibilities and properties.

Motorway Driving

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will initiate a campaign of "left is right" in relation to motorway driving, along the lines of the German "right is right" campaign.

Mr. Chope: The Department continues to emphasise the importance of keeping to the left except when overtaking and this will be reflected in future motorway and trunk road safety campaigns.

Road Accidents

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road accidents there were, both fatal and non-fatal, in each of the years 1984 to 1989 inclusive; and how many involved drivers aged under 24 years.

Mr. Chope: The Department collects only information on accidents involving personal injury.

A fatal accident is defined as one in which at least one person was fatally injured.

Accidents and accidents involving drivers aged under 24: 1984-89

	All accidents			*Accidents involving at least one driver or rider aged under 24 years*		
	Fatal	*Non-fatal*	*Total*	*Fatal*	*Non-fatal*	*Total*
1984	5,138	248,045	253,183	2,094	100,034	102,128
1985	4,768	240,877	245,645	1,915	93,929	95,844
1986	4,895	242,959	247,854	1,930	94,608	96,538
1987	4,694	234,369	239,063	1,816	89,798	91,614
1988	4,643	242,351	246,994	1,796	92,572	94,368
1989	4,907	255,852	260,759	1,831	96,769	98,600

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there has been an analysis carried out of the incidents of specific makes of vehicle in road accidents in relation to their general prevalence in the vehicle population as a whole; and if statistics exist for the seriousness of injuries sustained in those specific makes of vehicle.

Mr. Chope: The Department of Transport began collecting information about the registration marks of all vehicles involved in injury accidents from 1 January 1989. This will facilitate analyses of the type my hon. Friend seeks. I hope that a report will be published in the form of a statistical bulletin before the end of the year and a copy will be placed in the Library.

A45-B4029 Junction

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when work will commence on the grade separation at the junction of the A45 and the B4029.

Mr. Chope: Provided the scheme continues to show positive economic benefits, we hope to be in a position to publish orders in June 1991.

M40

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the full length of the M40 will be open to traffic in both directions.

Mr. Chope: There is still much to be done to complete the M40, with several major contracts still running. The construction industry, with the encouragement of the Government, has set itself exacting targets for the completion of this vital road and is determined to meet them. The project should, therefore, be completed earlier than expected and fully opened early next year.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what he anticipates will be the reduction of traffic, both north and south bound, on the M1 when the M40 is opened.

Mr. Chope: It is currently estimated that there will be a reduction of between 7,500 and 8,500 vehicles per day in each direction on the M1 between London and the M6 junction in the first year after the M40 extension is opened.

Road Planning

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list for the 18 schemes in England and Wales, identified by the National Audit Office as having a negative cost-benefit analysis, in its report of 27 October 1988, "Department of Transport, Scottish Development Department and Welsh Office: Road Planning" *(a)* location and name of each individual project, *(b)* length of road, *(c)* date of decision to build and date of completion, *(d)* capital cost, both estimated and outturn, *(e)* number of vehicles per day estimated, each way, *(f)* number of vehicles per day from recent census data and *(g)* the details of the negative economic appraisal or net present value.

Mr. Chope: The schemes concerned in England were as follows:

A40 Ross-on-Wye Relief Road
A483/A5 Oswestry Bypass and A5 Improvement (3 Schemes)
M65 Whitebirk-Hyndburn
A61 Chesterfield Relief Road North
A61 Chesterfield Relief Road South
A6 Chapel-en-le-Firth Bypass
A1079 Beverley Bypass
A63 South Docks Road (Easterly) Hull
A564 Blythe Bridge—Uttoxeter Bypass
A56 Accrington Bypass South
A66 Bowes Bypass

The detailed information requested will take some time to collect and I will write to the hon. Gentleman in due course. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is responsible for roads in Wales.

Bridges

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what requirements must be followed by central or local government before a bridge forming part of *(a)* a trunk road or *(b)* a local road may be turned into a toll bridge.

Mr. Chope: Authority to toll any part of a public highway must be obtained by Act of Parliament or by grant from the Crown.

Wheel Clamping

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what persons have authority to clamp vehicles allegedly parked illegally, apart from the police or their express agents.

Mr. Chope: There are no express powers that enable vehicles to be immobilised by wheelclamps other than those contained in sections 104 and 105 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, which refers to highways and other roads to which the public has access. In such cases, only the police have power to use clamps or authorise other persons to do so. The position on private land, including car parks, is not expressly provided for at law. Only the courts are in a position to interpret the law and thereby judge the legality of clamping vehicles on private land.

Mobile Canteens

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress his Department has made towards regulating mobile canteen trading in trunk road laybys under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

Mr. Chope: Paragraph 2 of schedule 4 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 enables district councils to regulate street trading. That schedule confers no powers on the Secretary of State. The application and operation of the schedule in any district is a matter for the relevant district council.

Continental Rail Travel

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he now expects to receive British Rail's proposals to acquire the trains needed for through passenger services from the north to the Continent; and whether he still expects these trains to be available in time for the services to start from the opening of the channel tunnel.

Mr. Freeman: I am now considering BR's proposals for trains to operate daytime services to the continent from north of London. There are discussions in progress between BR and its suppliers on the detailed technical specifications, the price and the timetable for deliveries. I still await BR's proposals for night services, which it is discussing with its continental partners.

Spanish Lorry Drivers

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the blockade by Spanish lorry drivers at the frontier with France; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* We received representations from the trade associations and from individual hauliers.

The strike by Spanish road hauliers who were protesting about Government-controlled haulage rates, fuel prices and working conditions ended on the evening of 19 October.

The French-Spanish border is now open and lorries are crossing in both directions.

HEALTH

Electric Hand Dryers

Mr. Dickens: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking in conjunction with the chief medical officer of health to ascertain the extent of any health dangers associated with the use of warm air electric hand dryers in public conveniences.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department of Health has supported research at Papworth hospital into airborne bacteria from hand drying with hot air electric hand dryers compared with paper towels. The results showed that hot air hand dryers produced no more aerosol and sometimes significantly fewer aerosolised bacteria than paper hand towels. These results have been confirmed by studies in Singapore.

Video Screens

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been undertaken into the debilitating effect of video screens on eyesight; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: I am advised that home television sets, larger commercial sets, amusement arcade game machines and visual display units are not known to have any debilitating effect on eyesight, although their prolonged use may draw attention to a pre-existing refractory problem. There are no known hazards from radiation from these screens in normal use.

Research into possible health effects from VDU use at work is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

National Health Service Trusts, Leeds

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many expressions of support he has received for the opt-out proposals of St. James and the Leeds general infirmary in Leeds; and from whom.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Neither St. James hospital nor Leeds general infirmary has put forward proposals to opt out of the National Health Service. However, both have applied to become National Health Service trusts and we have received a number of letters from members of the public supporting their applications. These comments have been passed to Yorkshire regional health authority which is responsible for arranging consultation on these applications. At the end of the consultation period, all comments made will be forwarded to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to consider alongside the applications before my right hon. and learned Friend decides whether to establish the units as National Health Service trusts.

Health Authority Accounts

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list in the *Official Report* those district health authorities which are audited by private accountancy practices and the name of each audit practice concerned.

Mr. Dorrell: From 1 October 1990, responsibility for the external audit of health authorities moved from the Department of Health to the Audit Commission. The commission has appointed auditors for each authority, who may be their own staff or private firms, and will be happy to supply details if required.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will outline the timetable to be used for units in the second wave of national health service trust applications, giving the date by which *(a)* units should apply and *(b)* decisions on suitability will be made at regional level; and if he will outline the consultation procedure which will be used by regions for second wave applicants.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A unit can apply at any time to be an NHS trust. The NHS management executive has produced an indicative timetable for units wishing to become trusts in April 1992. Under this timetable, units would submit applications in late April 1991. Regions may comment on proposals and on applications, but decisions on suitability are for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. Regions will determine the arrangements for consultation on applications subject to the requirements of the NHS and Community Care Act.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Truancy

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the rates of truancy *(a)* currently, *(b)* five years ago and *(c)* 10 years ago.

Mr. Fallon: This information is not collected centrally. My right hon. Friend is considering what scope there might be for reviewing the collection and presentation of such statistics at local level.

Telford CTC

Mr. Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many people applied for the post of head and deputy head of Telford city technology college; and whether he will give details of their present positions and previous career experience.

Mr. Eggar: There were 43 applications for the post of head at the Telford city technology college, and a total of 120 for the three posts of deputy head which were advertised. All of the applicants were suitably qualified being at present in posts at least equivalent to head of department. For the position of head, approximately one third of those applying were at present either deputy heads or heads.

School Closures

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the average time taken between the first submission to his Department of an application by a local education authority relating to a school closure or reorganisation and final decision by Ministers, for the latest available period, and for such of the years from and including 1980 for which information is available.

Mr. MacGregor: Data are available only for the average time taken between the publication—as opposed to submission to the Department—of statutory proposals under sections 12, 13 and 15 of the Education Act 1980 and a final decision by the Secretary of State in each of the calendar years from 1986 to 1989, as follows:

Year	*Average time taken (months)*
1986	7·30
1987	7·35
1988	7·97
1989	6·64

These figures exclude proposals which fell to be determined by a local education authority.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will update the table relating to school closures in the answer to the hon. Member for Blackburn, *Official Report*, 12 July, column *314*, to give the latest available information in respect of 1990.

Mr. MacGregor: The information is in the following updated table:

Calendar Year	*Number of proposals decided*	*Number of places to be taken out of use by proposals in column 2*	*Number of proposals in column 2 approved*	*Number of surplus places to be taken out of use as a result of approved proposals*
(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*	*(4)*	*(5)*
1983	366	104,174	330	85,606
1984	292	85,862	270	77,590
1985	205	101,097	185	88,218
1986	172	81,663	147	62,828
1987	159	55,116	134	45,326
1988	145	64,256	116	27,170
1989	140	59,527	114	41,831
[1]1990	107	28,558	94	28,043

[1] 1 January to 30 September 1990.

Assisted Places

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what records of the name, address and other details of pupils in receipt of awards made under the assisted places scheme, or their parents, are held by his Department or are otherwise available to it.

Mr. MacGregor: Details of individual pupils in receipt of awards under the assisted places scheme are not held by my Department. Such records as there are, including addresses of parents, and so on, are held by the schools which participate in the scheme.

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he has taken to ensure that records of personal details of award holders and their parents under the assisted places scheme are used only for the purposes for which the information was originally given.

Mr. MacGregor: The participating schools are wholly responsible for the records they keep of individual pupils in receipt of awards under the assisted places scheme.

ENERGY

Overseas Visits

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the overseas visits made by Ministers in his Department during July, and the nature of any agreements concluded.

Mr. Wakeham: I visited France on 16 and 17 July this year. My hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) visited Bonn on 6 July and attended the informal Energy Council in Rome on 16 July. No agreements were concluded.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Eastern Europe

59. **Mrs. Currie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much of the know-how funds for eastern European countries has now been spent or committed.

Mrs. Chalker: The know-how fund—KHF—for eastern Europe commenced in July 1989. A total of £2·3

million was spent on the KHF for Poland in 1989-90. In this financial year £15 million will be disbursed. The allocation of resources for next financial year and beyond has not yet been finalised.

Malaysian Minister for Energy

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth affairs whether representatives of the Overseas Development Administration met the Malaysian Minister for Energy, Mr. Samy Vellu, during his visit to London earlier in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: No representatives of the Overseas Development Administration met the Malaysian Minister for Energy during his visit to London earlier this year.

Aid and Trade Provision

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many applications for aid and trade provision funds to support contracts between developing countries and General Electric Company, Plessey, Northern Engineering Industries, BICC and Trafalgar House have been refused since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: Since aid and trade provision funds first became available in 1977, a total of 169 applications have been formally considered from the five companies named. These have led to 133 offers of aid; six applications are still under consideration. Of the 30 remaining cases, our records do not distinguish between those which were refused, and those which fell away for other reasons.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in how many aid and trade provision supported projects since 1979, the minimum test of developmental soundness was not carried out by the Overseas Development Administration.

Mrs. Chalker: Since 1979 all aid and trade provision supported projects have been assessed to provide a reasonable assurance of the soundness of the investment.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many internal, confidential, Overseas Development Administration evaluations of aid and trade provision projects contain references to excess profit margins, above departmental profit margin guidelines;

(2) how many published Overseas Development Administration evaluations of aid and trade provision projects contain references to excess profit margins, above departmental profit margin guidelines;

(3) in how many internal, confidential, Overseas Development Administration evaluations of aid and trade provision projects profit margins are considered;

(4) in how many published Overseas Development Administration evaluations of aid and trade provision projects profit margins are considered.

Mrs. Chalker: For negotiated contracts, value-for-money checks, which are undertaken before the provision of ATP funds is agreed, include consideration of anticipated profit margins. Two of the ATP projects that have been evaluated involved contracts awarded in 1978 and 1982 prior to the introduction of value-for-money checks; the evaluations considered anticipated profit margins in these cases and concluded that these were not excessive.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many internal, confidential Overseas Development Administration evaluations of aid and trade provision projects include references to corrupt practices;

(2) how many published Overseas Development Administration evaluations of aid and trade provision projects include references to corrupt practices.

Mrs. Chalker: In one evaluation report of an ATP-financed project there is a reference to allegations of undue influence in relation to the arrangements made for the consideration of competing bids by a tender committee. The contract was awarded to the firm making the lowest-priced bid.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will give details of Overseas Development Administration guidelines on profit margins used in evaluating applications for aid and trade provision funding;

(2) whether applicants for aid and trade provision grants must state the profit margins expected by British contractors when applying for funds;

(3) whether consideration is given to the level of profit margins when a contract between a British company and a developing country Government is considered for a grant from the aid and trade provision.

Mrs. Chalker: There are no general guidelines on profit margins for assessing applications by companies for ATP assistance made available to developing country Governments to help them finance overseas projects. Companies are not required to state their expected profit margin when applying for ATP assistance. In general, value for money in all aid-funded projects is sought by means of competitive tendering for contracts. In the case of a negotiated contract, in the absence of competition, we undertake a detailed value-for-money check of the proposed contract price, including an assessment of the anticipated profit margin.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether allocations of aid and trade provision funds include contributions towards commission payments.

Mrs. Chalker: An ATP grant helps finance a proportion of the total contract price for the purpose of providing only the eligible goods and services specified in the contract. Payments are made in accordance with the terms of the ATP aid agreement between Her Majesty's Government and the recipient Government and of the contract.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether consideration is given to the amount of commission payments when a contract between a British company and a developing country is considered for a grant from the aid and trade provision.

Mrs. Chalker: In the case of a negotiated contract between a British firm and a developing-country Government, where competitive bidding has not taken place, the detailed value-for-money check scrutinises all components of the contract price, including any agents' fees.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in the allocation of aid and trade provision funds to contracts between British companies and developing countries, consideration is given to contributions made by British companies to British political parties.

Mrs. Chalker: No.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date aid and trade provision funds were offered for the Pergau hydro-electric project in Malaysia; what is the value of the grant offered; what is the value of the total contract; and when the first instalment of aid is likely to be released.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply I gave her on 22 October, at column *25*.

Pergau Hydro-electric Project

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) which companies, other than Balfour Beatty, General Electric Company and Trafalgar House have sought contracts for the Pergau hydro-electric project in Malaysia;

(2) whether the Government have sought bids from companies other than Balfour Beatty, General Electric Company and Trafalgar House for the Pergau hydro-electric project in Malaysia;

(3) whether Balfour Beatty, General Electric Company and Trafalgar House tendered for the contract for the Pergau hydro-electric project in Malaysia.

Mrs. Chalker: The client for the Pergau hydro-electric project is Tengah Nasional Berhad—TNB—the Malaysian power utility; it is for TNB to decide from whom it should invite proposals. It would not therefore be appropriate for Her Majesty's Government to provide such information.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Spirits (Australia)

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken by Her Majesty's Government to persuade the Australian Government to amend their import duty/excise structure so as to put imported and locally produced spirits on an even footing.

Mr. Sainsbury: Following representations by United Kingdom industry, the Government have, through the European Community, alerted the Australian Government to their concern at certain practices that discriminate against imported spirits, and have sought to secure their elimination. We are addressing this issue in the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Accountancy Bodies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what matters he intends to discuss with the presidents of the accountancy bodies during his next meeting.

Mr. Redwood: I expect that, as usual when I meet leading representatives of the accountancy profession, we shall discuss matters of current mutual interest.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the current president of any of the bodies listed in section 389 of the Companies Act 1985 is or has been a partner in a firm criticised by his Department's inspectors.

Mr. Redwood: Thornton Baker, now part of Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants, was criticised in the inspectors' report on Gilgate Holdings Ltd. and others, which was published in 1981. Mr. M. Lickiss FCA, currently president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and Professor J. Percy CA, currently president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, are partners in Grant Thornton.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will be meeting the president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales in the near future.

Mr. Redwood: I met him on 8 October and have no plans for a further meeting in the near future.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any accountancy firms criticised by his Department's inspectors act as auditors to public bodies sponsored by his Department.

Mr. Redwood: Six reports, issued since June 1979 by inspectors appointed under the Companies Act have contained criticisms of accountants who act as auditors to public bodies sponsored by my Department. They are as follows:

Name of company	*Date of publication of report*	*Firm of accountants*
Gilgate Holdings Ltd. and others	8 September 1981	Thornton Baker and Co. (now Grant Thornton)
Norwest Holst Ltd.	23 June 1982	Price Waterhouse
Ramor Investments Ltd.	23 March 1983	Price Waterhouse
Milbury plc	27 October 1988	Arthur Young (now Ernst and Young)
Minet Holdings plc and WMD Underwriting Agencies	29 August 1989	Arthur Young (now Ernst and Young)
Alexander Howden Holdings Ltd.	29 August 1989	Arthur Young (now Ernst and Young) and Peat Marwick and Mitchell of Bermuda (now Peat Marwick McLintock)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any accountancy firms criticised by the joint disciplinary scheme act as auditors to public bodies sponsored by his Department.

Mr. Redwood: Three reports issued since 1980 by the committee of inquiry appointed under the joint disciplinary scheme, have contained criticisms of firms of accountants who act as auditors to public bodies sponsored by my Department. They are as follows:

Name of company	*Date of report*	*Firm of accountants*
Gilgate Holdings Ltd and others	22 December 1982	Thornton Baker (now Grant Thornton)
Orbit Holdings Ltd	28 March 1983	Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co (Peat Marwick Mclintock)
Ramor Investments Ltd	27 January 1986	Price Waterhouse

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to take any criminal or civil action against auditors criticised by the inspectors in the Minet Holdings report.

Mr. Redwood: No. A copy of the Minet report has been passed to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will invite the Office of Fair Trading to investigate the accountancy bodies' control of the accountancy press.

Mr. Redwood: I have no plans to do so. The hon. Member is of course free to put his concerns on this subject to the Director General of Fair Trading, who will look into any competition issues which arise.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to legislate to ban the call-off stocks accounting method used by companies.

Mr. Redwood: It would be helpful if the hon. Member would explain the nature of the problem he has in mind, as "call-off stocks" is an imprecise phrase.

Audit Policy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish the recommendations which his Department has made on the review of the Auditing Practices Committee's review of operations.

Mr. Redwood: The Government attach great importance to the role of the Auditing Practices Committee in setting auditing standards and in developing auditing guidance. I, therefore, welcome the decision of the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies to review the constitution, procedures and resources of the Auditing Practices Committee and look forward to the outcome.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the law firm criticised in the House of Fraser report acts as an adviser to any audit policy-making organisation.

Mr. Redwood: If the hon. Member is referring to the firm of solicitors which acted for the Fayed brothers, I understand that a partner in that firm is a non-voting member of the Auditing Practices Committee.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions he has taken any civil or criminal action against any auditing firm criticised in the Department of Trade and Industry inspectors' reports.

Mr. Redwood: None. Copies of critical reports are passed to the auditors' professional body for consideration.

Inspectors (Business Connections)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will provide a list showing the business connections of inspectors appointed by his Department since 1985.

Mr. Redwood: The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows:

1985

J. R. Sendall of the Department of Trade and Industry
H. B. H. Carlisle QC
M. G. Lickiss of Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants
N. Bohm, solicitor, of Norton Rose
A. Ridler of Pannell Kerr Forster, Chartered Accountants

1986

Sir Michael Kerry QC
K. S. Carmichael of Longcrofts, Chartered Accountants
D. T. Donaldson QC
I. G. Watt of KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock, Chartered Accountants
R. G. A. Youard, solicitor, of Slaughter and May
D. Anton of Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, Chartered Accountants

1987

M. McIver, solicitor, of Bird Semple Fyfe Ireland WS
D. J. McLeod of Ernst & Young, Chartered Accountants
H. Brooke QC
H. G. C. Aldous of Robson Rhodes, Chartered Accountants
J. F. Eden, solicitor, of Bevan Ashford
C. H. C. Chudley of Bromhead & Co., Chartered Accountants

1988

L. D. Ziman of Nabarro Nathanson, Solicitors
W. M. Hoffman of Baker Tilly, Chartered Accountants
D. A. Evans QC
B. L. Worth of Clark Whitehill, Chartered Accountants
Miss M. H. Arden QC
G. N. Lane of Chantrey Vallacott, Chartered Accountants
G. W. Staple of Clifford Chance, Solicitors
T. G. J. Tress of Hays Allen, Chartered Accountants
P. L. Heslop QC
R. P. G. Lewis of Kidsons Impey, Chartered Accountants
M. Crystal QC
D. L. Spence of Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants

1989

E. J. Lawson QC
D. Anton of Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, Chartered Accountants
D. A. Evans QC
B. L. Worth of Clark Whitehill, Chartered Accountants
Miss H. Heilbron QC
M. D. Boohan of Grant Thornton, Chartered Accountants
G. S. Moss QC
J. R. Venning of Robson Rhodes, Chartered Accountants
R. M. Owen QC
P. D. Powell of Moore Stephens, Chartered Accountants

1990

C. J. Brougham QC
R. T. Turner of Neville Russell, Chartered Accountants
E. W. Hamilton QC
J. A. Scott of BDO Binder Hamlyn, Chartered Accountants
C. P. F. Rimer QC
J. White of KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock, Chartered Accountants

Company Legislation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to require companies to show market value of their stocks.

Mr. Redwood: No. There is already a similar legislative requirement. Paragraph 27 of schedule 4 to the Companies Act 1985 requires companies to disclose in their annual accounts the amount of any material difference between the amount at which stock is stated in the balance sheet and its replacement cost, or its most recent actual purchase price if more appropriate.

Vietnam

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the rules regarding trade with Vietnam were last reviewed by the Co-ordinating Committee on Multilateral Exports; and when they will next be reviewed.

Mr. Sainsbury: Vietnam is one of the proscribed destinations listed in schedule 2 to the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1989, as amended. Equipment and technology, the export of which is controlled to the proscribed destinations, is subject to a regular rolling review undertaken with our COCOM partners, with one quarter of the items being examined each year. All the industrial dual-use items on the control list are under review at the present time as part of a special exercise being undertaken by COCOM partners to reduce controls to a core list of the most strategically sensitive items.

British Telecom (Vietnam)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations Her Majesty's Government made to the Co-ordinating Committee on Multilateral Exports prior to the consultative committee decision to refuse an export licence to British Telecom for work in Vietnam.

Mr. Sainsbury: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on individual licensing decisions, or on consultations with our partners in COCOM on such matters.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what basis the Co-ordinating Committee on Multilateral Exports refused an export licence for a British Telecom contract in Vietnam.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on individual licensing decisions, or on consultations with our partners in COCOM on such matters.

Aid and Trade Funds

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many contracts supported by aid and trade provision funds, since 1979, were open to tender; and how many companies were nominated.

Mr. Sainsbury: Tendering arrangements are the responsibility of the overseas Government concerned. Of the 207 projects listed in the answer the Minister for Overseas Development gave to the hon. Lady on 11 July 1990, *Official Report*, columns *224-30*, a total of 42 are classified in our records as negotiated contracts and the remainder as competitive contracts.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement indicating the precise policy which is being pursued by those representing the United Kingdom in discussions affecting the future of the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The policy pursued by the EC and the UK in discussions on the future of the multi-fibre arrangement continues to be one of seeking to phase out the MFA over a transitional period after the present extension expires next year in conjunction with a general strengthening of GATT rules and disciplines.

Strategic Mineral Stockpile

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans any further disposals from the strategic mineral stockpile.

Mr. Lilley: Yes. It has been decided to sell the contents of the stockpile over a two to three-year period. Disposals will take place in a manner which seeks to avoid undue disruption of the market.

British Aerospace

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what export licence requests have been made by British Aerospace in regard to plans to set up any joint ventures with Brazil.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on individual licence applications.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department has received any information from Her Majesty's customs authorities in Liverpool in regard to the investigation into the sale to Iraq in 1988 of monitoring equipment by Microwave Modules of Aintree Ltd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* It would be inappropriate to comment on export control matters under investigation by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

Al Yamamah Agreement

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, pursuant to the reply given to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central on 19 July, *Official Report*, column *677*, he will give dates of any meetings about the Al Yamamah contract which officials of his Department or the Export Credits Guarantee Department were involved in during June and July 1988.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* I have nothing to add to the reply given on 19 July by my hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood).

Retail Sector

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many company liquidations there were in each of the years 1979 to 1989, and in 1990 to date; how many of these were in the retail sector of business; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The available figures are in the tables. The industry analysis of insolvencies in England and Wales for the first half of 1990 is expected to be available early in November.

Insolvencies—England and Wales
Companies

	Compulsory liquidations	*Creditors' voluntary liquidations*	*Total*	*Retailing*
1979	2,064	2,473	4,537	501
1980	2,935	3,955	6,890	675
1981	2,771	5,825	8,596	928
1982	3,745	8,322	12,067	1,385
1983	4,807	8,599	13,406	2,214
1984	5,260	8,461	13,721	2,096
1985	5,761	9,137	14,898	2,159
1986	5,204	9,201	14,405	1,970
1987	4,116	7,323	11,439	1,436
1988	3,667	5,760	9,427	1,086
1989	4,020	6,436	10,456	1,039
1990 1st half	2,553	4,130	6,683	n/a

Insolvencies—Scotland Companies

	Compulsory Liquidations	*Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations*	*Total*	*Retailing*
1979	56	182	238	40
1980	135	244	379	54
1981	158	280	438	50
1982	177	326	503	51
1983	263	258	521	97
1984	272	251	523	87
1985	306	231	537	99
1986	299	212	511	96
1987	253	203	456	92
1988	228	168	396	78
1989	229	199	428	82
1990 1st half	116	101	217	26

Insolvencies—Northern Ireland companies

	Compulsory liquidations	*Creditors' voluntary liquidations*	*Total*	*Retailing*
1979	7	27	34	n/a
1980	8	66	74	n/a
1981	16	83	99	n/a
1982	10	111	121	n/a
1983	15	96	111	n/a
1984	19	64	83	n/a
1985	36	75	111	n/a
1986	56	108	164	n/a
1987	59	91	150	n/a
1988	60	63	123	n/a
1989	69	55	124	n/a
[1]1990	13	32	45	n/a

[1] January to May.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individuals were declared bankrupt in each of the years 1979 to 1989, and in 1990 to date; how many of these were engaged in the retail sector of business; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The available figures are in the tables. The industry analysis of bankruptcies in England and Wales for the first half of 1990 is expected to be available early in November.

Insolvencies—England and Wales
Individuals

	Bankruptcy orders	*Individual voluntary arrangements*	*Deeds of arrangement*	*Total*	*Retailing*
1979	3,456	—	44	3,500	472
1980	3,986	—	52	4,038	578
1981	5,075	—	76	5,151	790
1982	5,654	—	46	5,700	874
1983	6,981	—	51	7,032	1,058
1984	8,178	—	51	8,229	1,512
1985	6,730	—	48	6,778	1,288
1986	7,093	—	62	7,155	1,348
1987	6,994	404	29	7,427	1,226
1988	7,717	779	11	8,507	1,069
1989	8,138	1,224	3	9,365	1,023
1990 (1st half)	5,318	850	2	6,170	n/a

Insolvencies—Scotland
Individuals

	Sequestration
1979	106
1980	150
1981	181
1982	213
1983	282
1984	292
1985	298
1986	437
1987	808
1988	1,401
1989	2,301
1990	
1st half	1,860

Insolvencies—Northern Ireland
Individuals

	Orders made
1979	37
1980	41
1981	70
1982	78
1983	103
1984	114
1985	150
1986	193
1987	134
1988	164
1989	237
1990	
1st half	122

Pelagic Exports

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure pelagic exports are maintained following the ending of exports credit guarantees for trade with Soviet Klondykers.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* ECGD cover has not been withdrawn for pelagic exports to the Soviet Union.

European Single Market

60. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the President of the European Commission to discuss the consequences of the single market for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend has no plans at present to meet the President of the European Commission.

Malaysian Minister for Energy

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether representatives of his Department met the Malaysian Minister for Energy, Mr. Samy Vellu, during his visit to London earlier in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Senior officials from my Department met the Malaysian Minister of Energy in London during his visit in April and May this year to discuss progress on a number of power projects in peninsular Malaysia.

Single Market

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps remain to complete the single market.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department keeps a checklist of progress on the Commission's White Paper, which is updated every two months. A copy is deposited in the Library of the House. The latest copy reveals that 95 of the 282 single market measures have not yet been agreed.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Animals and Birds (Export)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps the Government have taken to review the policy of exporting live animals and birds; and whether it remains Government policy to allow continued export under the existing regulations unchanged.

Mr. Maclean: The exercise of our statutory duties is constantly under review in the light of prevailing circumstances. It is not known to what extent existing controls will be affected by forthcoming negotiations on Commission proposals for a Community regulation on the protection of animals during transport.

Milk Powder

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what representations he has made to Jordan about the sales of milk powder of United Kingdom origin; whether Jordan has accepted that there is no risk to human health from United Kingdom milk products; what are the prospects for sales of milk powder in Jordan; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has made to Turkey about sales of milk powder of United Kingdom origin; whether Turkey has accepted that there is no risk to human health from United Kingdom milk products; what are the prospects for sales of milk powder in Turkey; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what representations he has made to Egypt about sales of milk powder of United Kingdom origin; whether Egypt has accepted that there is no risk to human health from United Kingdom milk products; what are the prospects for sales of milk powder in Egypt; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what representations he has made to Tunisia about sales of milk powder of United Kingdom origin; whether Tunisia has accepted that there is no risk to human health from United Kingdom milk products; what are the prospects for sales of milk powder in Tunisia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: We have been in frequent contact with all those countries that have imposed restrictions on our exports of cattle and cattle products including milk. We have also been working closely with the Commission of the European Communities and the Organisation International des Epizooties—OIE—to reassure countries that there is no public or animal health risk in importing cattle products including milk powder from the United Kingdom.

At the moment Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Turkey are maintaining restrictions on our milk products despite the clear statements from the Commission and the OIE that milk products present no risk from BSE. We shall continue to make every effort to have these unwarranted restrictions lifted in order that United Kingdom exporters may resume their trade in the middle eastern countries.

Tobacco

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether the United Kingdom Government intend to support in the European Council the transfer of an additional £200 million European currency units to the tobacco sector of the EAGGF;

(2) whether the United Kingdom Government supported the 1989 Council decision to transfer an additional £165 million European currency units to the tobacco sector of the EAGGF.

Mr. Curry: In 1989 the costs of the tobacco regime were higher than originally estimated partly because of agrimonetary movements but mainly because production levels and intervention stocks were greater than forecast when the budget was fixed in 1988. As the expenditure was legitimately incurred within the rules for that sector, the budgetary authority—the Council and the European Parliament—agreed to regularise the situation in this and other sectors by transferring funds from sectors which had underspent. Overall, the 1989 FEOGA budget was underspent, after these adjustments, by some 2·4 billion ecu. Similar transfers from underspending sectors within the 1990 FEOGA budget to cover legitimate expenditure in other sectors, including tobacco, have recently been agreed.

The United Kingdom has long been critical of the EC tobacco regime and the expenditure which it incurs and has consistently pressed for improvements. The Commission is currently conducting a review of the regime and we shall be arguing for substantive change.

DEFENCE

Polish Resettlement Act 1947

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his replies of 11 May, *Official Report*, column *212*, and 9 July, column *38*, when he now expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Isle of Wight of 3 April, on the Polish Resettlement Act 1947.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces has today written to my hon. Friend.

British Forces (Gulf)

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence under whose ultimate control are the British forces in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: British forces in the Gulf will remain at all times under ultimate United Kingdom command.

SCOTLAND

Greater Glasgow Health Board (Contracts)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the list of private contractors approved by Greater Glasgow health board for the purpose of competitive tendering.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The board has no formal list of approved contractors. Each contract involves an open invitation to companies to indicate expressions of interest. A technical and financial evaluation is carried out on those companies which respond to determine whether they shall be invited to tender.

Correspondence

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will ensure that the director of the Scottish Information Office replies without further delay to the letters of 18 December 1989 and 8 June 1990 from the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden.

Mr. Rifkind: I am sorry that the hon. Member has not had a reply. My private secretary has written to him today.

Local Government Finance

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people have been exempted from paying the poll tax by way of each category of exemption in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole.

Mr. Lang: Information held by community charge registration officers on people who are exempt from the personal community charge is not comprehensive. The figures, which relate to 1 July 1990 and are available only for local authority areas, are as follows:

Known Exemptions from Community Charge

	Inverclyde	*Strathclyde*	*Scotland*
Persons aged 18 or over in receipt of Child Benefit	248	4,750	7,776
Prisoners	276	5,306	6,425
Foreign armed forces	39	1,737	3,138
Dependants of foreign armed forces	5	247	247
Persons aged 18 or over who are severely mentally handicapped	330	7,609	14,794
Other	898	15,458	21,139
Total	1,796	35,107	53,519

Note: "Other' includes patients in residential homes, nursing homes or hospitals, members of religious communities, residents in Crown property, persons of no fixed abode etc.

Prisoners

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current cost per inmate per week in each of Her Majesty's prisons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The latest available figures, which are for 1989-90, are set out in the table.

Establishment	*Approximate gross weekly cost per inmate* £
Aberdeen	350
Barlinnie	264
Castle Huntly	281
Cornton Vale	611
Dumfries	398
Dungavel	314
Edinburgh	310
Friarton	376
Glenochil	392
Greenock	405
Inverness	430
Longriggend	292
Low Moss	184
Noranside	305
Penninghame	278
Perth	336
Peterhead	1,008
Polmont	289
Shotts	318

The figures include the transfer value of supplies drawn by establishments from central stores and prison industries as well as the direct revenue costs of each establishment.

Earnings Statistics

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will publish separate statistics for average earnings for the Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and the Highlands and Islands;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* statistics for average earnings in the Scottish Borders, using samples taken in the Borders.

Mr. Rifkind: The only information on average earnings for these areas comes from the new earnings survey, which is a sample survey based on 1 per cent. of all employees in PAYE schemes in Great Britain.

The latest available information, from the 1989 new earnings survey, is given in the following table. It is not possible to provide average earnings estimates for the Borders region, nor for women in Dumfries and Galloway and the Highlands and Islands, because the new earnings survey sample in these areas does not give sufficiently reliable estimates.

Average gross weekly earnings in April 1989

	Males £	*Females* £	*Males and females* £
Borders	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dumfries and Galloway	232·0	n/a	207·6
Highlands and Islands	246·4	n/a	219·7

Notes:
n/a—Not available.
Earnings of full time employees on adult rates, not affected by absence.

A7

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be able to announce road improvement schemes to be carried out on the A7 trunk road south of Hawick; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department together with Borders and Dumfries and Galloway regional councils are preparing a route action plan to identify and bring forward a series of improvement schemes on the A7 in Hawick and on the Scottish section of the A7 trunk road to the south.

The final report on a route strategy by the regional councils is due to be submitted in December 1992. Interim reports have been requested during 1991 on an initial series of road safety and overtaking opportunity schemes. Once these reports are available and have been studied by the Department, I will then be in a position to decide which schemes are to be constructed.

Storm Damage Payments

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland which local authorities will benefit from the Bellwin scheme invoked after the severe storms in February of the current year; and by how much.

Mr. Lang: Claims for special financial assistance under the Bellwin scheme have now been assessed and I can announce that £62,000 in grant will be made available to three authorities which suffered an undue financial burden in responding to the storms and floods of February under the terms of the scheme which I announced on 8 February.

The details of grant are:

	£
Highland Regional Council	30,761
Inverness District Council	13,542
Perth and Kinross District Council	18,132
	62,435

Payments will be issued to these authorities as soon as possible.

Giant Hogweed

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what money has been allocated in the past five years by his Department to research into the spread, control and eradication of heracleum mantegazzianum;

(2) what money has been allocated in the past five years by his Department into educating the public of the dangers of contact with heracleum mantegazzianum.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* I understand that the basic facts about the plant and methods for controlling it are well understood without further research. In February 1989 Scottish agricultural colleges published a leaflet "Giant Hogweed: The Problem and its Control" which gives clear advice on the biology of the plant, its dangers and methods of control. If particular local authorities consider that the scale of the problem in their area justifies action they have statutory powers available to them to undertake this.

The plant is listed in part II of schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as a plant that must not be deliberately established in the wild. Under section 25 of the Act local authorities are required to publicise that fact.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Romania

2. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit Romania to discuss economic co-operation.

Mr. Waldegrave: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs plan to visit Romania at present. However, I hope that Ministers will be able to discuss economic matters with the Romanian Deputy Prime Minister in the United Kingdom next month. My right hon. Friend discussed Romania's troubled progress towards democracy with his Romanian counterpart in New York on 2 October.

52. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Foreign Affairs Council is next due to meet to review the postponement of trade and economic and commercial co-operation agreements with Romania; and what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards such agreements being dependent upon progress towards democratic reforms.

Mr. Waldegrave: The EC's trade and co-operation agreement with Romania was signed in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 October. The Council had earlier agreed that Romania's progress towards political and economic reform justified this positive step. We strongly support the Community's policy of treating individual countries according to their progress and commitment towards political and economic reform. The EC has, therefore, yet to decide to extend economic aid to Romania.

EC-USA Relations

3. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met with the United States Secretary of State to discuss relations between the European Community countries and the United States of America.

Mr. Hurd: I have no firm plans for my next visit to the United States. I am in frequent touch with Mr. Baker and last met him in New York on 2 October during the meeting of CSCE Ministers.

Cambodia

6. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit Cambodia to discuss progress towards peace in that country.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no plans to visit Cambodia, but we regularly discuss developments there with our European colleagues and others among our friends and partners.

38. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had in respect of Her Majesty's Government's policy towards Cambodia; and if any change in that policy is projected.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Our policy on Cambodia is kept under constant review. We remain committed to helping to create conditions in which the Cambodian people can elect a Government of their choice, free from the fear of Khmer Rouge atrocities, civil war and foreign invasion.

53. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with representatives of other permanent member countries on the United Nations Security Council, regarding the future of Cambodia.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs discusses Cambodia regularly with his colleagues among the permanent members of the UN Security Council and did so most recently during his visit to the UN General Assembly from 24 to 28 September.

Germany

17. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he plans to meet the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany to discuss the Federal Republic's membership of NATO.

21. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to visit the Federal Republic of Germany to discuss Germany's membership of NATO.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend expects to meet Herr Genscher in the next few days. It has been a key objective of our policy this year that a united Germany should remain a full member of NATO. We achieved this in the agreement signed in Moscow last month. The outcome is a tribute to Chancellor Kohl and his colleagues in the German Government.

43. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had recently with representatives of the German Governments about political reunification; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress made during discussions in the most recent two-plus-four meetings on German unification.

Mr. Garel-Jones: On 12 September in Moscow, together with his German, French, American and Russian colleagues, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs signed the treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany. On 1 October in New York, they signed a declaration suspending four-power rights and responsibilities with effect from German unification on 3 October.

We welcome the unification of Germany in peace and freedom. We will be working with the united Germany as a friend, ally and partner for the peace and prosperity of Europe and the wider world.

China

20. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit China to discuss Anglo-Chinese relations.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend has no plans to visit China at present. He had a useful discussion with the Chinese Foreign Minister at the United Nations General Assembly.

Kenya

22. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the protection of civil rights in Kenya.

Mr. Waldegrave: Kenya's record in this respect has been generally good since independence. The Kenyan Government are aware of the importance we attach to their maintaining this record.

Albania

23. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held with his European Community counterparts about the situation in Albania.

Mr. Waldegrave: The situation in Albania is discussed regularly under European political co-operation.

Political Co-operation

24. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet his counterparts in European Economic Community countries to discuss political co-operation.

49. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to attend a meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers to discuss closer political co-operation.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The United Kingdom strongly supports the developments of closer political co-operation among our Community partners. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will be meeting his EC colleagues in Brussels on 12 November when he will discuss various political co-operation issues. There is likely to be a discussion of political co-operation at the special European Council in Rome on 27 October, which will be attended by my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Baltic Republics

25. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the Baltic republics; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have received a number of representations about the Baltic republics from individuals and interested groups in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Our views on this question are clearly on record.

India

26. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding Britain's relations with India.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Our relations with India are excellent. We continue to look for ways of developing them still further.

35. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet representatives at Amnesty International to discuss human rights violations in India.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no plans to discuss this particular subject with Amnesty International, but we are in regular contact with it to discuss human rights in general.

Mauritius

27. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Mauritius on the future of Ilois persons displaced from the British Indian Ocean territory resident in Mauritius.

Mr. Waldegrave: None. Those concerned were given considerable financial assistance to resettle and their future now lies in Mauritius.

Korea

28. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to expedite the peaceful reunification of Korea.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We shall continue our consistent support for efforts to achieve the peaceful reunification of Korea. We welcome the recent high-level meetings between North and South Korea as a contribution to this process.

Economic and Monetary Union

29. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to attend a meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers to discuss economic and monetary union.

Mr. Garel-Jones: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will accompany my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister when she attends the special meeting of the European Council in Rome on 27 and 28 October, at which, among other topics, economic and monetary union is likely to be discussed.

EC Intergovernmental Conference

30. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the President of the European Commission to discuss the agenda of the next intergovernmental conference.

Mr. Garel-Jones: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs expects to meet Mr. Delors, President of the European Commission, at the special European Council in Rome on 27 and 28 October which will discuss the preparations for the intergovernmental conference on political union.

Iraq

31. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to meet the Foreign Minister of Iraq to discuss the report of Amnesty International on human rights in that country.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has no plans to meet the Iraqi Foreign Minister. Amnesty International's report further documents the terrible crimes against human rights perpetrated by the Iraqis in Kuwait as well as in their own country.

Cyprus

32. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest position on international co-operation on the future of Cyprus.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The United Nations Secretary-General's mission of good offices continues. The Secretary-General's special representative is currently pursuing a round of separate talks with representatives of the two communities with a view to the resumption of direct talks. We continue to give our active support to the Secretary-General's initiative.

Foreign Affairs Council

33. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Community have taken place since 1 August; and if he will make a statement concerning their contents and conclusions.

Mr. Hurd: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) on 15 October about the Foreign Affairs Council on 17 September.

The Foreign Affairs Council also met in Luxembourg on 22 October. I represented the United Kingdom. Ministers discussed a report prepared by their special representatives on preparations for the intergovernmental conference on institutional reform. They also discussed a report by the chairman of the ECOFIN Council on preparations for the IGC on economic and monetary union. They agreed that both reports should be submitted to the informal European Council in Rome on 27 and 28 October.

Ministers had a preliminary discussion of the economic problems facing the countries of eastern and central Europe and the Soviet Union. The Council agreed draft declarations on relations between the European Community and the United States, and the European Community and Canada. The presidency will finalise the texts with the Americans and Canadians, in preparation for endorsement by the informal European Council on 27 and 28 October and signature at the CSCE summit in November.

Ministers agreed in principle the Commission's proposals for the integration of the former GDR into the Community. The House debated this in full on 19 October. The Council's formal position will be adopted after examination of the European Parliament's opinion on the Commission's proposals.

The Council had a further discussion of the Community's relations with Turkey. It also considered a Commission report on the opening round of negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Gulf Co-operation Council. The issues were referred to the Council of Permanent Representatives for further study. The Council discussed progress in the negotiations between the Community and the EFTA countries for the creation of a European economic area. I underlined the importance we attached to early progress in all areas of the negotiation.

The Council approved an amendment to the Commission's regulation imposing surveillance licensing on imports of footwear from Korea and Taiwan.

Ministers discussed the Community's offer on agriculture in the GATT Uruguay round. The issue will

now go to a further meeting of the Agriculture Council, with Trade Ministers attending, on 26 October. I stressed the importance of early agreement between the Community member states if the EC wished to be taken seriously during the final stages of the Uruguay round negotiations.

Ministers also discussed EC relations with third countries, including Syria, China, Iran, Vietnam and South Africa. The trade and co-operation agreement between the EC and Romania was signed by the Romanian Prime Minister, the Commission and by the presidency, on behalf of the Twelve.

Hong Kong

34. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in discussions with the Chinese Government on the adoption of a number of confidence-building measures in respect to the future of Hong Kong.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: There is a continuing dialogue with the Chinese Government on the future of Hong Kong. The Sino-British joint liaison group met in London on 25 to 28 September. The Chinese Government have reiterated their commitment to the joint declaration and its implementation.

Middle East

36. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Government of Israel to discuss the middle east peace process.

41. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet the Foreign Minister of Israel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met the Israeli Foreign Minister on 16 October. They had a thorough discussion of middle east issues. He has no firm plans to meet Mr. Levy again. But they agreed to stay in closer contact in future.

39. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent action he has taken towards assisting progress in the middle east peace process.

51. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on the peace process in the middle east.

55. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Britain's contribution to finding a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict acceptable to the international community.

58. **Sir Dennis Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards peace in the middle east.

Mr. Waldegrave: The need for a solution to the Palestinian problem is more pressing than ever. Once the Gulf crisis is over, when conditions may be more conducive, we shall return to the peace process with renewed vigour. We are in close touch with the Americans and our friends in the region about possible ways ahead. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' recent visit to the middle east gave him a chance to talk to senior Egyptians and Israelis directly. We regret that a Palestinian boycott prevented his talking to leaders in the occupied territories also.

South Africa

37. **Sir David Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what help Her Majesty's Government are currently giving to political organisations in South Africa.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) on 13 June 1990, at column *255*. In this financial year we have committed over £40,000 under this scheme.

45. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the furtherance of diplomatic relations with South Africa.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have consistently maintained regular contact with the South African authorities on a wide range of issues, both here and via Her Majesty's ambassador. We have opposed the diplomatic isolation of South Africa and welcome the increasing number of countries which share our view.

NATO

40. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last had meetings with his NATO partners to discuss further developments of the organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We last discussed NATO's future at the London summit in July. We agreed that NATO should change, and set in hand a review of strategy and structure. We also agreed that NATO should develop closer contacts with the Soviet Union and east European countries, in keeping with the new security situation in Europe.

Soviet Union

42. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of the European Community and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development studies of the needs of the Soviet Union for economic and development aid.

Mr. Garel-Jones: These studies are continuing. The European Commission should present an interim report to the Rome European Council on 27 and 28 October. The results of the IMF study, in which the OECD is participating, are expected to be available in December.

Poland

44. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to pay an official visit to Poland.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had a useful visit to Poland from 29 April to 2 May 1990. He has no plans to visit Poland again at present. The Polish Foreign Minister plans to pay an official visit to Britain on 9 and 10 January 1991.

EC Policies

46. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further proposals he intends to place before his European Community partners for the development of Community policies.

Mr. Garel-Jones: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given by my hon. Friend the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on 9 May, 13 June and 11 July. We shall continue to play a constructive role in Community discussions.

Adib Afnan

47. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has raised with the Jordanian authorities the case of the untried political detainee Adib Afnan.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Jordanian authorities have informed our embassy that Adib Afnan is no longer in detention.

Treaty of Rome

48. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with Chancellor Kohl and other leaders of European Community states regarding revisions of the treaty of Rome leading to a transfer of power from the national legislatures to the institutions of the European Community.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The last discussion between Community Heads of Government on institutional reform was at the Dublin European Council on 25 and 26 June. They agreed to call an intergovernmental conference beginning in December, to examine the possibility of treaty changes. Any revision of the treaty will have to be ratified by this House before it can enter into force.

Israel

50. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement on Anglo-Israeli relations.

Mr. Waldegrave: Anglo-Israeli relations are correct and friendly; profound differences remain between us on policy towards the occupied territories.

Commonwealth

54. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Commonwealth Heads of Government will next meet to review the Commonwealth.

Mr. Waldegrave: Firm dates for the first meeting of the high-level appraisal group of 10 Heads of Government have not yet been agreed, but it is envisaged that it will take place early next year.

West Berlin

56. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the West German Government concerning the future of land and facilities currently under British control in west Berlin.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The future of facilities currently used by the three western allies in Berlin was covered in an exchange of notes concluded with the Federal Republic of Germany on 25 September. Some facilities will continue to be required. Others will be returned to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Bulgaria

57. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to include Bulgaria in the know-how fund for emerging eastern European democracies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have made it clear that Bulgaria will become eligible for support from the know-how fund for eastern Europe once the Bulgarian authorities have shown that they are firmly committed to political and economic reform. We are, therefore, observing with close attention the policies of the new Bulgarian Government.

United Nations

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters he plans to raise at the next meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs addressed the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September 1990, and urged the organisation to redouble its efforts to uphold the rule of law in international relations, with special reference to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Copies of his speech are available in the Library of the House.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Fund

116. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what percentage of income support claimants aged under 60 years are repaying social fund loans by deductions from their benefit payments in the London borough of Newham.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The table shows the number of social fund loans being recovered from income support recipients aged under 60 at the end of August 1990 and the percentage of recipients in that age group that the figure represents.

	Number of recoveries	*Percentage of IS recipients under 60*
Plaistow	674	7·5
Woodgrange Park	1,315	9·9
Canning Town	660	18·2

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will now review his powers on determining the levels of social fund payments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: We have no plans to do so.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many social fund loan applications were refused in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole in the financial year 1989-90 and in the present year due to perceived inability to pay; how many of those suffering such a refusal were offered a community care grant instead; and what financial advice was offered to those denied, in the first instance, a loan and a grant;

(2) what percentage of applications for community care grants were refused in 1988-89, 1989-90 and in the first six months of 1990 in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole; and, of those so refused, what proportion were offered the alternative of a loan.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what percentage of households claiming income support are repaying social fund loans by deductions from their benefit payments.

Mr. Scott: At the end of September 1990 a total of 426,218 social fund loans were being recovered from income support recipients, representing 14·8 per cent. of the total number of income support recipients.

Disability Employment Credit

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what will be the maximum weekly payment of disability employment credit;

(2) what will be the percentage taper for withdrawal of disability employment credit;

(3) what is his estimate of the number of disabled people who will qualify for disability employment credit if *(a)* there is no means test of capital and *(b)* there is a means test with a £16,000 capital cut-off;

(4) at what income level the payment of disability employment credit will be withdrawn.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) when he expects to publish his Department's consultation document on the disability employment credit; and what will be the length of time for consultation;

(2) what will be the minimum number of hours workable for the disability employment credit;

(3) if he will make it his policy not to means-test a claimant's capital when assessing eligibility for the disability employment credit;

(4) whether *(a)* the capital and *(b)* the income of a claimant's partner will be taken into account when assessing eligibility for the disability employment credit;

(5) if he will make it his policy to disregard compensation and similar payments for injury when assessing capital for disability employment credit.

Mr. Scott: We are still working up the details of the disability employment credit scheme, and hope to be in a position to issue our more detailed proposals shortly.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what representations he has received regarding no means-testing of capital when assessing eligibility for disability employment credit.

Mr. Scott: A number of the responses we have received to "The Way Ahead" have raised this issue.

Disability Benefit

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will now publish the age rules he proposes for the new disability benefit.

Mr. Scott: These will be published in due course.

Claimants of No Fixed Abode

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the total number of claimants of no fixed abode for England, and for each English region, and for the following Department of Social Security areas: Bath, Bristol (Central), Bristol (South), Bristol (East), Bristol (Morfield) and Bristol (West), for the years *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* 1989.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information is unavailable and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Income Support

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what percentage of income support claimants under 60 years of age are repaying arrears of their poll tax by way of deductions from their benefit payments in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information on the number of income support claimants under age 60 with a deduction to clear their community charge arrears is not available. The total number of deductions in Greenock and Port Glasgow, Strathclyde and Scotland as a whole at 31 August 1990 is as follows:

	Number
Greenock	121
Port Glasgow	32
Strathclyde[1]	6,342
Scotland	9,081

[1]The figure for Strathclyde includes Port Glasgow and Greenock.

Attendance and Severe Disablement Allowances

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish his best estimates of the number of people classified as mentally ill who were in receipt of *(a)* attendance allowance and *(b)* severe disablement allowance in 1989-90.

Mr. Scott: The information is not available in the form requested. We shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what efforts are made by his Department to monitor and review the medical assessments used for the purposes of establishing eligibility for attendance allowance and severe disablement allowance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The work of examining medical practitioners—EMPS—who examine the claimants for attendance allowance—AA—is monitored continuously throughout the regions by regional office medical officers—ROMOs

—who can initiate further training of an EMP if required. The work of delegated medical practitioners—DMPs—who decide the entitlement to AA based on the medical evidence, is monitored within the Department by senior medical officers and also, on a regular basis, by the independent Attendance Allowance Board.

Severe disability allowance—SDA—assessments are made by independent adjudicating medical authorities—AMAs. These assessments are subject to random monitoring by ROMOs. They do not have the power to alter the assessments of the AMAs. They can, however, recommend reference of a case to the medical appeal tribunal if it is considered that the assessment is not in line with the medical evidence.

AA reviews are handled by the medical officers and lay staff of the AA reviews unit, and, in certain cases, directly by the Attendance Allowance Board. SDA assessments may be reviewed only on the grounds of fresh evidence which, if it had been available to the AMA, might reasonably have altered the assessment made. The review would be carried out by an AMA, and the AMA's decision could be referred to a medical appeal tribunal in the normal way.

We recently published a consultative document on the assessment and adjudication procedures for the disability allowance which will succeed mobility allowance and largely replace attendance allowance in 1992 and would welcome comments on this.

Residential Care

Mr. Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will make available the findings of the study of costs in residential care and nursing homes in Great Britain carried out by Price Waterhouse for his Department.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to make available the Price Waterhouse report on the cost of care in private residential and nursing homes; and if he will publish the report in full.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Copies of the full Price Waterhouse report have today been placed in the Library. The survey has provided important information which has assisted my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in making decisions on the April 1991 uprating of the income support limits, announced today.

The overall objective of the survey carried out by Price Waterhouse was to identify the range of revenue and capital costs of caring for people with different types and levels of dependency in homes of varying size and staff-resident ratios in different parts of Great Britain. The field work was carried out between July and August 1990 and the data collected related mainly to financial years commencing between October 1989 and May 1990. Although the number of homes initially approached was much larger, information was finally obtained from a total sample of 732 residential care and nursing homes. Not all these could provide information on capital costs in addition to that on running costs.

The results of the survey show the difficulty of obtaining reliable and consistent data on costs for residential care and nursing homes. The figures obtained cover the period up to May 1990; assume a 90 per cent. occupancy rate in homes, which may be slightly lower than the actual occupancy level in homes. Unit costs reduce with higher occupancy levels; and are more reliable in some respects than others. Cost figures for voluntary sector homes in particular are based on a small sample size; and show that there is significant variation in the capital costs (including and excluding profits) that homes face, both within and across regions, indicating differences both in capital structure and accounting treatment.

The key findings on costs are as follows:

Running costs—

The average bedweek costs obtained from the survey are shown in the table.

Running costs by type of care

	Sample size	*Running costs £*	*Running costs and capital costs*	*Running costs and capital costs and profit*	*Staff costs*[1]
Elderly-residential					
median	462	120	154	168	68
mean	—	(134)	(172)	(188)	(81)
Other-residential					
median	—	211	270	295	144
mean	101	(240)	(307)	(336)	(158)
Elderly-nursing					
median	—	188	241	263	132
mean	143	(250)	(320)	(350)	(157)
Other-nursing					
median	—	169	216	237	122
mean	25	(209)	(267)	(292)	(167)

[1] Included in "running costs" column 2.

ENVIRONMENT

Toxic Waste

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any reports from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution on plans by Lanstar Wimpey Waste in Cadishead to import toxic waste from Italy.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Secretary of State has received no such reports from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution. However, he has received copies of notifications under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 of imports of hazardous waste from Italy by Lanstar Wimpey Waste in Cadishead.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to establish whether plans by United Kingdom toxic waste management and disposal companies to import toxic waste from Italy are in compliance with the European Community directive on the transfrontier transport of waste and the Basel convention guidelines.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 18 October 1990]*: The Secretary of State has taken no such steps. The enforcement of the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988, which implement Council directives 84/631/EEC and 86/279/EEC is the responsibility of the disposal authorities for the areas in which consignees operate their facilities, not the Secretary of State. The question of compliance with the Basel convention does not arise because the convention is not yet in force. However, the Secretary of State is pressing for the European Community and member states to move rapidly towards ratification.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any notification from ReChem International in regard to its plans to process 150 tonnes of toxic waste from the Karin B waste carrier ship.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 18 October 1990]*: The Secretary of State has received copies of notifications under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations of a number of shipments of hazardous waste from Italy to ReChem International's plant at Fawley, Southampton. It is not possible to tell from the documents whether any of the waste was ever on board the Karin B. The purpose of notification is to establish whether the disposal facility can deal with the waste in question, not to give its history. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales receives copies of notifications of shipments of hazardous waste from Italy to ReChem International's plant at Pontypool.

Development Corporations

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his replies of 15 October, *Official Report*, column *622*, if he will publish an edited version of the Garlick report with a view to providing public reassurance on matters dealt with by the full report, including those not covered by his statement of 29 August, while protecting the confidence of those who gave evidence.

Mr. Portillo: My answer of 15 October included a detailed statement which summarised Sir John Garlick's findings and the steps which the corporation and my Department are taking to address the shortcomings which he identified.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his replies of 15 October, *Official Report*, column *622*, what steps he intends to take to ensure the implementation of the recommendations in the Garlick report; what steps have already been taken; and which matters have yet to be dealt with.

Mr. Portillo: My answer of 15 October set out the steps being taken as a result of the findings of Sir John Garlick's inquiry.

Rent Arrears

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table setting out the top 20 local authorities whose rent arrears are the greatest.

Mr. Key: An ordered table showing rent arrears at March 1989 as a percentage of the rent roll for each English local authority was placed in the Library on 3 April 1990. Figures for March 1990 are not yet available.

Electoral Registration

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the impact of the poll tax on the level of electoral registration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: There is no direct relation between the electoral register and the community charge register and there is no reason why the community charge should have any implication for electoral registration.

Water Leakage

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much water was lost through leakages in each water authority area during *(a)* 1989 and *(b)* 1988.

Mr. Trippier: This information is not held centrally. Information for the former water authorities on water losses, which includes water lost by leakage, was published in the prospectus "The Water Share Offers", a copy of which is available in the Library. The Office of Water Services is developing guidelines for water companies so that the data they produce will allow effective consideration and comparison of water leakages.

Brookwood Hospital (Redevelopment)

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that the proposals for off-site highway works connected with the redevelopment of surplus land at Brookwood hospital, Knaphill, which has been formulated by Surrey county council and Woking borough council, fulfil the criteria recommended by his inspector in his report on the public inquiry into the development.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend is awaiting an undertaking about off-site highway works prior to

reaching his final decision on the appeals concerning the redevelopment of land at Brookwood hospital. He will be replying very soon to my right hon. Friend's letter of 6 October on this matter.

Agricultural Dwellings

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he will take to prevent the fragmentation of farmland into non-viable units following the granting of planning permission for an agricultural dwelling.

Mr. Atkins: I am considering currently the whole subject of planning permission for agricultural dwellings in the light of the responses to the draft planning policy guidance note "The Countryside and the Rural Economy" which we issued for consultation last winter.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to publish new guidelines on the planning control of agricultural dwellings.

Mr. Atkins: On 5 October we issued a consultation paper on possible changes to planning controls over agricultural buildings other than dwellings. We shall want to consider the responses to that consultation before issuing a revised version of the planning policy guidance note "The Countryside and the Rural Economy"—PPG7—early next year. That note will also contain guidance on agricultural dwellings.

Passive Solar Design

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies have been sponsored by the Building Research Establishment to research and demonstrate the benefits of passive solar design in buildings; and what steps he is taking to increase the awareness of the benefits of such design among developers, designers and clients, as indicated in paragraph 40, page 289 of the White Paper on the environment (Cm. 1200).

Mr. Trippier: The Building Research Establishment is undertaking for my Department and for the Department of Energy's technology support unit a range of specific projects on passive solar design. These currently include studies on modelling methods, the use of daylight for passive solar energy and work on international and European research. Department of Energy research spending currently amounts to some £2 million a year.

To increase awareness of the benefits of passive solar design an integrated marketing programme is in preparation as part of the best practice programme of the Energy Efficiency Office.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department's property holding organisation will publish the environmental action guide on energy efficiency, as foreshadowed by paragraph C25, page 286, annex C of the White Paper on the environment (Cm. 1200); how many copies of this guide will be printed; at what estimated cost; and to which Departments of Government and associated organisations it will be distributed.

Mr. Trippier: Her Majesty's Stationery Office hopes to publish the environmental action guide in December. It will provide an environmental framework for all aspects of property management and purchasing. The guide will be adopted across Government and will be on public sale for use by other organisations. The number of copies printed and their cost are commercial matters for HMSO.

Greenpeace

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received from Greenpeace; and how he intends to respond.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend received a letter from Lord Melchett, director of Greenpeace (UK) on 27 September. He replied by letter on 17 October 1990.

Homelessness

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will finance research to assess the number sleeping rough in the United Kingdom, the causes and the demographic profile.

Mr. Key: The 1991 population census, to be carried out in England and Wales by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and in Scotland by the General Register Office for Scotland, will include a count of persons sleeping rough. The Northern Ireland Census Office will not be including a count of persons sleeping rough, as consultations with the charities dealing with the homeless suggest that the numbers involved are very small. My Department is in the process of commissioning a study of single homeless people which will include those who sleep rough in England.

Pollution Inspectorate (Annual Reports)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the 1988 annual reports of the 12 Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution district inspectors; and whether the new Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution regions will publish separate regional annual reports.

Mr. Trippier: Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution district reports for 1988-89 have been published. Copies are available in the House of Commons Library. Regional chapters will be incorporated within HMIP's 1989-90 annual report.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people have been exempted from paying community charge *(a)* by each category of exemption, *(b)* in Leeds, West, and *(c)* in England and Wales.

Mr. Key: The categories for which information is available are given in the table. No information is available for Leeds, West. Figures for Wales are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Estimated numbers exempt from community charges in England at 1 June 1990

	Numbers
Members of visiting forces, international headquarters and defence organisations and their dependants. Including diplomats	40,000
Severely mentally impaired	97,000

	Numbers
Aged 18 who attract child benefit because they are still at school, or aged 18 or 19 and on full-time courses of further, but not higher education	179,000
Full time students whose term time address is in Scotland or Northern Ireland	2,500
Members of religious communities	11,000
Patients whose main residence is in an NHS hospital	42,000
People whose sole or main residence is in a residential care home, a nursing home, a mental nursing home, a private hospital, or a hostel providing a substantial level of care, and who are also being treated or cared for in such an institution	321,000
Residential care workers employed at a very low salary	1,500
In detention	45,000
Total of categories listed	739,000

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each local authority district area the latest figures on the number of premises liable for the standard community charge.

Mr. Portillo: I am arranging for the available information to be placed in the Library of the House.

Properties subject to a standard charge with a multiplier of zero are not included.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what monitoring is being undertaken by his Department on the operation of the rules relating to exemption from the poll tax for those suffering from severe mental impairment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My Department is in constant touch with local authorities on all aspects of the community charge. We also maintain close contact with officials in the Department of Health on issues relating to the exemption for persons with a severe mental impairment. Supplementary advice on the exemption was sent on 2 July 1990 to community charge registration officers and general medical practitioners from both Departments.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish the latest figures on the number of people who have been exempted from the poll tax due to *(a)* severe mental impairment, *(b)* residence in a hospital or home, *(c)* aged under 20 years at school or in further education, *(d)* membership of visiting forces, *(e)* persons in detention, *(f)* membership of a religious order, *(g)* homelessness and *(h)* others;

(2) if he will publish his best estimates of the number of people classified as suffering from mental illness who have been granted poll tax exemption under the severe mental impairment provisions;

(3) if he will publish his best estimates of the number of people classified as suffering from severe dementia who have been granted poll tax exemption under the severe mental impairment provisions.

Mr. Portillo: The estimated numbers exempt from community charges in England at 1 June 1990 are as follows:

	Number
Severely mentally impaired	97,000
Patients whose main residence is in an NHS hospital or people whose sole or main residence is in a residential care home, a nursing home, a mental nursing home, a private hospital, or a hostel providing a substantial level of care, and who are also being treated or cared for in such an institution	363,000
Aged 18 who attract child benefit because they are still at school, or aged 18 or 19 and on full-time courses of further, but not higher, education	179,000
In detention	45,000
Members of visiting forces, international headquarters and defence organisations and their dependants. Including diplomats	40,000
Members of religious communities	11,000
Persons without fixed abode or living in short stay hostels	n.a.
Residential care workers employed at a very low salary, and full time students whose term time address is in Scotland or Northern Ireland	4,000

Note: Separate information is not available on the number of exemptions of people classified as suffering from severe dementia or mental illness.

n.a. Not available.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will *(a)* place copies in the Library of all material produced by his Department designed to promote awareness of the right to poll tax exemption for certain groups of people and *(b)* state the level of expenditure being incurred on such material; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Copies of all departmental published material on exemptions from the personal community charge, including circular letters sent out to all community charges registration officers have been placed in the Library.

The cost of producing this material has been approximately £1·2 million so far.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to introduce legislation to prevent district councils from recovering poll tax debts from individual housing benefit allocations.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

Legislation does not provide for local authorities to recover arrears of community charge from housing benefit.

Pollution Exhibition

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition by the Institution of Civil Engineers relating to pollution and its containment to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 3 to 7 December.

Environmental Protection Bill

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the regulations under part I of the Environmental Protection Bill will be issued for consultation.

Mr. Trippier: I have issued today draft regulations governing the application procedure for making authorisations under integrated pollution control and local authority air pollution control under part I of the Bill; the procedure for varying those authorisations; the appeals procedure; and details of the public registers of information. A copy of the regulations, and an accompanying guidance note, has been placed in the Library. Responses are required by 14 December.

The common theme throughout our proposals is the involvement of the public. Subject to the Bill being approved by Parliament and the results of the consultation, the regulations provide that applications for authorisations and substantial variations of those authorisations must be advertised so that the public has an opportunity to comment on the proposals. Those comments will then be considered in determining the application. The regulations also require appeals made under clause 15 of the Bill to be advertised so that the public has the opportunity to make representations which will be taken into account in determining the appeal. The information about applications for authorisations and variations, and appeals will be held on the comprehensive public registers of information which are also established under these regulations.

We intend to issue next month a further set of regulations, prescribing the substances and processes for control under part I of the Bill.

Barkby Thorpe Landfill Site

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the number of times Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution has visited the landfill site at Barkby Thorpe, Leicester; and what are the dates of the visits;

(2) if he will publish the report of Her Majesty's inspector of pollution following his visit to the landfill site at Barkby Thorpe, Leicester.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: An inspector of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution made one visit to the Barkby Thorpe site, Leicester in July 1989. The visit was made in conjunction with discussions held with local authority officials. No site visit report was prepared.

Beach Huts

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the application of the community charge to beach huts without a postal address, road access or connecting services.

Mr. Key: The standard community charge is payable by the freehold owner or lessee of a domestic property which is no person's sole or main residence. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 defines a building as domestic property if it is used wholly for the purposes of living accommodation. Whether or not a beach hut constitutes living accommodation will be a matter for the community charges registration officer to establish in the light of the facts of the case. It would be open to an individual to appeal against a registration officer's determination to a valuation and community charge tribunal.

Housing Conditions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of (i) unfit dwellings, (ii) dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities and (iii) non-standard dwellings in need of renovations in *(a)* Oldham, *(b)* the north-west and *(c)* England and the percentage of stock that these numbers represent in each case.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 18 October 1990]*: Local authorities are asked for these figures in their annual housing investment programme returns; the figures are not necessarily comparable as authorities' criteria differ and they are not consistent with national and regional estimates from the 1986 English house condition survey.

The figures based on local authority returns for April 1989 are as follows:

	Oldham		*North West*		*England*	
	Total	*Percentage of stock*	*Total*	*Percentage of stock*	*Total*	*Percentage of stock*
Unfit dwellings	7,765	8·9	126,100	4·6	571,600	3·0
Dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities	2,837	3·2	57,300	2·1	382,300	2·0
Non-standard dwellings in need of renovation[1]	23,180	26·4	537,000	19·4	3,202,000	16·6

[1] Dwellings requiring repairs estimated at more than £3,000.

Corresponding information for April 1990 is not yet available.

Disabled People (Housing)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of *(a)* wheelchair housing starts and *(b)* wheelchair housing starts and completions for 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990 and the number of planned wheelchair starts for 1991.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 22 October 1990]*: The available figures for 1986 to 1989 for England appear in table 6.7 of the annual "Housing and Construction Statistics 1979-1989: Great Britain" and for the first half of 1990 in table 1.5 of part 1 of the June quarter 1990 edition of "Housing and Construction Statistics: Great Britain". Copies of both are in the Library.

The statistics cover wheelchair dwellings provided by local authorities, new towns and housing associations. There are no reliable estimates of the number of such dwellings built privately nor does the Department make forecasts for future periods.

Bradford (Development)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated cost of considering the application by 3D Developments Ltd., for a city grant towards the west end development scheme in Bradford.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) on 12 July at column *459*.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the position reached in the negotiations between 3D Developments Ltd., and his Department on the application for £40 million city grant towards the west end development in Bradford; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* 3D Ltd's proposals for the west end development scheme are being carefully considered by my officials.

Waste Management

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will obtain for his Department's library the book "Waste Management" by O. P. Kharbanda and E. A. Stallworthy published by Gowar Publishing Company in January.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The Department's library has this book.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he, or any officials of his Department, were invited to attend or present a paper at the "Waste Management in Europe 1992" conference in Amsterdam held between 10-14 September, organised by the International Solid Wastes and Public Cleansing Association.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* Yes. An invitation for an official to give a paper was received but it was not taken up.

Homelessness

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider setting up an interdepartmental agency to assess the extent of homelessness and possible solutions to homelessness in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* No. The Government's review of the homelessness legislation published last November concluded that local authorities were the appropriate agencies for helping homeless people and assessing their needs, as provided for in the Housing Act 1985.

Combustion Plants (Emissions)

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the Government have submitted a detailed proposal to the EC Commission on how they will achieve their emission reduction targets in accordance with the large combustion plant directive (609/EEC); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* The Government issued a second consultation document on the implementation of the large combustion plants directive on 18 September. The paper included the United Kingdom's draft plan for national emission reductions of sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen. British officials met informally officials from the European Commission to present and discuss the proposals in the draft plan on 11 October. The Government are currently considering all the responses to the consultation and will submit the final plan to the Commission before the directive's deadline of the end of this year.

English Heritage

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish a table showing the amount of funding given by English Heritage and the Department of the Environment to projects in the last 10 years;

(2) if he will list section 3A payments given by English Heritage since February 1990;

(3) if he will give the current staffing complement of English Heritage;

(4) if he has met the chair of English Heritage to discuss relocation; and if he will make a statement;

(5) if he will list the amount of money given to English Heritage in each year since 1979.

Mr. Trippier: The detailed breakdown of expenditure on building repair grants and information on staff complement are matters for English Heritage. I have asked the chairman, Lord Montagu, to write to the hon. Member. Government funding to English Heritage since it was established in 1984 is as follows:

	£ million (cash)
1984-85	49·9
1985-86	52·2
1986-87	60·1
1987-88	65·3
1988-89	66·2
1989-90	72·9
1990-91	78·5

Comparable information in respect of the period from 1979 until English Heritage was established, when the Department of the Environment had responsibility for funding historic buildings, could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The Secretary of State and myself have met the chairman of English Heritage on a number of occasions and have discussed many issues, including relocation. In line with Government policy, English Heritage has been considering options for relocating its London headquarters staff to the regions. On 17 October, English Heritage commissioners agreed to move the majority of their London-based posts (about 650 administrators and specialists) to Nottingham in 1992-94. This is subject to the acquisition of a suitable building and detailed approval from the Government, particularly on the resources involved.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the percentage unemployment changes in all Lancashire travel-to-work areas as between mid-1987 and the latest available date.

Mr. Jackson: The information is available in the Library. Percentage changes in unemployment between June 1987 and September 1990 for all the travel-to-work areas covering the county of Lancashire were:

Travel to work area	*Percentage change*[1]
Blackpool	−56·6
Settle	−56·0
Pendle	−51·1
Lancaster and Morecambe	−47·3
Wigan and St. Helens	−44·8
Clitheroe	−44·5
Bolton and Bury	−44·2
Burnley	−43·1
Preston	−42·4
Accrington and Rossendale	−42·0
Blackburn	−39·4
Rochdale	−38·2
Liverpool	−34·6

[1] Unadjusted unemployment.

The comparison is affected by seasonal influences as well as by the changes in the coverage of the count that have occurred over the period.

Enterprise Ealing

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many jobs are estimated to have resulted from the efforts of Enterprise Ealing; at what cost to public funds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Enterprise Ealing estimates that it has created approximately 1,200 new jobs since commencing operation in September 1986. Since that date Enterprise Ealing has received a total of £54,000 from my Department under the local enterprise agency grant scheme which has levered a larger amount of private sector sponsorship. I understand that Home Office funds have recently been secured to support the post of an ethnic minority business counsellor to work in Southall and Acton.

Enterprise agencies like Enterprise Ealing can provide a valuable local resource in the changing enterprise support world, especially in co-operation with the training and enterprise councils.

Textiles and Clothing

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many jobs have been lost in the textile and clothing industries in each of the last 12 months.

Mr. Jackson: Changes in the number of employees in the textile and clothing industries are supplied in the table.

Employees in Textile and Clothing industries
Textiles and Clothing excluding footwear
(Great Britain)

	Net monthly change (thousands)
1989	
August	5·8
September	0·2
October	−1·1
November	1·1
December	3·2
1990	
January	−0·6
February	5·9
March	−0·5
April	−0·8
May	−0·3
June	−0·7
July	1·4
August	−0·8

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 25 October 1990

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Information Technology

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the latest estimate of the balance of trade in information technology.

Mr. Sainsbury: According to the latest estimates, the United Kingdom had a deficit of £685 million in the manufactured products of the electronics and information technology sector in the first quarter of 1990. This sector is defined as the principal products of activity headings 3301-2, 3441-4 and 3453-4 of the Standard Industrial Classification. These figures are for hardware only. There are no separate figures for trade in software.

Trade Deficit

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet his European counterparts to discuss Britain's trade deficit with the rest of Europe.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend holds regular meetings with his counterparts in the European Community over a broad range of issues.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department has any knowledge of the corporate involvement between the Technology Development Group (TDG) of London and the Swiss firm of Schmiedemeccanica of Lugano; and what assessment his Department has made of the role of TDG in exporting sensitive technologies to Iraq.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* My Department is not able to confirm any information about possible links between TDG Ltd. and Schiedemeccanica SA. Exports of goods and technologies as described by the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1989 (as amended) require export licences. No applications for such licences have been received from TDG Ltd.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has initiated any investigation into the trading operations of the Technology and Development Group, based in London, in regard to its role in the procurement of military usable technology for Iraq.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* Officials in my Department have had discussions with the Technology and Development Group. It is not our practice to disclose the nature of such discussions.

Giant Hogweed

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will take steps to ban the import and sale of seeds of Heracleum Mantegazzianum.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* No. There are currently no plans to ban the import or sale of seeds of Heracleum Mantegazzianum.

However, under section 14(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence for any person to plant or to otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant which is included in part 2 of schedule 9 to the Act. Giant hogweed (Heracleum Mantegazzianum) is listed in the schedule.

SCOTLAND

Road Planning

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for the 16 schemes in Scotland, identified by the National Audit Office as having a negative cost benefit analysis in its report of 27 October 1988 "Department of Transport, Scottish Development Department and Welsh Office: Road Planning" *(a)* location and name of each individual project, *(b)* length of road, *(c)* date of decision to build and date of completion, *(d)* capital cost, both estimated and outturn, *(e)* number of vehicles per day estimated, each way, *(f)* number of vehicles per day from recent census data, *(g)* the details of the negative economic appraisal or net present value and *(h)* in respect of the A74 only, estimated capital value cost and NPV for two-lane and three-lane motorway.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is given in the following two tables. Table 1 refers to the 16 schemes identified in the NAO report of 27 October 1988 as having a negative net present value. The originally predicted traffic flows for 1989 were based on the then current national growth projections. Actual traffic growth has generally been higher than predicted at that time.

Table 2 gives the most recent budgetary estimates of costs and net present values for construction of the M74 between Millbank and Gretna.

Table 1

	Scheme name	*Region*	*Length kms*	*Contract let date*	*Completion date*	*Cost £ million*[1] *Estimated*	*Outturn*	*NPV*	*Originally predicted traffic flows for 1989 (annual average daily traffic)*	*Actual traffic flows for 1989 (annual average daily traffic)*
A1	Penmanshiel Diversion	Borders	1·7	October 1981	September 1982	3·0	3·4	−0·834	5,800	5,700
A74	Johnstone Bridge	Dumfries and Galloway	1·8	April 1981	March 1983	1·2	1·8	−0·250	18,300	18,900
A75	Carsluith Diversion	Dumfries and Galloway	3·0	October 1981	November 1982	1·1	1·5	−0·521	2,700	3,200
A94	Syde and Pert Improvement	Grampian	2·9	February 1981	September 1982	2·6	3·0	−0·911	[2]7,000	11,700

Scheme name	Region	Length kms	Contract let date	Completion date	Cost £ million[1] Estimated	Outturn	NPV	Originally predicted traffic flows for 1989 (annual average daily traffic)	Actual traffic flows for 1989 (annual average daily traffic)
A94 Scotston-Candy	Grampian	8·5	April 1983	July 1985	5·5	7·0	−2·757	[2]7,700	13,100
A94 Laurencekirk Bypass	Grampian	7·8	February 1984	May 1985	6·0	7·9	−1,745	[2]7,100	10,400
A92 A94 Stonehaven Bypass	Grampian	9·7	December 1982	November 1984	10·1	14·5	−5,362	[2]7,700	13,100
A82 Eos Eonan-Derrydarroch Bridges	Central	2·6	April 1981	December 1982	1·5	2·1	−0·813	1,900	2,300
A82 Carnoch-Craigrannoch I	Highland	2·9	December 1981	October 1983	1·6	1·7	−0·772	2,500	2,200
A82 Carnoch-Craigrannoch II	Highland	1·2	March 1983	October 1984	1·4	1·7	−1·071	2,500	2,200
A835 Silverbridge-Gorstan	Highland	3·2	May 1981	December 1982	2·4	2·9	−0·527	800	1,200
A9 Auchterarder Aberuthven Bypass	Tayside	8·2	January 1982	October 1983	5·9	7·5	−1·648	10,000	14,100
A9 Dalreoch-Burnside	Tayside	6·3	June 1984	October 1986	8·4	9·4	−0·683	9,700	14,300
A929 Tealing-Tarbrax	Tayside	5·6	November 1983	July 1985	6·0	6·4	−0·720	[3]9,800	13,300
A972 Kingsway III	Tayside	2·5	August 1984	June 1986	2·6	3·0	−0·203	[3]11,800	18,200
A94 Balnabreich-St Ann's	Tayside	2·8	May 1981	July 1982	1·9	2·1	−0·927	[3]7,400	12,800

[1] Tender letting stage estimate of total scheme cost.
[2] Includes an estimate for traffic re-routed as the result of the detrunking of the A92 Dundee-Stonehaven (coastal route).

Table 2

Motorway design standard	Cost £m (September 1990)	NPV (mid-1988 prices)
Dual 3 lane	412	127
Dual 2 lane	350	40

Note: All costs exclude VAT

Greater Glasgow Health Board

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what penalty points have been awarded by Greater Glasgow health board against private contractors providing domestic, catering, portering and associated services to the board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: One hundred and three penalty points have been awarded against in-house operators; 21 have been awarded against private contractors. These were mainly incurred during the first six months as the new arrangements settled in.

Eye Tests

205. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many eye tests were carried out in the first three quarters of each year since 1983 in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Glasgow.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is set out in the table below.

Year	Scotland	Strathclyde	Glasgow
1983	589,182	284,978	126,559
1984	619,999	298,928	133,091
1985	679,756	330,267	147,735
1986	692,400	333,203	149,720
1987	742,883	359,374	160,490
1988	841,030	404,363	185,376

The total number of sight tests carried out in Scotland from 1 April 1989 is not available centrally.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out in tabular format *(a)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the planning, building and maintenance of roads, *(b)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the development and maintenance of railways, *(c)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the development of public transport other than railways and *(d)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the promotion of cycling.

Mr. Rifkind: The roads directorate within the Scottish Development Department has 140 staff and deals with legislation, road safety, traffic regulation orders, road and bridge maintenance and new construction. It has executive responsiblity for the trunk road network in Scotland. The planning, building and maintenance of roads embraces provision for all road users and those employed on this work cannot be categorised by mode.

The responsibilities of transport and local roads division of the Department include the issuing of capital allocations to regional and island authorities who have executive responsibility in Scotland for local roads and transport, and the discharge of the Department's functions relating to other transport modes, principally ferry and bus services. The division has 15½ staff. Thirty-one staff are also employed on toll collection and related duties at the Erskine bridge.

The Department of Transport is the sponsoring Department for British Rail.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of what Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Rifkind: Under section 5(1) of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 anyone of any age who claims to have sustained injustice in consequence of maladministration by the Scottish Office may ask a Member of Parliament to refer a grievance to the Parliamentary

Commissioner for Administration. If the complainant is for any reason unable to act for him or herself, the complaint may be made by virtue of section 6(2) of the 1967 Act by another person on behalf of the complainant. The PCA may also investigate complaints against the following bodies, listed in schedule 2 to the Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Act 1987, for which I am responsible or to which I make appointments:

Countryside Commission for Scotland
Crofters Commission
Department of the Registers of Scotland
Forestry Commission
General Register Office, Scotland
Highlands and Islands Development Board
Red Deer Commission
Scottish Courts Administration
Scottish Homes
Scottish Legal Aid Board
Scottish Medical Practices Committee
Scottish New Town Development Corporations
Scottish Record Office
Scottish Sports Council
Scottish Tourist Board

Under section 70 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 I have the power to take default action, on complaint by an interested person or otherwise, in respect of the failure of an education authority, school board or school managers to discharge any statutory duty under the 1980 Act.

Persons, including children and young people under 18 years of age or those acting on their behalf, may make complaints or representations about their treatment by the national health service in Scotland in the following ways:

a. by complaining to the appropriate health board about their treatment in hospital (section 1 of the Hospital Complaints Procedure Act 1985);

b. by complaining to the appropriate health board that a family practitioner is in breach of the relevant terms of service (various sections of the NHS (Scotland) Act 1978);

c. by making representation to a tribunal that the continued inclusion of an individual in a list of those providing family practitioner services is prejudicial to those services (section 29 of the NHS (Scotland) Act 1978); and

d. by complaining to the Health Service Commissioner (Section 90 to 97 of the NHS (Scotland) Act 1978), although the Commissioner does not have the powers to investigate actions specified in Schedule 14 to the 1978 Act.

This reply excludes references to procedures in which I have no locus and which are about matters that are the responsibility of local authorities.

Education Authorities (Land Sales)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on how many occasions since 1979 his Department has compelled education authorities to sell land that was being held for future school building.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None.

Schools (Testing)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements he proposes to ensure that testing in English and mathematics is carried out with P4 and P7 pupils in Scotland in 1991.

Mr. Rifkind: Guidelines containing arrangements for the conduct of primary tests in 1991 were issued by the Scottish Education Department on 10 October. A copy has been placed in the Library. To ensure a consistent and orderly approach to testing I have concluded that it would be helpful to place the conduct of testing within a regulatory framework. Accordingly regulations to this effect are being laid before Parliament today.

TRANSPORT

Coventry Airport

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many air misses have been filed relating to Coventry airport over the past four years.

Mr. McLoughlin: Two—one on 8 March 1989 and one on 27 June 1989. The first was assessed by the joint air miss working group (JAWG) as a possible risk of collision. The second has still to be evaluated by the JAWG.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to change the instructions concerning the investigation of air misses so that complaints notified by members of the public may be so recorded.

Mr. McLoughlin: Reports by members of the public are ocassionally received by the Department and by the CAA. There is no standard procedure for dealing with them; each one is treated on its merits. None of the reports received from the public in recent years has been found on investigation to indicate any hazardous situation. The height of an aircraft can be accurately measured and maintained. The normal separation by height of aircraft at the lower levels is 1,000 feet, about 300 metres. This close vertical, but quite safe, proximity can mislead even an expert observer into believing that the aircraft are dangerously close. There are no plans to change the instructions concerning reports notified by members of the public.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on the methods of recording air misses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has had no discussions with the Civil Aviation Authority on the recording of air misses, which are incidents reported only by pilots. However, during 1987 and 1988 discussions between my right hon. Friend and the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority led to the introduction of aircraft proximity hazard (APHAZ) reports by air traffic controllers. The APHAZ reporting system, which began on 1 April 1989, closely parallels that for air misses.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many notifiable accidents were recorded for Coventry airport, and how many of those accidents were attributable to controller error, over the past two years.

Mr. McLoughlin: There have been two notifiable accidents at Coventry airport during the two years. On 23 August 1989 an undercarriage leg of a Cessna 172, a private aircraft, dropped into an unmarked pothole on the taxiway. The aircraft was substantially damaged, but there were no injuries. On 22 November 1989, a Cessna 150, a private aircraft, was blown on to its back during taxiing by the propeller wash of a DC6 that was running up its engines prior to take-off. The Cessna 150 was substantially damaged but there were no injuries.

Three-way Catalyst

251. **Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether he will provide in the regulations for the testing or replacement of the three-way catalyst in cars after eight years' use;

(2) if he will make three-way catalyst emission testing one of the conditions for granting an MOT certificate.

Mr. Chope: We are now consulting on proposals for an emissions check for introduction into the MOT test next year. We are proposing that this should include vehicles equipped with catalytic converters. A vehicle with a seriously defective catalyst would not pass the test.

Trams (London)

254. **Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what considerations he has given to the introduction of modern trams into London.

Mr. Freeman: No formal proposals for the introduction of modern trams in London have been submitted to the Department of Transport. The Department is co-operating in the study of a possible light rail system in the Croydon area which is being taken forward by London Transport in conjunction with British Rail and the London borough of Croydon. The study is considering options, including some street running.

Road Safety

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current budget for road safety campaigning; and what percentage is allocated to responding to inquiries from members of the public.

Mr. Chope: Estimates provision on road safety publicity in 1990-91 is £4·254 million. About 1 per cent. of this is allocated to the provision of a freephone inquiry service in connection with the recent child road safety publicity campaign. Each year several thousand written and telephone inquiries on all aspects of road safety are received by my Department. The cost of responding to these is not separately identified in the Department's provision for running costs.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, further to his announcement on 14 June about the channel tunnel rail link project, what action he has taken to safeguard the route between the channel tunnel terminal and the north downs.

Mr. Freeman: We have made initial safeguarding directions under the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 for this section of route (between Cheriton and Upper Halling). The directions came into force on 13 September to coincide with British Rail's launch of public consultations on the fine detail of this route section. We have invited comments from the local authorities concerned on any aspects of the initial directions that should be improved or changed in any revised directions.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. McLoughlin: There are no formal procedures specifically available to children and young people who wish to make complaints or representations about matters which are the responsibility of this Department. It is, however, open to members of the public, of whatever age, to write to the Department about any issue which concerns them.

Complaints may also be made, through hon. Members, to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, under section 6 of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967, about the administrative actions of Government Departments and certain non-departmental public bodies.

Traffic Lights

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if the transport and road research laboratory has made any study of the potential benefit of a traffic light system that allows an approaching bus to activate changes in traffic lights from red to green.

Mr. McLoughlin: The transport and road research laboratory (TRRL) studied bus-activated signals in the United Kingdom in the mid-1970s in both computer simulation and on-street studies. TRRL also participated in international bus priority studies.

At unco-ordinated (non-linked) signals, trials in Swansea showed that average reductions in bus delay of six seconds per bus per signalled junction could be achieved.

In a network of co-ordinated signals in Glasgow, reductions in bus journey times of between 2 per cent. and 15 per cent. were achieved depending on the signalling strategy and the time of day.

Conclusions from the research were that modest net benefits could be achieved. Benefits were less where bus flow was high and where there were conflicting bus movements. Disbenefits to other traffic could outweigh the benefit to buses.

Bus and Cycle Lanes

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to increase the mileage of *(a)* bus lanes and *(b)* cycle lanes in London.

Mr. Chope: Bus and cycle lanes are primarily for local highway authorities. My Department produces technical guidance to assist with their design.

My Department is planning to develop a network of priority routes which will assist the movement of buses and we are also supporting London Transport's bus priority team. Both initiatives will result in more bus lanes which could also be used by cyclists.

My Department is actively supporting the provision of a 1000-mile cycle network for London. We also consider the provision of cycle lanes and crossings when designing new trunk roads and improvements to existing ones.

Road Accidents

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the effects of traffic-calming measures on road accident levels.

Mr. Chope: The final report of the Urban Safety Projects which was published in May (TRRL report RR263) indicated that traffic calming measures can reduce casualties in residential areas by an average of 13 per cent. If this approach were applied nationally approximately 5 per cent. of all casualties would be saved.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents occurred in the Macclesfield constituency in the first six months of 1990; how many of these involved *(a)* minor injuries, *(b)* serious injuries and *(c)* fatal injuries; and what are the comparable figures for the same six-month period in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Chope: The figures requested for the constituency of Macclesfield are available only at disproportionate cost. The figures below relate to the borough of Macclesfield and include accidents reported to the police in the first six months of each year. The data for 1990 are provisional.

Road Accidents in the borough of Macclesfield (January-June)

	Fatal	*Serious*	*Slight*	*Total*
1990	10	59	311	380
1989	7	75	293	375
1988	7	55	329	391
1987	3	56	277	336
1986	15	50	286	351
1985	7	47	273	327

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement outlining the circumstances of each of the road traffic accidents which took place in the Macclesfield constituency during the first six months of 1990 and which led to fatal injuries; and if he will indicate in each case what steps have been taken by the appropriate authorities to minimise future accidents.

Mr. Chope: Information on the detailed circumstances of particular accidents is not held centrally. Investigation of road accidents is the responsibility of the police. Devising appropriate remedial measures is the responsibility of the highway authority. The Department has a continuing programme of engineering measures to improve accident blackspots on trunk roads, as do local highway authorities for their roads. From the next financial year funds from central Government will be made available through transport supplementary grant for engineering remedies on all local roads.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out in tabular format *(a)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the planning, building and maintenance of roads, *(b)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the development and maintenance of railways, *(c)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the development of public transport other than railways and *(d)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the promotion of cycling.

Mr. McLoughlin: My Department has the following numbers of civil servants dealing with:

	Numberk
Roads	2,300
Railways	135
Other public transport	20
Cycling	[1]40

[1]Part of the time.

The substantially larger number of roads' staff reflects the Department's direct responsibility for the national roads programme. The development and maintenance of other transport modes is the responsibility of other bodies, for example, British Rail and London Regional Transport.

Severn Bridge

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he is considering to avoid repetition of the prolonged traffic delays experienced on the Severn bridge in the first week of October.

Mr. Chope: Delays on the Severn bridge occurred on 5 and 6 October due to a combination of road works, restrictions due to high winds, and traffic incidents.

Resurfacing work will stop in November for the winter months thus easing traffic conditions. This work should be completed next year.

Some windshielding is about to be installed adjacent to and either side of the towers of the existing Severn bridge, where most of the high wind accidents occur. Additionally the proposed second Severn crossing will be windshielded over its entire length.

Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will list the present members of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority.

Mr. McLoughlin: The present members of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority appointed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport are:

Mr. J. H. Peart (chairman)
Mr. J. W. Cockfield, FICS
Mr. R. M. Stewart, OBE, TD
Mr. C. Godfrey
Mr. C. Ward, MBE
Mr. J. Newbold
Mr. G. D. Saul
Mr. G. Hall
Mr. A. D. Frew
Mrs. B. S. Lythgoe

In addition, two full-time officers of the authority have been appointed by the Tees and Hartlepool port authority to serve as members of the authority. They are Mr. J. P. Hackney and Mr. N. Britton, MBE.

Newcastle Airport (Near-miss)

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what inquiries have been undertaken into the recent reported near-miss involving a Dan-Air civilian aircraft taking off from Newcastle airport and two military aircraft.

Mr. McLoughlin: An air miss report was filed with the Civil Aviation Authority concerning a Dan Air B737 and two Tornado aircraft. The incident took place at 8.14 pm on 10 October near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The 737 was at a height of 12,000 ft en route from Newcastle to Cos in Greece and the Tornados were flying to RAF Leaming, in

Yorkshire. Avoiding instructions were given to the Dan Air aircraft by Newcastle airport air traffic control and the Tornados passed above the 737.

The precise details are being investigated by the CAA's safety regulation group. The information will then be sent to the joint air miss working group (JAWG) for assessment. The JAWG comprises representatives from all sectors of the industry, including operators, pilots and air traffic controllers.

MV Derbyshire (Sinking)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will hold a public inquiry into the sinking of the Derbyshire, following publication of the report of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) on Tuesday 23 October at column *98*.

A595

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will undertake a further survey of the pedestrian and vehicle figures for the A595 at Bigrigg, and reconsider the case for a pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Chope: Yes. The Department's agent, Cumbria county council, has been given instructions to carry out a further survey.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the A595 Egremont bypass.

Mr. Chope: The next stage is for the compulsory purchase order to be made.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Freehold

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any proposals for law reform to enable householders to have the same right to purchase the freeholds of their property as exists in England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I have approved the publication of the final report of the land law working group which makes wide-ranging recommendations on the law of property in Northern Ireland, including recommendations on ground rents and the purchasing of freeholds. It is intended to publish the report before the end of the year, following which there will be a period of public consultation on its recommendations with a view to bringing forward legislation.

Commons Brae, Castlereagh

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the condition of the road surface at Commons Brae off Saintfield road in the borough of Castlereagh; and what proposals he has to improve this road surface.

Mr. Needham: The road surface at Commons Brae is in good condition. There are no proposals to improve it at present.

Local Government Finance

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the percentage increase in each of the last 10 years and the current year in *(a)* the regional rate and *(b)* the local rate in each of the council areas of Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The information is set out in the tables.

a. Regional rate: Percentage increase over the previous year in each of the last 10 years and the current year.

1980-81	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
17·9	9·8	6·9	2·9	7·9	8·1	9·4	2·9	7·98	12·63	7·39

b. Local rate by council area: Percentage increase over the previous year in each of the last 10 years and the current year.

Council	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
Antrim	28·8	12·1	21·5	0·0	2·05	3·70	8·93	6·01	5·15	3·92	2·83
Ards	50	16·7	16·7	2·0	0·0	0·0	6·00	0·0	1·89	6·48	13·04
Armagh	25·8	7·7	8·9	4·9	4·07	2·99	10·14	0·0	7·89	7·32	7·95
Ballymena	17·3	11·1	8·3	4·6	4·04	2·39	4·54	4·87	7·53	2·68	6·82
Ballymoney	30·8	35·3	11·6	3·9	2·05	3·05	7·10	1·66	2·17	6·91	7·46
Banbridge	16·7	10·7	7·1	6·9	14·06	10·47	6·77	6·27	0·0	0·0	7·65
Belfast	30·06	16·0	18·1	10·4	7·00	6·46	10·60	4·81	4·91	0·0	4·91
Carrickfergus	29·3	24·0	8·6	2·5	3·09	4·27	4·55	3·32	5·20	4·2	5·70
Castlereagh	30·2	10·7	9·7	−2·9	−3·0	3·13	18·42	4·91	−2·68	−5·01	17·12
Coleraine	27·8	11·6	6·8	4·9	0·0	5·26	8·89	2·04	6·00	3·77	0·0
Cookstown	21·6	11·1	10·0	13·6	4·02	10·14	10·88	8·18	−0·58	11·7	8·38
Craigavon	15·6	14·9	10·0	8·0	4·09	3·8	9·61	5·22	0·0	6·5	4·89
Derry	35·1	12·9	10·5	8·9	2·06	7·99	12·61	3·73	4·39	5·86	9·38
Down	30·4	23·3	16·2	4·7	0·0	0·0	17·78	13·21	8·33	4·62	2·94
Dungannon	23·2	13·2	6·7	6·3	2·09	8·57	9·21	6·02	0·0	0·0	8·52
Fermanagh	25·5	11·9	8·3	6·3	5·03	6·88	14·04	4·10	5·42	3·74	3·60
Larne	16·7	11·4	7·7	3·6	0·0	3·45	9·44	6·70	6·09	1·79	13·97
Limavady	22·5	12·2	10·9	3·3	1·06	9·38	11·43	5·00	26·23	8·05	7·45
Lisburn	20·9	26·8	12·4	7·5	6·00	1·40	5·54	1·95	7·68	0·0	3·71
Magherafelt	18·75	14·5	13·8	17·2	3·08	9·77	10·65	12·28	5·97	6·53	5·74
Moyle	28	43·8	8·7	3·8	5·05	9·13	10·04	0·0	−0·38	4·43	8·51
Newry and Mourne	20	13·0	27·9	10·3	7·00	6·52	10·82	9·94	0·0	−2·85	0·0
Newtownabbey	18·75	7·9	4·9	4·7	6·07	9·58	4·77	3·86	4·93	6·73	0·92

Council	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
North Down	33·3	20·3	11·7	5·8	3·03	9·57	10;49	7·03	4·60	3·38	5·15
Omagh	23·7	23·4	17·2	14·7	5·01	4·88	9·30	9·89	6·49	6·36	9·91
Strabane	19·2	9·7	7·5	15·5	0·0	4·82	16·09	6·93	5·56	6·58	10·70

HOME DEPARTMENT

Motor Vehicles (Information)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to improve co-ordination between the police and DVLA on the recording and sharing of information on the ownership, registration and keeping of motor vehicles to combat the resale of stolen vehicles.

Mr. John Patten: We have no such plans. I understand from the police and the DVLA that they regard the existing arrangements for co-ordination as satisfactory.

Telecommunications (Complaints)

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted under section 49 of the British Telecommunications Act 1981 for each of the years since the Act came into force; and how many of those prosecuted were *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is given in the table below. 1989 data are not yet available.

Persons prosecuted for offences under Section 49 of the British Telecommunications Act 1981, by sex. 1981-1988 England and Wales

Prosecutions	Males	Females
1981	—	—
1982	—	—
1983	3	1
1984	2	—
1985	1	2
1986	—	—
1987	—	—
1988	—	—

Vagrancy

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* prosecuted and convicted in the Metropolitan and City of London police districts in the year ended December 1989 under the Vagrancy Act 1824 for (i) begging and (ii) sleeping out, *(b)* prosecuted and convicted in the rest of England and Wales in the same period for the same offences; and how many people at *(a)* and *(b)* above (i) were fined, (ii) received custodial sentences, (iii) served custodial sentences in default of payment of fines, (iv) received conditional discharges and (v) received probation orders.

Mr. John Patten: Data for 1989 will not be available until November.

Domestic Violence

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police in the last year for which figures are available; and how many resulted in *(a)* committal proceedings and *(b)* convictions in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: Information on notifiable offences of violence against the person is published annually in table 2.8 of "Criminal Statistics England and Wales". The figures for 1989 are published in table 6 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/90. Regular information on domestic violence is not reported separately to this Department by the police forces in England and Wales. However, detailed information on homicide is presented in chapter 4 of the above publication. Some incomplete information was published in "Criminal Statistics" in 1979 and 1980. In addition, results obtained from a special survey of violent crime recorded by the police and from the 1988 British Crime Survey were published in Home Office Research Bulletin No. 27. There is also some information in chapter 7 of "Domestic Violence" Home Office Research Study 107. Copies of all these publications are available in the Library. Information on prosecutions and convictions is not collected in sufficient detail to distinguish domestic violence.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individual police forces have dedicated domestic violence units.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: This information is not collected centrally, but I understand that dedicated units have been established by three forces to date.

Brixton Prison (Suicides)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suicides per quarter have taken place in Brixton prison in the last two years.

Mrs. Rumbold: The number of deaths of inmates at their own hand at Brixton prison in each quarter over the last two years is shown in the table.

Deaths at the prisoner's own hand at Her Majesty's prison Brixton between 1 October 1988 and 30 September 1990

Period	Number of deaths at own hand[1]
1 October to 31 December 1988	—
1 January to 31 March 1989	1
1 April to 30 June 1989	[1]3
1 July to 30 September 1989	[1][2]3
1 October to 31 December 1989	1
1 January to 31 March 1990	1
1 April to 30 June 1990	—
1 July to 30 September 1990	[3]2

[1] The figures in brackets give the number of deaths in respect of which a verdict of suicide was returned at the inquest.
[2] Includes one death which occurred at Isleworth crown court.
[3] Neither inquest has yet been held.

Child Care

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what child care provision his Department provides for the pre-school age children of Home Office employees or after-school or holiday care for children aged five years or over; and whether he has any plans to increase provision.

Mr. Waddington: The Home Office is making day nursery provision available, for payment, for children of its staff in Croydon with effect from 30 October and in Bootle from 5 November. Consideration is being given, with other Government Departments, to making similar provisions in central London. Holiday play scheme places have already been made available for the children of staff in Bootle, Croydon, Peterborough and Westminster.

Police Forces

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men are employed by the individual police forces in Britain; and at what grade they are employed.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend is responsible for policing in England and Wales where the number of male and female police officers as at 31 August 1990 is as follows:

Force	*Chief Con.*[1]	*Deputy Chief Con.*[2]	*Assistant Chief Con.*[3]	*Chief Supt.*	*Supt.*	*Chief Insp.*	*Insp.*	*Sgt.*	*Const.*	*Total male ranks*
Avon and Somerset	1	1	3	12	38	68	147	467	2,044	2,781
Bedfordshire	1	1	1	5	15	19	50	137	677	906
Cambridgeshire	1	1	1	5	12	24	59	190	770	1,063
Cheshire	1	1	2	6	23	31	104	267	1,207	1,642
Cleveland	1	1	2	7	19	25	87	229	943	1,314
Cumbria	1	1	1	7	19	24	69	189	738	1,049
Derbyshire	1	1	2	7	25	34	94	254	1,171	1,589
Devon and Cornwall	1	1	3	13	34	46	132	440	1,915	2,585
Dorset	1	1	1	6	16	23	69	189	834	1,140
Durham	1	1	2	5	17	28	75	208	926	1,263
Dyfed Powys	1	1	1	7	13	21	38	149	618	849
Essex	1	1	3	12	31	59	121	416	1,897	2,541
Gloucestershire	1	1	1	6	14	20	54	171	782	1,050
Greater Manchester	1	1	5	27	91	128	388	1,022	4,477	6,140
Gwent	1	1	1	5	14	17	46	152	668	905
Hampshire	1	1	3	11	35	51	127	476	2,132	2,837
Hertfordshire	1	1	2	9	23	30	90	244	1,025	1,425
Humberside	1	1	1	8	23	37	204	315	1,345	1,835
Kent	1	1	3	12	36	50	170	419	1,943	2,635
Lancashire	1	1	3	13	40	72	158	507	2,059	2,854
Leicestershire	1	1	2	7	23	29	100	265	1,142	1,570
Lincolnshire	1	1	1	4	10	24	65	193	782	1,081
Merseyside	1	1	3	20	60	78	253	730	2,964	4,110
Norfolk	1	1	1	6	18	22	65	196	161	1,271
Northamptonshire	1	1	1	6	13	22	70	167	742	1,023
Northumbria	1	1	3	13	48	63	188	508	2,362	3,187
North Wales	1	1	1	7	24	27	66	206	863	1,196
North Yorkshire	1	1	2	7	17	26	75	206	926	1,261
Nottinghamshire	1	—	1	8	27	32	129	328	1,611	2,137
South Wales	1	1	3	14	42	64	178	525	2,028	2,586
South Yorkshire	1	1	3	11	40	43	156	437	1,954	2,646
Staffordshire	1	1	2	11	31	50	120	319	1,384	1,919
Suffolk	1	1	1	6	17	20	59	177	791	1,073
Surrey	1	1	2	7	23	24	94	246	1,048	1,446
Sussex	1	1	4	10	33	39	175	443	1,979	2,685
Thames Valley	1	1	3	12	35	46	174	485	2,476	3,233
Warwickshire	1	1	1	5	14	17	60	154	658	911
West Mercia	1	1	2	11	29	39	127	288	1,264	1,762
West Midlands	1	1	5	24	78	121	387	1,029	4,252	5,898
West Yorkshire	1	1	5	19	69	80	280	794	3,423	4,672
Wiltshire	1	1	1	6	16	23	58	180	739	1,025
City of London	1	1	1	6	11	20	53	117	491	701
Metropolitan	4	15	34	164	242	484	1,421	4,158	18,269	24,791

[1] Includes ranks of assistant commissioner and above in Metropolitan police, and commissioner in the City of London police.
[2] Includes deputy assistant commissioner in Metropolitan police and assistant commissioner in the City of London police.
[3] Includes commanders in Metropolitan police and City of London police.

Force	*Chief Con.*[1]	*Deputy Chief Con.*[2]	*Assistant Chief Con.*[3]	*Chief Supt.*	*Supt.*	*Chief Inspector*	*Inspector*	*Sergeant*	*Con.*	*Total Female Ranks*
Avon and Somerset	—	—	—	1	—	1	4	14	268	288
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	8	129	141
Cambridgeshire	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	5	115	122
Cheshire	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	22	191	218
Cleveland	—	—	—	—	1	1	8	7	131	148
Cumbria	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	115	120
Derbyshire	—	—	—	—	1	2	8	6	172	189
Devon and Cornwall	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	14	264	282
Dorset	—	—	—	1	1	—	3	7	134	146
Durham	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	4	107	113
Dyfed Powys	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	82	86
Essex	—	—	—	—	1	—	6	22	272	301

Force	Chief Con.[1]	Deputy Chief Con.[2]	Assistant Chief Con.[3]	Chief Supt.	Supt.	Chief Inspector	Inspector	Sergeant	Con.	Total Female Ranks
Gloucestershire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	100	103
Greater Manchester	—	—	—	1	—	4	12	47	816	880
Gwent	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	4	88	95
Hampshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	11	298	314
Hertfordshire	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	11	211	224
Humberside	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	6	146	156
Kent	—	—	—	—	1	2	2	21	338	364
Lancashire	—	—	—	—	1	2	5	15	302	325
Leicestershire	—	—	—	—	—	2	5	14	178	199
Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	1	1	4	4	99	1,190
Merseyside	—	—	1	—	3	2	6	35	523	570
Norfolk	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	7	101	110
Northamptonshire	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	3	106	111
Northumbria	—	—	—	—	1	1	5	15	312	334
North Wales	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	8	129	139
North Yorkshire	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	9	120	130
Nottinghamshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	8	192	202
South Wales	—	—	—	—	1	—	3	15	249	268
South Yorkshire	—	—	—	—	—	1	5	13	292	311
Staffordshire	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	12	261	276
Suffolk	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	5	115	123
Surrey	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	13	195	210
Sussex	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	18	274	295
Thames Valley	—	—	—	1	3	—	4	16	455	479
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—	—	1	3	3	98	105
West Mercia	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	10	235	248
West Midlands	—	—	—	1	2	1	14	56	903	977
West Yorkshire	—	—	—	1	—	2	8	26	570	607
Wiltshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	7	102	111
City of London	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	9	78	90
Metropolitan	—	—	1	3	6	10	30	262	3,183	3,495

[1] Includes ranks of assistant commissioner and above in Metropolitan police, and commissioner in the City of London police.
[2] Includes deputy assistant commissioner in Metropolitan police and assistant commissioner in the City of London police.
[3] Includes commanders in Metropolitan police and City of London police.

Police Stations (Rape Suites)

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individual police forces have dedicated rape suites.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information is not collected centrally, but I understand that well over half the forces in England and Wales have now established these suites.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the inquiry by the Devon and Cornwall police into the Birmingham pub bombings case to be complete; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) on 22 October at columns *19-20*.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Waddington: This information is not collated centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. If the right hon. Gentleman is aware of any instance in which a child or young person has been improperly or unlawfully refused a procedure for making a complaint or representation about a matter falling within my responsibility I will look into the matter if he will send me the details.

Electoral Statistics

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people had registered to vote by 10 October in the Finchley constituency.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested will not become available until the electoral register is published on or before 15 February 1991.

Ampthill Games

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Bedfordshire on the requirement for citizens of the United Kingdom participating in the Ampthill games on 4 November to divulge their names and addresses to the Bedfordshire police; what information he has on any similar requirement imposed on internationally famous sportsmen when participating in similar games in the United Kingdom; and what is the Government's policy on such requirements.

Mr. Waddington: The police have no power to require those who participate in sporting events to disclose their names and addresses. I understand that the police did not

ask for this information in the case to which the hon. Member refers. The information was provided voluntarily by the organisers.

Birmingham Public Inquiry Office

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the staffing by grade at the proposed Birmingham public inquiry office.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The most recent estimate indicated a requirement for two executive officers, five administrative officers, one administrative assistant and a custodian.

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the likely workload of the proposed Birmingham public inquiry office.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: It was estimated in 1985 that the proposed Birmingham public inquiry office would attract around 16,000 callers per annum.

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the savings at other offices following the opening of the proposed Birmingham public inquiry office.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: A study in 1985 suggested that there would be a reduction of around 6,500 postal applications per annum at Lunar house, with an approximate net saving at that time of £65,000.

Dogs

Mr. Andy Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his review of model byelaws for the regulation of dogs in the light of comments received in response to the Department of the Environment consultation document "Action on Dogs".

Mrs. Rumbold: On 10 August 1989 the Department of the Environment published a consultation document, "Action on Dogs", which sought views on various issues including the content and operation of the Home Office model byelaws. Comments were submitted by 126 local authorities and other bodies and these have been carefully considered in the light of our experience in dealing with dog byelaw applications since the models were last reviewed in 1987.

When reaching his conclusions, the aim of the Home Secretary has been to offer a wide range of possible byelaw provisions for dog control which can be used by local authorities in a variety of combinations to produce schemes tailored to meet local needs.

By far the largest number of those commenting suggested making the "poop-scoop" byelaw more freely available. This makes it an offence for a person in charge of a dog to fail to remove any faeces it may deposit in designated parks, recreation grounds and open spaces. At present the byelaw may be applied to any children's playground or sports pitch, beaches and promenades in the summer season, trunk road picnic sites, and picnic areas in country parks, but it may be applied to parks and open spaces only where there are alternative uncontrolled areas. Experience of operating the byelaw has shown that, while it has been successful in designated parks, uncontrolled areas nearby tend to become heavily fouled. We consider that it is reasonable to expect dog owners to clear up after their pets in places used by other members of the public, including children. Therefore my right hon. and learned Friend has decided that he will be prepared to confirm "poop-scoop" byelaws for any park, recreation ground or open space, except heaths and woodlands where the local authority considers them appropriate and without the need to provide alternative uncontrolled areas. The byelaw will also be available for beaches and promenades all the year round. Parts of beaches which are subject to a dog ban during the summer season may be designated as "poop-scoop" areas for the remainder of the year.

We have also considered the byelaws available to control fouling on highways. At present, local authorities may introduce a byelaw which makes it an offence simply to allow a dog to foul a pavement next to a carriageway or an adjacent grass verge up to 4 metres wide. Although most local authorities have this byelaw, it has been criticised on various grounds: it provides no protection either for footpaths which are not adjacent to a highway or for pedestrianised areas and, once the fouling has taken place, the faeces remain there. Since our aim is to encourage dog owners to remove dog mess from the environment, my right hon. and learned Friend proposes to replace the "no fouling" byelaw for pavements with a further extension of the "poop-scoop" byelaw.

In addition to recreation grounds and open spaces, the "poop-scoop" byelaw will be freely available for local authorities to apply to any footpath in a built-up or residential area whether or not it is adjacent to a highway. The byelaw can also be applied to any grass verge which is maintained in good order and is adjacent to a highway. It will also be available for any pedestrianised area owned by a local authority such as a shopping precinct.

My right hon. and learned Friend has also decided to make the "poop-scoop" byelaw available for the gutters of highways in urban areas. While it would be too hazardous to both the pet owner and the traffic to extend the "poop-scoop" byelaw to the carriageway itself, the "no-fouling" byelaw will become available for carriageways in built-up areas. This will prevent the transfer of the problem from the gutter to the carriageway and deter owners from permitting their pets to foul the highway. It will be open to local authorities to choose to use these byelaws for pavement, gutter and carriageways either individually or in combination to meet their local needs.

We have also considered the operation of the "dogs on leads" byelaw. This compels owners to keep their dogs on leads at all times in designated places. It may be applied to parks and other open spaces where a need can be shown —eg ornamental gardens, children's play areas and bowling greens, promenades adjacent to beach ban areas during the summer months, and areas where the disturbance of wildlife is a consideration.

There is a need to balance the interests of those who wish to visit parks without being bothered by loose dogs, such as mothers with young children and pet owners who wish to exercise their dogs off the lead at some time during the day. But the balance is, in general, best determined locally, bearing in mind the need to protect those, such as children, who are likely to be frightened or disturbed by loose dogs. In order to assist local authorities, my right

hon. and learned Friend has decided that a wider range of byelaws should be made available to promote greater flexibility.

First, the "dogs on leads" byelaw will be available in a wider range of circumstances than previously permitted, including promenades all the year round, where the local authority is able to justify the use of the byelaw, which will normally involve showing areas are available locally where dogs may be exercised off the lead at some time during the day. Secondly, two new model byelaws will be made available. Instead of imposing a requirement for a dog to be kept on a lead in a park or part of a park all day, it will be possible for a local authority to limit the lead requirement to certain times of day or days of the week, for example when young children are most likely to be there. Different times could be imposed in different parks in the same area to cater for various local needs. A second new byelaw will give powers to council officers to ask for dogs to be put on a lead if it is necessary to prevent nuisance or behaviour giving reasonable grounds for annoyance. This byelaw will be available to local authorities to apply to designated parks and open spaces, again where a need can be demonstrated.

Finally, we have examined the byelaw which prohibits dogs from entering designated and enclosed grounds, enclosed parts of other grounds (children's play areas, bowling greens, etc.) and parts of beaches during the summer season. My right hon. and learned Friend has concluded that these measures should continue to be available on the same basis as before, but that a wider variety of byelaws should be available to the local authority. Two further model byelaws have been developed, first, a byelaw which enables dogs to be banned from a designated park or open space for a specified period of the day. This will be similar to the new time-limited "dogs on leads" byelaw and will be available for open parks as well as enclosed ones. Secondly, we have developed a new model byelaw which will enable local authorities to ban dogs from designated enclosed parks, apart from a specially designated and enclosed exercise area. The exercise area will need to be of a reasonable size and usually be subject to a "poop-scoop" byelaw. Owners will be required to take their dogs on the lead from the park entrance to the exercise area.

When considering which combination of byelaws is most suitable for their areas, local authorities will need to bear in mind that, unlike the general law, the validity of byelaws, including their reasonableness, can be challenged in the courts. Local authorities will need to weigh up the needs of various sections of the community. These will include mothers with children and others who wish to be able to enjoy a visit to the park either free from dogs or free from boisterous loose dogs. There will also be pet owners who wish to exercise their dogs off the lead at least once a day, reasonably near their homes. These will include families with children and dogs who wish to go to the park together, shift workers, the elderly who cannot walk far and solitary women who would wish to choose a time to exercise their dogs when they feel it is safe to do so.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment intends that the same range of byelaws should be available to local housing authorities for public housing estates and amenity greens. The consultation paper "Action on Dogs" also sought comments on the present procedure for local highway authorities to make "dogs on leads" orders under section 27 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, and whether this power should be replaced by a byelaw making power. The balance of comment was in favour of change. The Government have taken note of this and propose to take this forward when a suitable opportunity arises.

My right hon. and learned Friend is grateful to all the bodies that commented on the byelaws and he hopes that the increased range of measures will strengthen the ability of councils to regulate dogs and to deal effectively with the fouling of public areas. Details of this answer, together with the wording of the new model byelaws, will be circulated to local authorities shortly.

European Parliamentary Constituencies

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Boundary Commission intends to conduct any supplementary review of European parliamentary constituencies in England.

Mr. Waddington: The Commission has informed me that it intends to consider making a supplementary report on the following two European parliamentary constituencies in England:

Oxford and Buckinghamshire
Bedford South.

Jet Skis

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will approve local authority byelaws to enable local authorities to control the use of jet skis.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* My right hon. and learned Friend will consider any proposal from a local authority which wishes to make byelaws to regulate the use of jet skis, under any enabling power for which he is the confirming authority.

Immigration

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of outstanding cases for each month in 1989 and 1990 under the headings *(a)* naturalisation, *(b)* registration, *(c)* refugees, *(d)* asylum seekers and *(e)* general immigration work, and the numbers of new applications in each of those areas for each month.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The number of outstanding cases relates to casework in B1 and B4 divisions in the immigration and nationality department and is as follows:

Outstanding cases

	Nationality		*General immigration casework*[1,2]	*Asylum and related casework*[1,3]
	Naturalisation[1]	*Registration*[1]		
1989				
January	[6]	[6]	45,237	[6]
February	[6]	[6]	43,774	[6]

	Nationality		General immigration casework[1,2]	Asylum and related casework[1,3]
	Naturalisation[1]	Registration[1]		
March	41,154	84,438	43,011	[6]
April	43,855	81,068	39,995	[6]
May	46,109	85,112	36,629	9,548
June	52,318	86,452	34,782	9,678
July	59,226	73,689	33,806	9,645
August	64,193	78,365	30,475	10,091
September	63,877	70,858	29,204	11,067
October	65,925	68,700	30,520	11,650
November	64,924	59,765	30,774	12,767
December	64,930	55,239	30,678	13,539
1990				
January	64,402	47,622	29,274	14,475
February	65,355	42,791	27,978	15,031
March	65,050	38,832	27,968	16,272
April	63,902	35,780	26,197	17,270
May	64,273	33,755	23,444	18,150
June	64,318	32,081	22,584	19,752
July	65,203	30,648	21,073	21,069
August	66,031	27,312	21,880	23,229
September	64,681	26,103	21,227	26,595

[6] Not available.

The number of new applications received is not available in the form requested, but the information which is available is as follows:

Intake

	Nationality		General Immigration Casework[1,2]	Asylum and related Casework[1,4]
	Naturalisation[1]	Registration[1]		
1989				
January	3,177	8,924	22,231	670
February	4,033	11,782	19,814	710
March	5,094	11,131	22,745	1,010
April	4,432	10,316	19,456	860
May	3,427	9,037	18,271	1,820
June	7,963	6,971	22,139	2,920
July	9,777	4,491	21,826	850
August	7,160	3,030	23,587	1,210
September	1,452	904	24,760	1,660
October	1,625	884	27,413	1,560
November	1,622	933	26,707	1,220
December	849	601	18,805	1,620
1990				
January	1,515	830	23,545	1,550
February	1,586	972	21,935	1,220
March	1,485	843	26,612	1,330
April	629	540	21,337	1,300
May	1,589	767	23,285	1,230
June	1,457	1,276	24,681	1,820
July	2,714	1,144	26,459	1,750
August	1,408	553	25,759	2,640
September	2,033	1,001	25,536	3,060

[1] Does not include applications received in the Department but which await allocation to caseworkers.
[2] Includes referred entry clearance applications, and enquires submitted by letter, as well as variation of leave cases. Includes both general and Eastern European casework (the latter was absorbed into general casework in July 1990.)
[3] These figures are a total of all work outstanding in the Refugee Unit.
[4] Provisional figures. Those for 1990, particularly for recent months, understate because of delays in recording cases on the computer system.

Tear Gas and CS Gas

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes to review the legislation governing the storing of supplies of tear gas/CS gas at Territorial Army headquarters in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have been asked to reply.

Containers of CS gas and similar irritants are stored in accordance with military regulations for ammunition storage. All premises which store these materials are inspected and licensed by the Chief Inspector of Explosives (Army) and hazard assessments are made under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1989.

Orthchloro-benzylidene Melonitrile

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those Territorial Army headquarters in the United Kingdom that are known to stock supplies of orthchloro-benzylidene melonitrile.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I have been asked to reply.

It would not be appropriate, for security reasons, to provide this information.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Eastern Europe

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government have plans to offer aid to the newly democratised countries in eastern Europe for the specific purpose of combating pollution and protecting the environment.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are already doing so through the European Community, and £35 million has already been spent on environmental projects in eastern Europe this year alone. United Kingdom experts have participated in fact-finding missions. We are also prepared to consider carefully targeted support under our know-how funds for eastern Europe.

Kenya

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Kenya concerning the fate of those designated by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience, including George Anyona, Edward Oyugi, Ngotho Kariuki, Augustus Kathanga and Kanu and Caleb Mokaya Gichana; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have made representations on several occasions to the Government of Kenya urging the release of those detainees held without charge. It is our understanding that Messrs Anyona, Oyugi, Kariuki, Kathanga, and Gichana have now been charged in accordance with Kenyan law. The Kenyans are well aware of our concern for the maintenance of good human rights standards.

Argentina

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made any representations to the Argentine Government about abuses of human rights in Trelew, Patagonia, Argentina.

Mr. Garel-Jones: No. We have seen a report of public demonstrations in Patagonia but we have not received any reports of human rights abuses.

Gulf Crisis

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about indications given by the United States Government to the Government of Iraq, prior to the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, concerning the United States Government's likely response to such an eventuality.

Mr. Waldegrave: This is a matter for the United States Government.

Cambodia

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the Ministers in *(a)* the Lords and *(b)* the Commons who have had responsibility for Cambodia since 1980.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Since 1980 Ministers in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with responsibility for Cambodia have been:

Peter Blaker MP—1 January 1980—August 1981
Nicholas Ridley MP—until November 1981
Douglas Hurd MP—until August 1982
Cranley Onslow MP—until February 1983
Douglas Hurd MP—until August 1983
Richard Luce MP—until Novembber 1985
Timothy Renton MP—until August 1987
David Mellor MP—until November 1987
Lord Glenarthur—until November 1989
Lord Brabazon—until July 1990
The Earl of Caithness—since July 1990

Antarctica

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his present policy towards ratification of the convention on the regulation of Antarctic mineral resource activities; if he will consider supporting the Australian initiative calling for a new all-embracing environmental convention; annd if he will make a statement.

Mr. Garel-Jones: My hon. Friend will have received a copy of my letter which has been sent to all Members and which encloses a copy of our policy paper "Britain in Antarctica". This paper sets out our position on all issues concerning Antarctica including the convention on the regulation of Antarctic mineral resource activities (CRAMRA). The United Kingdom, along with 18 out of 38 member states, has signed CRAMRA, but there is no set timetable for ratification.

We remain committed to the protection of the Antarctic environment and we look forward to discussion of all proposals to that end at the meeting of Antarctic treaty consultative parties in November. Along with a number of other member states, we are proposing an environmental protocol to the existing Antarctic treaty which will provide comprehensive measures for protecting the Antarctic environment and for which we believe there is widespread support.

Palestinians

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek a report on the Palestinian doctor found hanged in the occupied territories in the early part of October; and as to what progress there has been towards an autopsy.

Mr. Waldegrave: The consulate-general in Jerusalem is watching this case closely. We understand that an autopsy has been carried out at the request of the family. The preliminary findings from this, suggesting death by suffocation, have been published. But we await a fuller report.

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the number of Palestinians he had originally intended to meet during his recent visit to Israel; and how many of them were imprisoned before his visit.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had intended to meet 29 Palestinians for discussions and lunch in Jerusalem on 17 October. Of these, one—Feisal Husseini—was detained by the Israeli authorities before his visit.

Gaza Strip

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the security problem that existed in the area of Gaza strip where he had been scheduled to open a British Council operation at the time at which he had been originally scheduled to carry out the opening.

Mr. Waldegrave: The trial of a Hamas leader from Gaza, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, was scheduled to begin on 17 October when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had intended to open the new British Council office there. This would have been marked by a general strike and a significant increase in tension in the area. My right hon. Friend therefore decided to delay the opening which was carried out on his behalf by the consul-general in Jerusalem on 24 October.

Israel

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether, in his recent visit to Israel, he entered into any commitments to the Israeli Government in the event of an Iraqi attack on Israel.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs made it clear to the Israelis during his recent visit that such an attack would be absolutely unacceptable.

British Muslims

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will meet British Muslims recently returned from a visit to the Gulf states.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 22 October]:* I will meet Mr. Yusuf Islam shortly.

HEALTH

Cataract Operations

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources can be made available under section 64 of the general scheme for care grants to encourage district health authorities to participate in the schemes organised by the Impact Foundation to reduce waiting lists for cataract operations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Health authorities cannot make applications for core grants under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. These are available only to voluntary organisations.

The Impact Foundation has made an application and we are currently considering this.

Waiting list initiative funds have been, and are being, used by health authorities to support schemes set up by the Impact Foundation to reduce waiting lists and times. So far these schemes have proved to be cost effective and have enabled many patients to be treated from waiting lists.

Mental Illness (Women)

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidents of women suffering from mental illness are currently recorded with his Department; and, of those, how many have children in care.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are now available locally and nationally, or will soon be available under the Children Act 1989, to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The National Health Service (Service Committees and Tribunal) Regulations 1974 (as amended) made under sections 29, 36, 39 and 42 of the National Health Service Act 1977 provide for a complaint to be formally investigated if it has been made by or on behalf of any person entitled to family health services and alleges that a family practitioner has failed to comply with the relevant terms of service.

(b) Directions issued to health authorities under section 17 of the NHS Act 1977, and issued following the Hospital Complaints Procedure Act 1985, provide a formal framework for dealing with complaints made about services, care or treatment received in hospital.

(c) Section 120(1)(b) of the Mental Health Act 1983, requires that any complaint made by a detained, or formerly detained, patient should be investigated. This duty is undertaken by the Mental Health Act Commission under section 121(b) of the same Act.

(d) Section 111 of the NHS Act 1977 enables any individual to make a complaint to the Health Service Commissioner with regard to certain failures in service or maladministration by health authorities, family health service authorities, the Mental Health Act Commission and the Public Health Laboratory Service Board.

(e) Section 26 of the Local Government Act 1974 allows complaints of maladministration to be made to the Commissioner for Local Administration in relation to local authority personal social services.

(f) The Department has introduced formal complaints procedures in both its youth treatment centres. Complaints may be made by residents about any aspect of their life in the youth treatment centres.

(g) Section 26(3) of the Children Act 1989, to be implemented in October 1991, requires local authorities to set up procedures to consider representations including complaints about the provision of services to children and families under part III of that Act. Section 59(4) requires voluntary organisations to set up procedures to consider representations including complaints made by children accommodated by them, but not looked after by local authorities, and by other people connected with the child. Paragraph 10(2)(1) of schedule 6 to the Act places a similar requirement on registered children's homes.

The Department does not hold information centrally about national or local procedures for making complaints and representations which fall outside the scope of the legislation mentioned.

Nebulisers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to change the arrangements for issuing nebulisers to national health service patients.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: There are no such plans. Powered nebulisers will continue to be supplied through the hospital service for those patients for whom they are considered clinically necessary.

ENVIRONMENT

Sheffield Development Corporation

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the total possible and actual number of attendances of each member at meetings of the board of Sheffield development corporation since their appointment.

Mr. Portillo: Attendance at board meetings is a matter for the board of Sheffield development corporation.

London Docklands Development Corporation

185. **Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many firms were relocated from the area of the Royal Docks since the inception of the London docklands development corporation and how much money was paid to these firms in compensation for these removals.

Mr. Portillo: The London Docklands development corporation has since 1981 relocated 71 firms previously operating in the Royal Docks area, and £2·13 million has been paid out in compensation for these removals.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Chris Patten: The only formal procedures relating to my Department are those under which the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration may investigate complaints drawn to his attention by hon. Members. The Department does not make any distinction on grounds of age in responding to complaints from members of the public, or from hon. Members on behalf of their constituents.

Education Authorities (Land Sales)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on how many occasions since 1979 his Department has compelled education authorities to sell land that was being held for future school building.

Mr. Atkins: Directions under section 98 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 are not issued where public sector owners have firm and specific plans to bring land into use for the purposes of their functions within a reasonable period.

Palace of Westminster (Repairs)

Mr. Fishburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the work carried out in the current year to the great clock.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: As my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope) announced on 22 March at column *683*, the hour strike had to be taken out of action to allow essential repair work to be carried out. The chime was restored on 28 August.

The hon. Member will no doubt have noticed that the tone of the chime is lower than it was before the work started. This is mainly because the bearings which are new need time to settle in and new rubber buffers have been installed. However, a check with the archives has confirmed that the tone is identical to a recording made after similar work was carried out in 1956.

Cornish Coast (Wildlife Losses)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many dolphins have been found dead in the area around Portreath and Newquay in the past 12 months; and what were the causes of death.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* The British Museum (Natural History) holds a comprehensive record of confirmed reports of strandings of cetaceans around the British Coast. Its records for the past 12 months show that 28 cetaceans were found dead around the coasts of Devon and Cornwall. Of these, three were found between St. Ives and Newquay. Comparison with past records shows nothing unusual in these numbers.

Since July, a systematic study of the strandings of cetaceans has been funded by this Department with post-mortems and the taking of samples for contaminant analysis being co-ordinated by a veterinary surgeon based at London Zoo. A post mortem carried out on the only cetacean found in the Portreath/Newquay area since the co-ordinator's appointment has shown no obvious cause of death.

EC Statistics

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent action he has taken to extend the collection and publication of statistical data on the environment; and if he will make a statement on the policies of other EC member states on the compilation and release of their environmental statistics.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* A wide range of statistical material is published by my Department, including the annual Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics. In order to bring together environmental statistics in a more coherent and comprehensive form, the Government proposed in their Environment White Paper "This Common Inheritance" to publish at regular intervals a statistical report covering a range of data on environmental topics. It is hoped that the first report will be published in 1992.

Other EC countries are making similar efforts to improve the collection and dissemination of environmental statistics. All are committed, for example, to support the work of the European Environment Agency, when

operational, to ensure that the data underpinning environmental policy are objective, comparable and reliable, at the European level.

Printing (Toxicity)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what requirements exist for the treatment of waste water to be undertaken by print workers before discharge to local sewers or natural drainage channels.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* The treatment required will depend on the terms of the trade effluent consent by the relevant sewerage undertaker or, for natural drainage channels, the terms of the discharge consent by the National Rivers Authority.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the risk to print workers posed by the discovery of the radioactive isotopes Caesium 137, Caesium 134 and Cobalt 60 in newsprint imported from Scandinavian countries since April 1986.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* I have been asked to reply.

Measurements of Caesium 137 present in paper imported from Scandinavia indicate levels of contamination little higher than those present in any natural material. This would represent only a negligible hazard to print workers handling newsprint.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has no records of measurements for Caesium 134 and Cobalt 60 in newsprint imported from Scandinavia. However, HSE can confidently state that these measurements would be less than that for Caesium 137.

EC Environmental Directives

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on European Community document 8221/90 Env 184 FIN 268 on the implementation of Council regulation (EEC) No. 2242/87 on action by the Community relating to the environment, dated 27 July.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* The document concerned was a report by the European Commission on applications received and funding given during 1989 under the "ACE" Programme (Action by the Community relating to the Environment). An explanatory memorandum to Parliament on the document was submited by the Department of the Environment on 13 September.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what response he has made to European Commission document 8288/90 ENV 186 COM (90) 287 Final being a proposal for a Council directive harmonising and rationalising reports on the implementation of certain directives relating to the environment, dated 2 August 1990.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* The proposal has not yet come forward for discussion in the Environment Council. We shall be submitting an explanatory memorandum on the proposal to Parliament in the near future.

ENERGY

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether any of the accountancy firms criticised by Department of Trade and Industry inspectors have been advising on the electricity privatisation.

Mr. Baldry: Further to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member on 24 April 1990 at column *146*, two reports of inspectors appointed under the Companies Act published since that time have contained criticisms of firms of accountants who have been appointed by the Department to advise on electricity privatisation.

Name of company, date of publication of reports and firm of accountants:

Minet Holdings plc and WMD Underwriting Agencies, 29 August, Ernst and Young.

Alexander Howden Holdings plc, 29 August, Ernst and Young/Peat Marwick McLintock and Co. Bermuda.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether any of the accountancy firms criticised by the joint disciplinary scheme have been advising on the electricity privatisation.

Mr. Baldry: Two reports, by the committee of inquiry appointed under the joint disciplinary scheme, have contained criticism of firms of accountants who have been appointed as advisers by the Department on electricity privatisation.

Name of Company, date of report and firm of accountants:

Orbit Holdings Limited, 28 March 1983, Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co.

Ramor Investments Limited, 27 January 1986, Price Waterhouse.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what action Her Majesty's Government have taken to implement the steps proposed to urge the European Community to negotiate effective voluntary agreements on minimum standards of energy efficiency for domestic and individual appliances, as set out in paragraph C33, page 2, of annex C of the White Paper on the Environment (Cm 1200);

(2) what studies have been undertaken or commissioned by his Department to substantiate the statement made in the White Paper on the Environment (Cm 1200) C31, page 287, that customers are unlikely to choose white domestic appliances lighting systems, central heating systems etc. on energy saving grounds; and what additional measures are planned by his Department to increase customer awareness of energy labelling on electric goods.

Mr. Baldry: A report by independent consultants on the energy efficiency of domestic electrical appliances, commissioned by the Energy Efficiency Office, was published in September (HMSO Energy Efficiency Series No. 13). The report established the general lack of consumer interest in choosing appliances on the basis of their energy efficiency. The Energy Efficiency Office is now discussing with manufacturers, advertising agencies and consumer groups the best way to present energy information to consumers and has proposed a voluntary labelling scheme for electrical appliances.

The Energy Efficiency Office is actively participating in the EC action programme for improving the efficiency of

electricity end use (PACE) and will be discussing information and efficiency standards for domestic electrical appliances at a workshop in Brussels next month. We are also pressing for work on labelling and standards to be carried forward under the proposed specialaction programme for vigorous energy efficiency (SAVE).

Renewable Energy

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will set out each of the steps taken since May 1979 to publicise the availability of finance for renewable energy from the European Community and the efforts made to encourage British companies to take advantage of such opportunities, to which reference is made in paragraph C.58, page 291, of annex C of the White Paper on the Environment (Cm 1200).

Mr. Moynihan: The Department of Energy has publicised the availability of financial support from the European Community for the research development and demonstration of renewable energy technologies since their programmes began in 1983-84. In 1989, the latest year for which figures are available, 54 United Kingdom companies and universities successfully participated in these programmes with our active encouragement. For the 1991 call for proposals the Department has so far distributed over 30,000 leaflets, mounted nine seminars throughout the United Kingdom, and responded to more than 300 requests for detailed information.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will set out the methods by which Her Majesty's Government intend to reinforce their existing programme for demonstrating renewable technologies; how much additional moneys will be made available per annum to achieve this reinforcement; and what criteria will be adopted by his Department to judge which renewable energy technologies will receive support under the initiative at paragraph C.48, page 290 of annex C of the White Paper on the Environment (Cm. 1200).

Mr. Moynihan: In the light of the White Paper on the Environment my Department's renewable energy strategy, as published in Energy Paper 55, is to be reviewed and updated during 1991. Methods, resources and criteria for support will be addressed in that comprehensive review.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the establishment of the new ministerial committee on energy efficiency foreshadowed in paragraph 5-32, page 70 of the White Paper on the Environment (Cm. 1200).

Mr. Wakeham: The ministerial committee on energy efficiency aims to raise the profile of energy efficiency by working with Government Departments, local authorities and organisations representing energy users in all sectors of the economy to stimulate improvements.

The first meeting of the committee was held on 17 October. I asked my colleagues to: develop initiatives to raise awareness of the potential for energy saving and to draw attention to the energy efficiency measures that can be taken and the Government services to promote them; to intensify the campaign to improve energy efficiency on the Government estate; and to report on how they and their Departments will take forward the initiatives announced in the White Paper on the Environment.

The first annual report of the campaign to promote energy efficiency on the Government estate was also published on 17 October. Copies of the report are in the Library of the House.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will set out the specific services he expects the Energy Efficiency Office will develop in 1991 to provide energy users with expert advice, specific to circumstances, on the purchase, design and improvement of energy using equipment and buildings, as foreshadowed in paragraph C11, page 285 of annex C of the White Paper on the Environment (Cm. 1200).

Mr. Baldry: Implementation of energy efficiency investments often involves the selection and purchase of complex equipment and alterations to the structures of buildings and to the heating, lighting and ventilation equipment, or modification of industrial processes. These purchases, alterations or modifications require engineering and costing expertise often lacking in smaller companies.

My officials have begun work on a scheme to assist with this project management of energy efficiency investments.

Offshore Installations (Safety)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the number of industrial serious occurrences and lost time incidents in the east Shetland basin for each month in the current year up to and including September.

Mr. Moynihan: Provisional figures for accidents on or near to offshore installations on the United Kingdom continental shelf reported to my Department in the current year to September are as follows:

	Fatalities	*Serious accidents*	*Dangerous occurrences*
January	—	6	37
February	—	8	32
March	1	6	39
April	—	6	38
May	—	5	30
June	—	5	26
July	[1]7	5	36
August	1	5	32
September	1	6	33

[1] Includes six fatalities resulting from the helicopter crash on the Brent Spar.

Separate figures for the east Shetland basin could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Figures in respect of disablement from work for three days or more are not readily available. I shall write to the hon. Member with this information as soon as possible.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) how many visits his Department's safety inspectors made to offshore installations in August and September; how much notice they gave in each case; and how long each visit lasted;

(2) what is the policy of his Department's safety inspectors as regards giving notice to the operators of offshore oil and gas installations before visiting; and what information he has on Norwegian practice.

Mr. Moynihan: Twelve offshore inspections were undertaken in August 1990 and six in September 1990. My Department does not maintain records of the precise duration of each inspection.

The Offshore Installations (Inspectors and Casualties) Regulations 1973 require inspectors to give offshore operators reasonable notice of their need for conveyance offshore for the purpose of carrying out an inspection. In practice approximately four days' notice are normally given. Inspectors also have the discretion to undertake surprise visits where virtually no advance notice is given and they do this from time to time.

I understand that Norwegian practice is similar.

PRIME MINISTER

Q13. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Prime Miniser if she will make a statement on the interdepartmental progress being made in terms of United Kingdom preparations for the preliminary conference and the twin inter-governmental conference meetings starting in December in Rome.

The Prime Minister: Interdepartmental preparations for both intergovernmental conferences continue in the usual way.

Electronics Industry

Q32. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she treats the international electronics industry as an appropriate area for special ministerial co-ordination.

The Prime Minister: The Government are primarily concerned with creating the right climate in which all British business can prosper. We see no need for special ministerial co-ordination of the electronics industry.

Official Visits

Q33. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to a national health service hospital.

The Prime Minister: I visit a number of hospitals during the course of each year. I have at present no plans for further visits.

Engagements

Mr. Watson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 25 October.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

Women's Issues

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will state the terms of reference, the current membership, and the criteria for membership for the ministerial group on women's issues; and if she will indicate the issues that this group has recently dealt with.

The Prime Minister: The ministerial group was established in 1986 to provide a co-ordinated examination of policy issues of special concern to women, and with a particular duty to consider the Government's response to the forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women (adopted during the United Nations decade for women).

The group is chaired by the Home Office Minister of State with special responsibility for equal opportunities, my hon. Friend the Member for Mitcham and Morden (Mrs. Rumbold). The vice-chairman is the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Social Security, my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South-West (Mrs. Shephard), who is also co-chairman of the Women's National Commission. Other members attend on the basis of their departmental responsibilities for matters within the remit of the group.

The group has recently:

—reviewed the Government's policy in areas covered by the forward looking strategies;

—issued guidance designed to ensure that civil servants recognise the equal opportunities implications of policy proposals;

—taken steps to increase the number of women appointed to public bodies;

—drawn up two 5-point plans to improve the range and quality of child care options;

—developed a package of initiatives aimed at tackling domestic violence;

—among the issues the group are now discussing the problems faced by those caring for elderly or disabled relatives.

Children and Young People

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Prime Minister which cabinet committees have responsibilities which include policy and/or co-ordination of policy on matters relating to children and young people under 18 years.

The Prime Minister: Policy issues requiring co-ordination are the subject of collective discussion by Ministers as appropriate.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will update the answer of 29 July 1988 she gave to the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor), *Official Report*, column *629*, on the responsibility of different Government Departments for matters relating to children and young people under 18 years.

The Prime Minister: Current departmental responsibilities in England are as follows:

Department of Education and Science

Promotion of education, including primary, secondary and further education and the youth service; school curriculum and assessment policy and public examinations.

Department of Employment

Responsibility for training, employment and vocational education initiatives for young people, such as YT, training credits, TVEI, inner city compacts and other educational programmes.

Central responsibility for the careers service in England delivered by the local education authorities.

Department of Environment

Out of school sporting activities for children and young people.

Grants under the Urban Programme for projects benefiting children.

Department of Health

Health services for children and young people in hospital and in the community, including child health surveillance and dental and school health services.

Policy for social services for children, prevention of child abuse, adoption, regulation of day care services for under fives (including inspection of facilities).
Nutrition including infant feeding.
Care and protection of children.
Social services for socially deprived families and children in care.
Care, control and treatment of juvenile delinquents.

Home Office
Criminal justice policies.
Arrangements for offenders given custodial sentences.
Magistrate's court proceedings involving the custody and maintenance of children.

Lord Chancellor's Department
Family law relating to children.

Department of Social Security
Policy on social security benefits affecting children and young people, including benefits for disabled people, unemployment benefits, family credit, child benefit, and one-parent benefit, the social fund, state and occupational pensions, income support and housing benefits.
(payments of benefits is undertaken by the Department and by local authorities. Payment of unemployment benefits is undertaken by the Department of Employment on an agency basis).

In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, some of the functions are carried out by the Departments listed; others or their equivalents are, subject to appropriate legislation, performed by the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland Offices.

Further breakdown by departmental divisions would be possible only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Prime Minister what formal arrangements exist for co-ordinating policy among the Departments involved on matters relating to children and young people under 18 years of age.

The Prime Minister: There are official interdepartmental co-ordinating committees concerning children and young people on juvenile delinquency, child abuse and services for pre-school children. Issues concerning children arise at other interdepartmental committees.

There is an interdepartmental group on Women's issues whose discussions involve a variety of subjects of particular interest to women. These discussions have also included various aspects of child care.

Visits (Cost)

Mr. Livsey: To ask the Prime Minister if she will publish *(a)* the total cost of her visit to Wales on 26 September and *(b)* the total cost of her visit to the Brecon and Radnor constituency that was paid for by the public purse.

The Prime Minister: The costs of visits of this nature are not readily identifiable.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Housing Possession

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General what is his policy on the use of duty solicitors in housing possession cases.

The Attorney-General: We have no proposals to extend the duty solicitor scheme to cover housing possession cases.

Legal Aid

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General what was the expenditure in the last financial year of legal aid and advice for criminal cases in the courts and on duty solicitor schemes for police stations and at courts; and what was the comparable expenditure immediately before the operation of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

The Attorney-General: The access to legal advice provisions as laid out in section 58 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 were implemented on 1 January 1986. The financial year 1984-85 has therefore been used for the purpose of comparison with 1989-90. The table shows gross expenditure during the two years:

	1989-90 £ *million*	*1984-85* £ *million*
Criminal Legal Aid:		
Magistrates' Courts	151·478	68·056
Higher Courts	134·956	68·039
Duty Solicitor Schemes:		
Magistrates' Courts	6·522	0·537
Police Stations	30·969	—
	323·925	136·632

County Courts

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Attorney-General what plans he has to improve county court procedures to accelerate hearings.

The Attorney-General: On 6 April 1989 the Lord Chancellor announced the Government's acceptance of the civil justice review body's proposals and his strategy for implementing them. The proposals, which are to be implemented over a period of five years, include a wide range of measures to improve the handling of cases and speed up their progress to trial or hearing. A number have already been introduced administratively and by rule changes in June and October this year.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Attorney-General what is the average length of time it takes to obtain a county court hearing and judgment; and if he will list his answer in tabular form by courts.

The Attorney-General: The information is not available in the form requested. However, the time between a request being received for hearing and the next available date for trial is monitored on a monthly basis. Table A shows the average waiting time measured on this basis, for the county courts and the High Court. Table B shows the figures for county court trial centres at 31 May 1990 and 30 September 1990. Trial centres provide continuous hearings and it can be taken that judgment follows very shortly after the conclusion of the trial. Actual waiting time in particular cases varies according to the circumstances of a particular case, including such factors as the availability of key witnesses or the appearance of new evidence.

Table A
County Court and High Court Waiting Times

1. County Court Trial Centres
Average 11 weeks (ranging from 4-26 weeks depending on sitting pattern).
2. High Court
15 weeks.

3. Queen's Bench general list in London
Warned list to hearing: 8 weeks. Fixed dates: 11-12 months.

Table B
Average waiting time for judges hearings county court trial centres

Court name	*Waiting time in days*	
	30 Sept 1990	*31 May 1990*
Barnsley	22	20
Birmingham	48	24
Blackpool	26	28
Bolton	35	35
Brighton	14	22
Bristol	27	39
Bromley	53	20
Burnley	18	18
Caernarfon	8	40
Canterbury	78	54
Cardiff	31	35
Carlisle	20	33
Chester	38	28
Coventry	26	40
Croydon	49	23
Darlington	27	36
Derby	75	32
Doncaster	30	32
Dudley-Wolverhampton	46	40
Durham	39	23
Exeter-Tiverton	7	58
Gateshead	35	34
Guildford	40	38
Hartlepool	34	30
Holywell	35	38
Lancaster	16	14
Leeds	70	116
Leicester	24	26
Lincoln	47	31
Liverpool	42	42
Llanelli	32	28
Macclesfield	41	34
Manchester	46	43
Mansfield	47	59
Mayors and City	37	39
Medway	33	18
Merthyr Tydfil	44	28
Middlesbrough	51	55
Milton Keynes	39	40
Newcastle Upon Tyne	14	32
Newport (Gwent)	30	51
Northampton	25	20
Norwich	78	43
Nottingham	26	21
Oldham	54	44
Oxford	43	38
Peterborough	39	32
Plymouth	26	36
Portsmouth	17	62
Preston	23	29
Scarborough	59	40
Sheffield	34	63
Slough	29	43
Southampton	33	59
Stafford	30	18
Stockton-on-Tees	35	35
Stoke on Trent	8	12
Sunderland	37	15
Swansea	55	27
Telford-Wellington	43	34
Thanet	40	36
Truro	63	51
Wakefield	41	44
Walsall	16	18
Warrington	25	37
Warwick	20	38
Watford	27	8
Westminster	49	35
Worcester	30	41
York and Malton	19	18

NB This information is in the form of a "snapshot" view of the position. It can vary significantly from month to month.

County Court Bailiffs

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Attorney-General what plans he has to remunerate county court bailiffs by commission.

The Attorney-General: County court bailiffs are salaried members of the Lord Chancellor's Department. There are no plans to remunerate them by commission.

Judgment Debts

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make it his policy to re-establish the practice where a judgment debt was required to be paid into the court and not to the plaintiff.

The Attorney-General: There are no plans to re-establish the practice where a judgment debt was required to be paid into court and not to the plaintiff. The present arrangements introduced in April 1990 have led to significant savings in court staff time and brought advantages to court users through a wider spread of payment methods and places to pay.

Debt Enforcement

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Attorney-General what representations he has received about county courts regarding debt enforcement.

The Attorney-General: The largest number of representations was received in response to the civil justice review body's consultation paper on the enforcement of debt. A total of 120 responses were received.

The consensus of those responses was that the nature and value of business conducted by High Court sheriffs and county court bailiffs were significantly different and that these two separate functions should be maintained. The enforcement area identified as being most in need of reform was the administration order procedure.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Attorney-General if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor's Department.

The Attorney-General: A formal, non-statutory procedure exists whereby all complaints made, including those made by or on behalf of children, to the Lord Chancellor are fully considered and investigated by the Lord Chancellor's Department.

In addition, a provision in the Courts and Legal Services Bill will extend the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to the administrative functions of court and tribunal staff appointed by the Lord Chancellor, except in relation to acts undertaken at the direction or on the authority of a person acting in a judicial capacity.

National Union of Mineworkers

Mr. Andy Stewart: To ask the Attorney-General whether the Serious Fraud Office will conduct a thorough investigation into the national and international affairs of the National Union of Mineworkers in the light of the conclusions of the Lightman inquiry.

The Solicitor-General: The Metropolitan police fraud squad is conducting a number of inquiries and will consider whether there is a case for investigation by the Serious Fraud Office. It has not yet completed those inquiries.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Eggar: Provision is made in sections 68 and 99 of the Education Act 1944, as extended by section 219 of the Education Reform Act 1988, for complaints to be made to the Secretary of State about the conduct of local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools (including grant-maintained schools), higher education corporations and certain institutions of further or higher education maintained or assisted by local education authorities, in the exercise of their functions under the Education Acts. Where the complaint relates to the curriculum or religious worship the complaint must first be made at local level, under arrangements made by the local education authority pursuant to section 23 of the Education Reform Act. None of these provisions imposes any formal restriction on the age of the complainant.

Research

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the number of scientists employed at each of the Agricultural and Food Research Council institutes since 1980, including those expected to be employed in 1991 and 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Agricultural and Food Research Council-funded institutes were restructured during the period 1985 to 1987. For ease of reference, the figures for science group staff in post are shown on the basis of the present institutes of research.

The figures for actual numbers employed at 1 April in the relevant years to 1990 and estimates for 1991 are shown in the table. The number of staff employed in 1992 will depend on a number of factors including the funding available to the council through the science budget and the extent of commissions from the Ministry of Agriculture and other externally funded research. The present estimate is that the total number of scientific staff will be about 1,960, including Agricultural and Food Research Council staff employed in the British Society for Horticultural Research (BSHR).

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991 (est)*
IACR[3]	803	783	789	774	750	680	557	523	480	477	449	433
IAH	328	311	314	310	299	307	252	283	282	264	292	283
IAPGR	343	330	338	327	326	345	331	270	254	266	337	321
IER	131	129	138	129	124	122	133	123	97	115	115	103
IFR	380	394	420	434	451	447	496	473	450	435	381	245
IGER	431	432	441	425	435	442	388	378	381	364	308	285
IHR[2]	443	430	440	438	452	425	353	323	326	318	(295)[2]	(260)[2]
IPSR[4]	266	282	278	274	282	279	309	373	274	271	234	234
Total	3,125	3,091	3,158	3,111	3,119	3,047	2,819	2,746	2,544	2,510	2,116 (2411)	1,904 (2,164)

Notes:

[1] Abreviations:
IACR—Institute of Arable Crops Research
IAH—Institute of Animal Health
IAPGR—Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics
IER—Institute of Engineering Research
IFR—Institute of Food Research
IGER—Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research
IHR—Institute of Horticultural Research
IPSR—Institute of Plant Science Research

[2] IHR became part of the British Society for Horticultural Research (BSHR) on 1 April 1990. The figures in brackets show the number of AFRC scientific staff seconded to BSHR.

[3] The figures for IACR for 1980-84 include the former Letcombe Laboratory and the Weed Research Organisation, which closed in 1985 and 1986 respectively. They also include the former Soil Survey and Land Resource Centre, which was transferred to the Cranfield Institute of technology in 1986-87.

[4] The figures for IPSR for 1980-86 include that part of the former Plant Breeding Institute which was purchased by Unilever plc in 1986-87.

National Curriculum

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to enable primary schools to close for an extra day in order to allow training to take place for national curriculum assessments; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I asked local education authorities in 1989 to set aside two or three of this school year's existing school closure days for training to prepare teachers who will undertake the first national assessments of seven-year-olds in 1991. As a result, most local education authorities have already developed coherent plans for such training. I am encouraged by the commitment and professionalism of primary school teachers as they prepare for the implementation of the national curriculum assessment arrangements.

However, not all LEAs are equally well-prepared. In response to representations, particularly from the NAHT, and in order to ensure the success of training arrangements in all local education authorities, I therefore intend shortly to make regulations to permit primary schools, if they wish to do so, to close for one extra day in the spring term of 1991 for the purpose of training teachers in the assessment of seven-year-olds and the development of school policies for reporting the results to parents.

I stress that this is an exceptional step. It responds to the unique challenge facing primary schools who have never before been involved in comprehensive national assessments. I also wish to emphasise that this is solely to make the option of an extra closure day available to those local education authorities for whom it will be helpful. It is not obligatory. Many local education authorities and schools with already settled training plans may see no need to exercise the option and will be under no compulsion to do so. The availability of an extra day in the spring term will provide those schools that need it with useful additional flexibility to exploit effectively the training materials shortly to be issued by the School Examinations and Assessment Council and to promote the development of effective school arrangements for reporting the results of assessments to parents.

EMPLOYMENT

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Jackson: Under the legislation and programmes for which my Department is responsible any formal procedures for making complaints and representations which exist are open on the same basis to those under 18 as to those over 18.

In the case of those programmes aimed mainly at those under 18: *Youth Training* (YT); a contractual requirement is placed on YT providers to ensure that non-employed trainees have access to clear written grievance procedures, including the right to make representations to the Department or to the careers service. Where training and enterprise councils (TECs) have been established contractual requirement is placed upon TECs to ensure that YT providers make similar arrangements for non-employed trainees, including the right to make representations to the TEC or to the careers service.

Careers Service and the Department's Vocational Education Programmes such as TVEI: local education authorities operate these programmes in their area. I would expect issues about provision in a particular area to be raised with the relevant authority in the first instance. No formal procedures exist for making representations to my Department in these cases, although we will naturally consider any representations that are made to us, whether by those under or over 18.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Child Benefit

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what percentage of total Government expenditure on child benefit goes to families with incomes below the mean, on an equivalent income basis;

(2) what percentage of families receiving child benefit have income levels below the mean, on an equivalent income basis.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The proportion of families receiving child benefit with household incomes below the mean of equivalised income before housing costs has changed little since 1979 and remains in the region of 70 per cent. About 74 per cent. of total Government spending on child benefit went to these families.

National Insurance

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what increases in national insurance contributions have been imposed specifically on sub-postmasters since 1987; for what purposes; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No increases in national insurance contributions have been imposed specifically on sub-postmasters since 1987. The treatment of their earnings for national insurance contribution purposes and the rates at which their national insurance contributions are paid are identical to those of other workers in similar circumstances.

European Court of Justice

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on the implications for British pensioners of the Barber decision of the European Court of Justice.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The European Court of Justice ruled on 17 May 1990, in the case of Barber *v.* Guardian Royal Exchange, that benefits from occupational pension schemes are pay for the purposes of article 119 of the treaty of Rome. This means that occupational pension schemes must treat men and women equally. Schemes need to take legal advice as to how the terms of the judgment apply to their particular circumstances.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has any plans to change the total funding of, and categories of, people eligible to claim from the independent living fund.

Mr. Scott: The decision to restrict eligibility to those aged between 16 and 74 and who also receive attendance allowance at the higher rate was taken by the trustees in the light of the resources made available for this financial year. I understand that they are keeping this decision under review.

Computerisation

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish the Government's estimate of the profit-cost of the social security computerisation programme made in each of the past eight years and his latest estimate.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available estimate of the cost of the social security computerisation programme is in the order of £1,800 million up to the end of March 1999. The computerisation programme is helping to produce savings in administration costs which are expected to amount to around £150 milion per annum by 1995. Earlier estimates of the profit-cost of the programme were examined by the Committee of Public Accounts in its 24th report (HC179) following the Comptroller and Auditor General's report (HC111). I refer the hon. Member to these reports.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish the Government's estimates of job losses that would result from the computerisation of the social security system made in each of the past eight years and his latest estimate.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: When the operational strategy project was announced in 1982, very early estimates of the reduction in manpower amounted to approximately 25,000 posts.

In 1988 a more detailed analysis was undertaken to reflect changes to workloads and future system functionality.

The latest estimte of the number of posts to be lost is 21,000, as published in the 1989 annual review of the operational strategy.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In general, only persons aged 16 or over are entitled to social security benefits in their own right. All such persons have the same rights of making complaints or representations irrespective of age. Where children are entitled to benefit any rights of redress will be exercised by the person claiming on their behalf.

Claims for social security benefits are decided by independent adjudication officers (section 98 of the Social Security Act 1975). Claimants unhappy with benefit decisions can ask for a review of that decision (section 104) or appeal to an independent tribunal under the presidential system (sections 100 and 109). There is a further right of appeal, on a point of law, from the tribunal decision to the social security commissioner (sections 101 and 112) and from the commissioner's decision to an appropriate court (section 114).

Entitlement to income support is restricted to persons over 18 and to those of ages 16 and 17 who are not required to be available for employment including lone parents, blind and disabled persons and pregnant women. A 16 or 17-year-old who is required to be available may also be entitled where it appears to the Secretary of State that severe hardship will result unless income support is paid. Decisions on the severe hardship question are made centrally at the severe hardship cases unit in Glasgow and can be reviewed and possibly revoked following representation.

The attendance allowance board determines medical questions arising from claims to attendance allowance (section 105) and a dissatisfied claimant can seek a review of the board's decision (section 106). There is then a right of appeal on a point of law against any review decision to the social security commissioner.

Certain questions, mainly concerned with contribution matters, are decided by the Secretary of State. Claimants can seek a review of such decisions or appeal on a point of law to the appropriate court (section 94).

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration can investigate complaints of maladministration but has no power to challenge decisions of the independent adjudication authorities (PCA Act 1967).

Invalidity Benefit

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether sums of money paid by an employer to a person receiving invalidity benefit in respect of the cost of travelling to work are treated as earnings for the purposes of the therapeutic earnings rule; and whether the actual travelling costs are deductible.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The amount paid by an employer to reimburse a person for the cost of travelling to and from work is not taken into account as earnings in considering the application of the therapeutic earnings rule. Where the employee pays his own travelling costs these are generally deducted in full from his earnings before the therapeutic earnings test is applied.

Mrs. M. Pilgrim

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make inquiries into the delay in arriving at a decision on the application for night rate attendance allowance in respect of Mrs. M. M. Pilgrim of 25 St. Augustone's avenue, Southend, reference ZX252490D; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: There was no delay in arriving at a decision on the application for night rate attendance allowance. There was delay in making payment while inquiries were made into the status of the two nursing homes involved. I can confirm that all arrears due to Mrs. Pilgrim were paid on 11 October.

Pensions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will set out the amount lost per week and per year which (i) a single pensioner and (ii) a married couple would have received over and above the price-indexed pension increase each year since 1979 if the earlier formula had been maintained of increasing pensions each year in line with either prices or earnings whichever was higher; and if he will set out these sums both on a weekly and annual basis for each year since 1979 at *(a)* current prices and *(b)* 1990 prices.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 15 October 1990]:* Similar figures for pension rates were given in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) on 15 October at col. *741*, together with an estimate of the increased national insurance contribution rates—£7·50 a week in respect of an employee on average earnings, including the employer's contribution—which would be entailed in meeting the additional cost in the present year.

It would be inappropriate to make the further calculations requested, since they would rest on the wholly unrealistic assumption that additional expenditure on the scale implied would have taken place without economic and financial effects, including higher rates of inflation and taxation than have in fact occurred, with seriously adverse consequences for pensioners themselves.

Social Security Commissioner

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many appeals to the social security commissioner were lodged during the last year for which statistics are available concerning mobility allowance; what proportion of all claims for mobility allowance in that year they represented; and how many such appeals resulted either in the case being remitted for reconsideration by the medical appeal tribunal or in the commissioner substituting his or her own decision for that of the medical appeal tribunal;

(2) how many appeals to the social security commissioner were lodged in the last year for which statistics are available concerning attendance allowance; what proportion of all attendance allowance claims in that year they represented; and how many such appeals resulted in the case being remitted to the attendance allowance board for reconsideration.

The Attorney-General: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is given in the table. No figures are available for the number of cases remitted to medical appeal tribunals. Commissioners are not empowered to substitute their decisions for those given on medical questions by medical appeal tribunals.

Appeals to the Social Security Commissioner (England, Wales and Scotland) Figures for year 1989

	Benefit	
	Attendance allowance	*Mobility allowance*
Number of claims lodged with DSS[1]	365,219	203,590
Number of appeals to OSSC		
Direct	3	72
Deemed[2]	491	217
Total	494	289
Appeal as percentage of claims lodged	0·135	0·142
Total number of appeals decided	225	246
Number decided in claimant's favour	[3]175	202
Number remitted[2]	170	[4]

[1] Department of Social Security figures.

[2] Successful applications for leave converted to appeals (Reg. 5(2) SI 1987 No. 214).

[3] The difference between the number decided in the claimant's favour and the number remitted to the Attendance Allowance Board reflects the time delay in handling over the period.

[4] Not available.

DEFENCE

Atomic Weapons Establishment

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the atomic weapons establishment is suffering from any difficulties of recruiting enough graduate scientists in any or all areas.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The science group as a whole at AWE continues to experience difficulties with the recruitment of graduate scientists. The position has not changed significantly over the past year.

SRAM-T Missiles

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are any plans to deploy SRAM-T missiles in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The London declaration, following the NATO summit meeting here in May, made clear the alliance's continuing requirement for nuclear forces, based in Europe and kept up to date where necessary. However, the question of the detailed deployment of United States SRAM-T missiles has not yet arisen.

Radar

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United States Congress has removed from the 1990-91 budget United States financing of the joint United States/United Kingdom over-the-horizon radar proposed for the former St. David's airfield, Pembrokeshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: We understand that, as part of congressional scrutiny of United States Government spending proposals for fiscal year 1991, the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee has requested the United States Government to re-examine the requirement to locate this system in the United Kingdom. The reponse to this request is a matter for the United States Government.

Thai Army

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many employees of his Department were attached to the Thai army, and for what purpose, for each year from 1985, inclusive.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) on 22 October at column *90*.

Diving Clearance Service

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the future of the Royal Navy specialised diving clearance service based in Portsmouth.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: In the light of my right hon. Friend's statement to the House on 25 July on "Options for Change", the future of the whole of the naval estate and support services, including diving services, is under consideration.

Any announcements of changes will be made when our examination is finished.

Gulf Crisis

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what stage his Department assessed that the risk of attack against Saudi Arabia had become sufficiently grave to justify the dispatch of an armoured brigade for the defence of that country.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The initial military need in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was to strengthen quickly the defences of the Gulf states and to enforce the United Nations embargo. To achieve this the United Kingdom, together with the United States and other countries, sent air and naval forces at the request of countries in the region. Substantial Iraqi forces, including large concentrations of armour, still occupy Kuwait. The deployment of 7 Armoured Brigade is to help counter the continued threat to the Gulf states from these forces.

WALES

Rents into Mortgages Scheme

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the progress of his flexi-ownership—rents into mortgages—scheme.

Mr. Grist: We are extremely encouraged by the progress made by the Development Board for Rural Wales in the first 10 months of operating the experimental flexi-ownership scheme. Seventeen per cent. of the eligible tenants have expressed an interest and almost 60 (7 per cent.) have applied to become flexi-owners. Ten sales have been completed and the board estimates that about 5 per cent. of the eligible stock will have been sold by the end of the first year. We are currently considering whether the scheme should be extended.

Local Authorities (Car Usage)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much money was allocated by each district council and county council in Wales for *(a)* the purchase of cars and *(b)* car allowance schemes for chairpersons and chief executives during 1989.

Mr. David Hunt: The information requested is not available centrally.

Farmers' Incomes

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of the income of farmers in Wales accrued from non-farming sources for each of the past 10 years for which records are available.

Mr. David Hunt: Based on the Inland Revenue survey of personal incomes, details of which are only readily available for the years 1983-84 to 1986-87, the percentage of the income of farmers in Wales which accrued from non-farming sources for each of the four years was as follows:

Year	*Percentage of income from non-farming sources*
1983-84	42
1984-85	41
1985-86	37
1986-87	50

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish the average income of farmers in Wales in each of the past eight years for which records are available, expressed as a percentage of each year's average manual worker's earnings in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: Informattion on Welsh farmers' incomes is based on the results of the Inland Revenue survey of personal incomes and relates to incomes assessed for tax of individuals registered as having a self-employed income from agriculture and horticulture as their main or principal other source of self-employment income. Separate figures for Wales are not readily available prior to 1983-84, and the latest results of the survey are for the year 1986-87.

The average earnings of manual workers in Wales are derived from the Department of Employment new earnings survey.

The two series are not strictly comparable, there being conceptual differences in the way income and earnings are calculated.

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*
Average income of Welsh farmers assessed for tax	£7,939	£7,739	£9,110	£11,002
Average manual workers earnings in Wales	£7,090	£7,548	£7,990	£8,510
Average income of Welsh farrmers assessed for tax expressed as a perscentage of available manual workers' earnings in Wales	112 per cent.	102 per cent.	114 per cent.	129 per cent.

Housing

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many units of housing accommodation were completed by all Welsh local authorities for each of the past 10 years for which records are available.

Mr. Grist: The information is given in the following table:

Local authority completions

Year	*Number*
1980	3,493
1981	3,370
1982	1,771
1983	1,543
1984	1,997
1985	992
1986	744
1987	810
1988	793
1989	566

Hospital Beds

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the number of hospital beds available in every Welsh health authority area in each of the past 10 years for which records are available.

Mr. Grist: Details of average daily available beds in each Welsh health authority for the years 1980 to 1988-89 are published in the relevant issues of "Hospital Bed Use Statistics" copies of which are in the Library. The information for 1989-90 (the latest available) is given in the table:

Average daily available beds—year ending 31 March 1990

Health authority	*Number*
Clwyd	2,442·8
East Dyfed	1,578·8
Gwent	3,208·0
Gwynedd	1,586·6
Mid-Glamorgan	4,047·2
Powys	908·0
South Glamorgan	3,271·8
West Glamorgan	2,343·1
Pembrokeshire	469·1

Departmental Staff

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out in tabular format *(a)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the planning, building and maintenance of roads, *(b)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the development and maintenance of railways, *(c)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the development of public transport other than railways and *(d)* the number of civil servants in his Department devoted to the promotion of cycling.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The Secretary of State has statutory responsibility for the construction and maintenance of motorway and trunk roads in Wales. The Welsh Office highways directorate which carries out these functions has a staff complement of 172·5. With minor exceptions statutory responsibility for matters relating to public transport rests with the Secretary of State for Transport. The Welsh Office transport policy division, which has oversight of all transport-related issues affecting Wales, including public transport and cycling, has a staff complement of 20.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. David Hunt: The following formal procedures provide for complaints to be made by children and young people or their representatives:

Section 26(3) of the Children Act 1989, which comes into force in October 1991, provides that any complaint or representation about the provision of services to children and their families under part III of the Act should be considered through local authorities' procedures. Section 59(4) requires voluntary organisations to set up similar procedures to consider representations including complaints made by children accommodated by them but not looked after by local authorities, and by other people connected with the child. Paragraph 10(2)(b) of schedule 6 to the Act places a similar requirement on registered children's homes.

Any person who is or has been a patient at a hospital or a person acting on behalf of any such patient is eligible to make a complaint about the care and treatment received, under the Hospital Complaints Procedure Act 1985. If not satisfied there is the right to make representations to the Health Service Commissioner to investigate a complaint, under section III of the National Health Services Act 1977. There is no age constraint.

The National Health Service (Service Committees and Tribunal) Regulations 1974 (as amended) made under sections 26, 36, 39 and 42 of the National Health Service Act 1977 provide for a complaint to be formally investigated if it has been made by or on behalf of any person entitled to family health services and alleges that a family practitioner has failed to comply with the relevant terms of service.

Section 120 of the Mental Health Act 1983 provides for the investigation of any complaint by a detained or formerly detained patient, of whatever age. By virtue of section 121 of the Act, such investigation would be carried out by the Mental Health Act Commission.

There is nothing to prevent a child or young person from using the provisions of sections 68 and 99 of the Education Act 1944, as extended by section 219 of the Education Reform Act 1988, providing for complaints to be made to the Secretary of State about the conduct of local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools (including grant-maintained schools), higher education corporations and certain institutions of further or higher education maintained or assisted by local education authorities, in the exercise of their functions under the Education Acts. Where the complaint relates to the curriculum or religious worship the complaint must first be made at local level under arrangements made by the local education authority pursuant to section 23 of the Education Reform Act.

British Urban Development

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether, in view of the cancellation of some of British Urban Development's projects, together with the imminent departure of the deputy chairman, he has sought a definite date to discuss the future of the proposed project in Swansea.

Mr. David Hunt: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, I have issued an open invitation to British Urban Development to discuss developments on the Tawe Vale project. That invitation remains open.

School Psychological Services

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has anything to add to his reply to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West on 18 October, *Official Report*, column *870*, in respect of figures published in the report by Her Majesty's inspectors on a survey of school psychological services in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: There are no current statistics available on the number of educational psychologists in post in Wales, but local education authorities have been asked for details.

Housing Revenue Account

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he will consult representatives of local government and relevant professional bodies on his proposals for housing revenue account subsidy in 1991-92; and what proposals he will be making.

Mr. Grist: The Welsh Office is today consulting local authorities, the Council of Welsh Districts and other interested bodies on proposals for determining each authority's entitlement to subsidy for 1991-92. The proposals include some important technical changes to the rules for calculating subsidy entitlement. Comments on the bulk of the proposals are invited within six weeks. I shall be placing a copy of the consultation papers in the Library together with a list of the guidelines and allowances for each authority.

For rent guidelines, we propose an average rent increase of just 2 per cent. above the allowance for inflation. This means an average increase per week of £1·87 ranging from £1·41 to £2·50 over the guideline rent which applied this year. This will continue the process introduced last year or encouraging authorities towards charging sensible levels of rents which better reflect the value of property in different parts of the country while remaining within the reach of ordinary tenants.

For management and maintenance allowances, we propose to introduce a system of targeted allowances which will better reflect the condition of each authority's stock. This will be of particular benefit to a number of authorities while no authority will have an allowance lower in cash terms than for the current year. Across Wales overall, the average increase in allowances will maintain them at this year's level in real terms.

The rent guidelines and management and maintenance allowances are no more than the assumptions the Government will make in calculating each authority's entitlement to subsidy. It is for each council to set its own rents and to decide how much to spend on managing and maintaining its stock within its obligations under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Changes are also proposed which affect authorities' subsidy entitlement in respect of properties held on leasehold terms. The aggregate cost of leases acquired after midnight tonight will have to be met within annual limits. Authorities can continue to use short-term leasing in appropriate circumstances subject to the plans being agreed with the Department. This is in addition to a change proposed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security which was announced earlier this week and deals with an anomaly in the present subsidy rules.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Interest rates

17. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are current short-term interest rates in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* West Germany.

Mr. Maude: On 24 October three-month interbank rates were 13·8 per cent. in the United Kingdom and 8·6 per cent. in Germany.

19. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the results of his interest rate policy to date.

Mr. Major: Monetary indicators and evidence from the real economy both point firmly to a reduction in inflationary pressures, as a result of the Government's sustained policy of high interest rates.

53. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on present interest rates.

76. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the current level of interest rates.

Mr. Maples: Bank base rates are 14 per cent.

55. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has had any recent representations from the Confederation of British Industry about interest rates.

Mr. Maples: Yes.

National Savings

18. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the effect of his last Budget on national savings.

Mr. Maples: The Budget was above all a Budget for savers and I am confident that it will encourage the saving habit.

Inflation

20. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his forecast for the annual rate of inflation to the fourth quarter of the current year.

Mr. Maples: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor will publish a new forecast with his autumn statement.

25. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many countries in the EEC currently have a higher inflation rate than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maples: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy).

39. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the rate of inflation and what is the average rate of inflation for those countries which were in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system on 1 July, measured on a comparable basis.

41. **Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the underlying rate of inflation; and what is the average rate of inflation for those countries which were in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system on 1 July, measured on a comparable basis.

46. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the underlying rate of inflation; and what is the average rate of inflation for those countries which were in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system on 1 July, measured on a comparable basis.

60. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the underlying rate of inflation; and what is the average rate of inflation for those countries which were in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system on 1 July, measured on a comparable basis.

Mr. Maples: The underlying rate of inflation for the United Kingdom, as measured by the RPI excluding mortgage interest payments (MIPS) and community charge, was 8·3 per cent. in September 1990. For those countries in the ERM on 1 July 1990, average consumer price inflation was, in August, 4·2 per cent. on a comparable basis.

45. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current underlying rate of inflation; and what are the rates of inflation for the same period measured on a comparable basis for *(a)* France, *(b)* West Germany and *(c)* Italy.

Mr. Maples: The following is the annual rate of consumer price inflation, excluding owner occupiers' costs from all indices:

	September 1990 per cent.
United Kingdom	8·3
France	3·8
West Germany	2·9
Italy	6·3

74. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the rates of inflation in *(a)* Britain, *(b)* France, *(c)* West Germany and *(d)* Holland, measured on a comparable basis.

Mr. Maples: The following is the annual rate of consumer price inflation, excluding owner occupiers' costs from all indices:

	September 1990 per cent.
United Kingdom	8·3
France	3·8
West Germany	2·9
Holland[1]	2·7

[1] Partly estimated.

Retail Prices Index

21. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the percentage change in the retail prices index since June 1979.

Mr. Maples: The all-items RPI has risen by 132 per cent. since June 1979, an average annual increase of 7·8 per cent.

Balance of Payments

22. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cumulative balance of payments deficit for the current year to date.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The cumulative deficit on the United Kingdom current account for the first nine months of this year is estimated at £13·6 billion.

24. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times the monthly balance of payments deficit has been under £1 billion in the last two years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Twice, most recently last month.

Child Benefit

23. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met representatives from the Trade Union Congress to discuss child benefit.

Mr. Major: I have not met representatives of the TUC to discuss child benefit.

Energy Conservation

26. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any proposals to use tax incentives to stimulate energy conservation work.

Mr. Maude: My right hon. Friend has no present plans to introduce such tax incentives. The White Paper on the Environment outlines a number of measures designed to encourage energy efficiency.

Unemployment

27. **Mr. Radice:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the effect of high interest rates on the level of unemployment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) earlier today.

Taxation

28. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans for further reforms of the income tax system.

33. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans for further reforms of the income tax system.

Mr. Maude: We shall continue to keep under review all options for reforming the income tax system.

29. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of gross earnings a married couple with one earner on average earnings, with two children, paid in tax, treating child benefit as negative income tax, in 1978-79 and in 1989-90.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) earlier today.

38. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the percentage of total tax revenue collected from higher band taxpayers; and what was the comparable figure in 1979.

Mr. Maude: In 1978-79, income tax liability at the higher rate accounted for 9 per cent. of total income tax liability. In 1990-91 it is estimated that this proportion will be about 20 per cent.

Child Poverty

30. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met representatives of the Child Poverty Action Group to discuss the effects of the Government's policies on child poverty.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I last met representatives of the CPAG on 8 June.

Intergovernmental Conference

31. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his preparations for the intergovernmental conference in December.

Mr. Maude: As the hon. Member knows, my right hon. Friend set out proposals for a hard ecu and a European monetary fund on 20 June. We have been promoting these ideas since then, and will continue to argue forcefully for them in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference.

Share-owners

32. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the adult population now owns shares.

Mr. Maude: The latest Treasury and stock exchange survey carried out in January and February 1990 estimated that 24 per cent. of the adult population in Great Britain now own shares.

49. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the United Kingdom adult population now owns shares.

Mr. Maude: The latest Treasury and stock exchange survey carried out in January and February 1990 estimated that 24 per cent. of the adult population in Great Britain now own shares. Information for the United Kingdom as a whole is not available.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of shares was owned by individuals in 1979 and currently.

Mr. Maude: The stock exchange survey of share ownership carried out in 1981 estimated that 28·2 per cent. of shareholdings were in the beneficial ownership of the United Kingdom personal sector. More recent comparable figures, and figures for 1979, are not available. The Central Statistical Office expects to publish its latest share register survey in "Economic Trends" in December.

Profitability

34. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest information on the profitability of non-North sea industrial and commercial companies.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The net real rate of return on capital of non-North sea industrial and commercial companies in 1989 was 8·3 per cent. With the exception of 1988, that is higher than for a / year since 1973. In 1981 the rate was 2·7 per cent.

72. **Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest information on the profitability of non-North sea industrial and commercial companies.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The net real rate of return on capital of non-North sea industrial and commercial companies in 1989 was 8·3 per cent. With the exception of 1988, that is higher than for any year since 1973. In 1981 the rate was 2·7 per cent.

Savings

35. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any further plans to encourage savings.

Mr. Maples: Tax-exempt special savings accounts (TESSAs) will be introduced on 1 January 1991. Composite rate tax will be abolished in April 1991. The Government's objective is to encourage the saving habit over the medium term.

Input-output Analyses

36. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what study he has made of the applicability of the input-output analysis techniques initiated by Professor Wassily Leontief and developed by the Japanese Government to be used by the European Community.

Mr. Maples: Input-output tables for the United Kingdom are produced by the Central Statistical Office. The latest published set relates to 1984.

The Japanese Government (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) are developing internationally linked input-output analyses. They have been in touch with a number of countries, including the United Kingdom Central Statistical Office who have been collaborating as resources permit.

Productivity

Mr. Hind: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the productivity improvements in British industry since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Manufacturing industry's productivity grew by an average of 4·2 per cent. a year between 1979 and 1989; faster than in all other major

industrialised countries. In the sixties and seventies the United Kingdom was at the bottom of the manufacturing productivity league table.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to encourage further manufacturing productivity growth.

Mr. Neale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to encourage manufacturing productivity growth.

Mr. Norman Lamont: This Government will continue to implement economic policies designed to encourage enterprise and efficiency and thus to promote manufacturing productivity growth. The proof of these policies' success has been the marked improvement in manufacturing productivity growth over the last decade. Since 1979, it has grown faster than any other major industrialised country. In the sixties and seventies we were at the bottom of the international league for manufacturing productivity growth.

Mr. Stevens: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest information on the output per hour worked in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Japan.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest information on the output per hour worked in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Japan.

Mr. Maples: Output per hour worked in the United Kingdom in 1986, the latest year for which data are available, is estimated to have been around 50 per cent. higher than in Japan.

European Monetary Union

40. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress he has made during discussions on European monetary union; and if he will make a statement.

69. **Sir David Steel:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress during recent discussions on his proposals for a European currency unit.

Mr. Major: Since I set out our proposals for a hard ecu on 20 June, I have met my fellow Finance Ministers a number of times to promote the United Kingdom approach to progress beyond stage 1. A consensus is emerging that, as I have argued, more convergence in economic performance is needed before moving beyond stage 1; and there is growing support for our view that objective criteria are needed to determine when sufficient convergence has been achieved.

I will continue to argue forcefully for the United Kingdom approach in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference.

Trade Deficit

42. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give his estimate of the trade deficit for 1990; and what are the comparable volume and real terms figures for 10 years earlier.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The visible trade balance in the first three quarters of 1990 was a deficit of £14·8 billion, or about 3½ per cent. of GDP. In 1980 there was a visible trade surplus of £1·4 billion, or ½ per cent. of GDP.

Investment

43. **Sir Fergus Montgomery:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth in total investment of European Community countries during the 1980s.

58. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth in total investment of European Community countries during the 1980s.

Mr. Maples: Since 1980, growth of total investment in EC countries has averaged 2·2 per cent. a year. Over the same period United Kingdom investment growth averaged 4·7 per cent. a year.

51. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will bring forward proposals to encourage a higher level of investment by manufacturing industry.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Government's economic policies are designed to reduce inflation while encouraging enterprise and efficiency. This is the best way to encourage sustainable growth of manufacturing investment.

Corporation Tax

44. **Mr. Donald Thompson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest information on the corporation tax take from the major businesses privatised during the 1980s.

75. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest information on the corporation tax take from the major businesses privatised during the 1980s.

Mr. Maude: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply that the Paymaster General gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth) on 24 July 1990 at column 128.

Incomes

47. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the change in real personal disposable income during the last 12 months for which figures were available.

48. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the change in real personal disposable income during the last 12 months for which figures were available.

71. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the change in real personal disposable income during the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Maude: During the second quarter of 1990 aggregate real personal disposable income is estimated to have been 3·9 per cent. higher than in the corresponding period in 1989.

Government Expenditure

50. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest forecast for the share of gross domestic product to be taken by general Government expenditure in 1990-91.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A new forecast for the ratio of general Government expenditure to gross domestic product will be given in the autumn statement.

VAT

56. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the implications of the imposition of value added tax on the purchase of new buildings used for charitable purposes.

Mr. Ryder: There have been very few representations following the Government's decision last year to shield charities from the full force of the 1988 European Court judgement on the United Kingdom's zero rates and to allow continued VAT relief for new self-contained buildings used for charitable non-business activities.

70. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much value added tax was paid by charities in each of the last three financial years.

Mr. Ryder: I have no more up-to-date information than that which I gave to my hon. Friend on 15 February at col. *338*.

Take-home Pay

59. **Mr. Wolfson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the change in real take-home pay of a married man with two children during the 1980s.

65. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the growth in real take-home pay of a married man with two children during the 1980s.

Mr. Maude: A married man with two children on average male earnings enjoyed an increase in real take-home pay of over 26 per cent. between 1979-80 and 1989-90.

EC Finance Ministers

61. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his most recent meeting with European Community Finance Ministers.

Mr. Maude: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor gave to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on 15 October at col. *718*.

Manufacturing Exports

62. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth of manufacturing exports since 1983.

73. **Mr. Norris:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth of manufacturing exports since 1983.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Manufacturing exports have grown on average by 7·1 per cent. per year since 1983. In 1989 they rose by 10·5 per cent.—the fastest growth in any year since 1973. Supply side reforms have transformed industry's ability to compete on world markets, and allowed manufacturers to maintain their share of world trade after decades of decline.

Investment Trusts

64. **Mr. French:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has received any recent representations about the role of investment trusts in the savings market.

Mr. Maude: I have received a representation from the Association of Investment Trust Companies on this subject.

National Income

66. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total income to the Exchequer since May 1979 from *(a)* North sea oil revenues and *(b)* privatisations.

Mr. Maude: In the period from 1979-80 to 1989-90, North sea revenues amounted to some £67 billion. In the same period net privatisation proceeds amounted to some £28 billion.

Investment and Consumption

67. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth rate of *(a)* total investment and *(b)* total consumption during the 1980s.

68. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth rate of *(a)* total investment and *(b)* total consumption during the 1980s.

78. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth rate of *(a)* total investment and *(b)* total consumption during the 1980s.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Total fixed investment grew by 44 per cent. in volume terms between 1979 and 1989. Over the same period, the volume of total domestic consumption grew by 31 per cent.

Eastern Europe

77. **Mr. Neubert:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any plans to visit eastern Europe before Christmas to discuss the development of market economies.

Mr. Maples: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

Gross Domestic Product

79. **Mr. Ward:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth in gross domestic product of European Community countries during the 1980s.

Mr. Maples: Since 1980 of the EC countries has grown at an average annual rate of 2·2 per cent. Over the same period United Kingdom gross domestic product growth averaged 2·7 per cent. a year.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the rates of growth of the gross domestic product of the United Kingdom, France, Italy and West Germany in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's, respectively.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Data for the gross domestic product of France, Italy and West Germany are published by the OECD in "National Accounts 1960-88" and in "Main Economic Indicators". Data for United Kingdom gross domestic product are published in the CSO "Blue Book".

Civil Service Relocation

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for the period since 1979, Department by Department, the number of civil servants relocated from the south-east, the number planning to be relocated and for which locations have already been chosen and over what time scale, and the numbers of which will be relocated and for which no location has yet been decided.

Mr. Ryder: Table 1 below lists for the period since 1979 the number of civil service posts located or relocated out of the south-east, which total more than 15,000 posts. However, the list probably understates the total as some 6,000 posts created or relocated away from the south-east on Departments' own initiative prior to 1988 were not monitored in detail.

Table 1

Department dispersal location	*Posts dispersed*
Employment group	
Sheffield	2,152
Bootle	1,025
Runcorn	304
Total	3,481
Land registry	
Peterborough	780
Telford	440
Coventry	350
Weymouth	350
Durham	290
Swansea	240
Hull	180
Leicester	180
Total	2,810
DSS	
N. Fylde	1,200
Newcastle	600
Lytham	243
Glasgow	50
Wigan/Manchester	43
Belfast	20
Total	2,156
MOD	
Glasgow	1,400
Swindon	210
Bath	164
Harrogate	70
Cheadle Hulme	60
Yeovilton	54
Sutton Coldfield	50
Llangennech	40
Total	2,048
IR	
Various	1,034
DTI	
Newport	560
Birmingham	134
Billingham	53
Cardiff, Edinburgh	25
Total	772
FCO/ODA	
East Kilbride	657
Home Office	
Bootle	301
Liverpool	126
Glasgow	88
Total	515
ECGD	
Cardiff	433
DOE	
Salisbury	70
Bootle	63
Bristol, Manchester, Leeds	73
Total	206
HM CUSTOMS	
Liverpool	200
OFFER	
Birmingham	89
Various	88
Total	177
D/TRANSPORT	
Nottingham	127
OTHERS	
Various	495
Total	15,111

Table 2 lists, with the likely timings, the relocation plans which departments have announced but which have still to be implemented; these cover more than 17,000 further posts.

Table 2

Department and dispersal location	*Number of posts*	*Likely timing*
MOD		
Bristol	3,800	1993-on
Teesside	1,600	1993-95
Bath/Bristol	600	1992-93
Sutton Coldfield	200	1990-91
Llangennech	180	1990-91
Bath	156	1990-91
Harrogate	18	1990
Total	6,554	
Inland Revenue		
Nottingham	1,800	1992-93
Various	976	1990-92
Total	2,776	
DSS		
Leeds	800	1992-93
Glasgow	450	1990-91
Belfast	330	1990-91
Wigan	220	1990-91

Department and dispersal location	Number of posts	Likely timing
Newcastle	64	1990-92
Manchester	37	1990-91
Total	1,901	
HM Customs		
Liverpool	1·250	1993-94
Manchester	430	1990-93
Total	1,680	
Home Office		
Midlands	1,000	1993-95
Merseyside	120	1991-93
Total	1,120	
D/Health		
Leeds	c1,000	1992-93
Employment group		
Runcorn	469	1990-93
Sheffield	203	1990-93
Total	672	
IBAP		
Newcastle	350	by March 1992
DTI		
Newport	290	1990-91
OPCS		
Southport	230	1991-92
Land registry		
Birkenhead	200	1992
Charity commission		
Taunton	c130	1990-91
Treasury solicitor		
Taunton	116	1991
Others		
Various	86	1990-91
Total	17,105	

Details of current relocation reviews by departments are being collated as part of the 1990 public expenditure survey and I shall be making a further announcement in due course.

Invisible Trade

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what factors have led to the ending of the surplus on the United Kingdom's invisible trade.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The invisibles account is estimated to have been in surplus by £2·3 billion in 1989 and £1·2 billion in the first half of 1990.

Iraq

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Treasury co-operated with UNO in the preparation of a study on the impact of the United Nations sanctions against Iraq on other countries; and what is the assessment of the windfall gain for the United Kingdom in a year.

Mr. Maples: The United Kingdom, like most other countries, suffers overall rather than gains from higher oil prices. We have been prepared to commit very substantial resources, human and financial, to the international military effort in the Gulf region and to helping those countries most directly affected by the costs of making United Nations Sanctions against Iraq effective. The United Kingdom has played a very active part in the United Nations in dealing with Suddam Hussein's aggression. We were not consulted over the particular United Nations report to which the question refers and which appears to have been a purely internal United Nations document.

Correspondence

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to make a detailed reply to the letter of the hon. Member for Falmouth and Camborne of 21 July on the matter of Mr. John D. Brock.

Mr. Maude: I replied to my hon. Friend's letter on 23 October.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Agricultural Exports

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much is spent by each member state of the European Community on the marketing of agricultural exports to other member states within the Community.

Mr. Curry: The information is not available in the form requested. Information on the export marketing budgets of the national food and drink marketing organisations of certain member states is as follows:

Country and organisation	Year	Export marketing budgets[1] £ million
France		
SOPEXA	1990	37
Germany[2]		
Central Marketing Agency	1990	10
Republic of Ireland		
Irish Exports Board	1989	3
Holland		
(Government and sectoral promotion bodies)	1990	[3]34
Spain		
ICEX	1990	57

[1] Export marketing budgets (all markets).
[2] Forecast before reunification of Germany.
[3] Budget for home and overseas marketing.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a breakdown of the money spent on marketing United Kingdom agricultural products abroad during 1988, 1989 and 1990.

Mr. Curry: Comprehensive information is not collected; marketing is a necessary activity of all food and drink export businesses. The estimated amounts spent on export marketing spent by Food From Britain, the national food marketing organisation, are as follows:

£ millions

Year ending 31 March		
1989	1990	[1]1991
4·0	5·0	5·3

[1] Forecast.

Livestock (Metal Poisoning)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will indicate the cause of the restrictions imposed on the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibition) (Copper or Other Metal Poisoning) Order 1990 as well as the type of animals and number of animals involved and the contaminants involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: These restrictions were introduced by an order made under part I of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 to protect consumers from the risk of eating contaminated food following a case of copper poisoning among a group of 19 lambs on a farm in East Sussex.

Tobacco

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many ecus have been transferred to the tobacco sector of EAGGF in *(a)* 1989 and *(b)* 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Community Budget Authority (the Council and the European Parliament) transferred the following amounts to the tobacco sector:

	Million ecus
1989	165
1990	200

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has given his support to additional money being transferred to the tobacco sector of the EAGGF; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The United Kingdom has long been critical of the EC tobacco regime and the expenditure which it incurs and has consistently pressed for improvements. The Commission is currently conducting a review of the regime and I shall be arguing for substantive change. However, tobacco is grown in some of the poorest parts of the Community and alternative crops cannot be easily identified.

In 1989 the costs of the tobacco regime were higher than originally estimated partly because of agrimonetary movements but mainly because production levels and intervention stocks were greater than forecast when the budget was fixed in 1988. As the expenditure was legitimately incurred within the rules for the sector, the Budgetary Authority (the Council and the European Parliament) agreed to regularise the situation in this and other sectors by transferring funds from sectors which had underspent. Overall, the 1989 FEOGA budget was underspent, after these adjustments, by some 2·4 billion ecu. Similar transfers from underspending sectors within the 1990 FEOGA budget to cover legitimate expenditure in other sectors, including tobacco, have recently been agreed.

Casualty Animals

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what regulations and controls cover the procedure whereby casualty animals are disposed of or are prevented from entering the human food chain; whether he has plans to review or change the procedure; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: It is an offence to sell for human consumption meat which is unfit. In addition the Slaughterhouses (Hygiene) Regulations 1977 require that a veterinary health certificate be issued for animals known or suspected to be injured or diseased, and for carcases of such animals, which are intended to be presented at the slaughterhouse. This certifies that the animal is not affected with any condition, nor has received any medication, which is liable to render the whole carcase unfit for human consumption. The requirement for compulsory certification is subject to certain exemptions relating to injuries of recent origin (such as during transit when a veterinarian will not be available) and, for welfare reasons, to sheep and lamb carcases, where a declaration by the owner is required. It is an offence to allow casualty animals or their carcases to enter a slaughterhouse under any other circumstances.

Meat from carcases which does not pass post-mortem examination or from knacker animals must be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Meat (Sterilisation and Staining) Regulations 1982.

I am already considering whether any changes to the regulations in this area may be desirable.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assistance he proposes to give farmers in the provision of incinerators and other means of disposing of casualty animals in the light of the new regulations regarding the use of offal.

Mr. Maclean: It is the responsibility of farmers to ensure that their casualty animals and fallen stock are disposed of properly in accordance with existing statutory provisions.

Livestock Premiums

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received proposing that the steer premium should be paid at store cattle marts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I have received no representations suggesting that the beef special premium should be payable in respect of male cattle sold through store markets. This is not an option under the EC regulations which govern the operation of the scheme. These provide only for the payment of premium on-farm (as is done in Northern Ireland) or at slaughter or on first marketing for slaughter (as is done in Great Britain).

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will arrange for the next ewe premium payment to be advanced in order to assist farmers' cash flows.

Mr. Curry: As we announced on 24 September, the second advance payment of sheep annual premium has been brought forward, and will be paid as soon as possible.

The final balancing payment cannot be determined by the European Commission until the necessary data are available, after the end of the marketing year in January 1991. Once the final rate has been set, payments should be completed quickly.

Food Imports

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on recent levels of food imports from *(a)* Hungary, *(b)* Poland, *(c)* Czechoslovakia and *(d)* the former East Germany.

Mr. Curry: Food imports in the last three years (by value) have been:

Hungary

£ million

	1988	*1989*	*[1]1990*
Live animals chiefly for food	0·080	0·051	0·036
Meat and Meat preparations	4·126	5·411	1·849
Dairy Products and Eggs	—	—	—
Fish and Fish Preparations	0·006	0·001	0·008
Cereal and Cereal Preparations	0·183	0·110	0·065
Fruit and Vegetables	8·732	8·735	5·674
Sugar, Sugar Preparations and Honey	0·297	0·209	0·132
Coffee, Tea, Cocoa, Spices and manufactures there of	0·232	0·210	0·090
Miscellaneous Food Preparations	0·067	0·029	0·019
Oilseeds, Oils and Fats	0·258	0·307	0·173
Beverages	1·115	1·653	1·712
Total	15·096	16·716	9·758

[1]January to August.

Poland

£ million

	1988	*1989*	*[1]1990*
Live animals chiefly for food	0·076	0·088	0·096
Meat and Meat preparations	7·624	7·095	6·277
Dairy Products and Eggs	—	—	0·020
Fish and Fish Preparations	3·510	2·349	1·753
Cereal and Cereal Preparations	0·025	0·019	0·021
Fruit and Vegetables	6·095	4·431	7·041
Sugar, Sugar Preparations and Honey	0·992	1·195	1·881
Coffee, Tea, Cocoa, Spices and manufactures there of	0·311	0·320	0·511
Miscellaneous Food Preparations	—	—	0·032
Oilseeds, Oils and Fats	3·863	1·889	11·635
Beverages	0·317	0·248	0·087
Total	22·813	17·634	29·354

[1]January to August.

Czechoslovakia

£ million

	1988	*1989*	*[1]1990*
Live animals chiefly for food	0·054	0·068	0·057
Meat and Meat preparations	1·892	2·300	0·078
Dairy Products and Eggs	—	0·007	—
Fish and Fish Preparations	0·073	0·005	0·010
Cereal and Cereal Preparations	0·002	—	—
Fruit and Vegetables	1·045	0·736	0·686
Sugar, Sugar Preparations and Honey	0·068	0·051	0·063
Coffee, Tea, Cocoa, Spices and manufactures there of	0·222	0·072	0·044
Miscellaneous Food Preparations	—	0·008	—
Oilseeds, Oils and Fats	—	—	0·003
Beverages	0·642	0·714	0·021
Total	3·998	3·981	1·562

[1]January to August.

GDR (former East Germany)

£ million

	1988	*1989*	*[1]1990*
Live animals chiefly for food	0·042	0·021	0·010
Meat and Meat preparations	—	—	—
Dairy Products and Eggs	—	—	—
Fish and Fish Preparations	—	—	0·055
Cereal and Cereal Preparations	0·011	0·009	0·003
Fruit and Vegetables	0·360	0·286	0·416
Sugar, Sugar Preparations and Honey	0·346	0·402	0·224
Coffee, Tea, Cocoa, Spices and manufactures there of	—	—	—
Miscellaneous Food Preparations	—	—	—
Oilseeds, Oils and Fats	0·004	0·639	0·840
Beverages	0·683	0·670	0·293
Total	1·446	2·027	1·841

[1]January to August.

Research Projects

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list any other research and development projects he is planning to cut other than those carried out under the Barnes review; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The content of my Department's research and development programme is subject to continuous review and adjustment as projects are completed and new work commenced in the light of current priorities. The level of funding of research and development by my Department is substantial and is set at £121 million this year.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will outline his methods for deciding which research projects are categorised as near-market; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: In general, projects are categorised as near-market if they offer the prospect of commercial application or exploitation whether as a product, process or system within a short enough time scale to justify investment by industry. Such near-market work is most appropriately funded by industry since it is the direct beneficiary and therefore better placed to judge priorities.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list all the research projects that have been closed or are due to be closed as a result of the Barnes review; if he will indicate in each case which year they are to be closed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: A comprehensive list is not available and can be produced only at disproportionate cost. The following two lists provide details of projects in the fisheries and food sectors which have been identified as near-market research for which funding by my Department has been, or is being, phased out in line with Government policy.

List 1

Projects for Termination in 1990

1. Effects of Frozen Storage on quality and processing meat.
2. Carcase characteristics that determine value.
3. Effects of poultry breeding, husbandry, handling and processing on carcase composition and quality.
4. Flavour of cheese, fats, oils and confectionary.
5. Identify of flavours and taints resulting from processing, packaging and storage of cheese, fats, oils, confectionary and beverages.

6. Factors controlling meat restructuring processes.
7. Protein solubilisation and adhesion in reformed meats.
8. Adhesions and cohesion in meat products.
9. Effects of breeding, husbandry and poultry plant operations on the further processing quality of turkey meat.
10. Crystallisation behaviour of triglyceride mixtures in bulk phase and emulsion systems.
11. Temperature and mass change in meat cooking.
12. Electrical stimulation, hot boning and accelerated ageing.
13. Electrical stimulation, hot boning and processing properties of beef, pork and poultry.
14. Industrial development and technology transfer.
15. Optimum conditions for maintaining quality in packaged fruit and vegetables.
16. Use of microbial enzymes for the upgrading of sugar beet.
17. Carcase composition and meat quality in cattle.
18. Carcase composition and meat quality in sheep.
19. Techniques for assessment of carcase composition.
20. Effects of pre-slaughter handling practices on value of carcase and fresh meat.
21. Microbial spoilage of packaged fish and shellfish.
22. Innovation of fish and shellfish products and relevant process technology.
23. Shellfish processing.
24. Textural modification of recovered flesh.
25. Improved chilling and handling of sea fish and farmed fish.
26. Innovation and characterisation of added value products from industrial and waste fish resources and development of relevant new pilot plant processes or existing processes.
27. Improvements in the efficiency of processing fish—smoking.
28. Investigation of chemical/physical methods of reducing the rate of deterioration of bulk stored fish at sea.
29. Assessment of the requirements for the introduction of freezing-at-sea on small fishing vessels.
30. Study of cultured fish in relation to general quality aspects and to their suitability for processing.
31. The efficient use of recovered fish flesh for human consumption.
32. Applications of electronics and physical sensors in fish processing.
33. Plant design—Development of monitoring and control systems.
34. Refrigeration—the design and development of a mulitpass freezer.
35. Plant design—Energy utilisation in fish processing.
36. Plant design—A study of fundamental principles in the design and development of new smoking processes.
37. Processing machinery—Development of a machine to produce uncoated formed fillets.
38. Processing machinery—Separation of meat from shellfish.

List 2

Projects for Termination in 1991.

1. Utilisation of proteins as functional ingredients in processed food products.
2. Chemical composition and processing conditions on functional properties of food emulsions.
3. Compositional factors and processing conditions of fat in food emulsions.
4. Heat and mass transfer in meat refrigeration.
5. Robotics in meat handling and processing.
6. Meat process engineering.
7. Quality control robotic vision and meat grading by video image analysis and fibre.
8. Production of savoury flavour-enhancing peptides by enzymes.
9. Improve yield and quality of cheese and other fermented dairy products using cultures and enzymes derived from biotechnology programmes at IFR.
10. Packaging techniques for improved storage and display.
11. Optimum conditions for maintaining quality in bulked storage of vegetables.

Fish Hygiene Regulations

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the progress of draft European Community Fish Hygiene Regulations Com (89) 645; and what steps he is proposing to take to assist fish markets to adapt to them.

Mr. Curry: Discussions on these measures in a Council working group began in July and are continuing. Grant aid will continue to be available through a range of national and EC schemes to assist improvements in certain market and port facilities, including projects designed to raise hygiene standards.

Intervention Stocks

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the products from intervention stores in the United Kingdom, both public and private, which have been sold to other countries outside the EC, giving the quantities and price for which they were sold.

Mr. Gummer: In the 12 months to 30 September the following products were released from intervention and aided private storage under export arrangements.

	Intervention		*Aided private storage*	
	Tonnage	*Price £ per tonne*	*Tonnage*	*Price £ per tonne*
Beef	3,589	[1]795-6,362	2,712	[2]—
Barley	36,000	[3]72·50	—	—

[1] According to cut.
[2] Not available.
[3] Average.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the quantities of *(a)* skimmed milk powder, *(b)* butter, *(c)* beef and *(d)* cereals in (i) public and (ii) private intervention in (1) the United Kingdom and (2) the EC in October 1989 and October 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The information requested is available from the monthly notes deposited in the Library of the House.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much was spent on the storage of *(a)* skimmed milk powder, *(b)* butter, *(c)* beef and *(d)* cereals in public and private intervention in the United Kingdom for the periods January to September 1989 and January to September 1990.

Mr. Gummer: The information requested is as follows:

	January to September 1989 £'000	*January to September 1990 £'000*
Skimmed Milk Powder		
Public storage	—	8
Aided private storage	—	—
Butter		
Public storage	757	567
Aided private storage	1,601	836
Beef		
Public storage	2,316	1,287
Aided private storage	1,636	1,657
Cereals		
Public storage	16,491	7,112
Aided private storage	—	—

Animal Feedstuffs

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the measures that cover the quality and content of animal feedstuffs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The quality and content of animal feedingstuffs is controlled by wide-ranging EC legislation and implemented by United Kingdom legislation. The following is the legislation for which my department is responsible.

Agriculture Act 1970:
Feeding Stuffs Regulations 1988 as amended.

Medicines Act 1968: (as amended by the Animal Health and Welfare Act 1984)
Medicated (Medicated Animal Feeding Stuffs) Regulations 1989 (as amended)
Medicines (Veterinary Drugs) (Pharmacy and Merchants' List) (No. 2) Order 1989 (as amended)

Animal Health Act 1981:
The Disease of Animals (Waste Food) Order 1973 (as amended)
The Importation of Hay and Straw Order 1979
The Importation of Processed Animal Protein Order 1981 (as amended)
The Meat (Sterilisation and Staining) Regulations 1982 (as amended)
The Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (No. 2) Order 1988 (as amended)
The Zoonoses Order 1989
The Processed Animal Protein Order 1989

There are also voluntary codes of practice in place for the control of Salmonella in animal feedingstuffs and for the use of veterinary medicated feedingstuffs.

The metabolisable energy working party, which is sponsored by my Department, has issued guidance to farmers on energy values of ruminant feeds.

Proposals for new regulations have been issued this week which will improve the labelling and composition requirements of animal feedingstuffs.

Abattoirs

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give the location and capacity of all abattoirs in the United Kingdom, indicating those which are up to European Community standard for the slaughter of animals for export.

Mr. Maclean: I am placing in the Library of the House a current list of abattoirs in England and Wales which identifies those which are export approved. The capacity of individual abattoirs will vary according to a variety of factors, although it is estimated that approximately 43 per cent. of British meat production is accounted for by export approved abattoirs.

The Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Northern Ireland have responsibility for abattoirs in those parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what European Community and national assistance is available to abattoir owners to bring them up to European Community standards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Grants for the improvement of facilities have been available in the past to abattoir owners to help them meet necessary standards. They remain available for investment projects which qualify for assistance under the regional selective assistance scheme or the regional enterprise grant scheme, both of which are administered by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Agricultural Mortgage Corporation

Mr. Moss: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what conclusions he has reached following the review of the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation which he announced on 21 June; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I have considered the comments which I have received in response to my earlier announcement about the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation very carefully. I am satisfied that it would be generally beneficial to remove the present statutory restrictions on the corporation, including those on the range of financial services which it can offer. This will require legislation, which I hope to introduce at the first convenient opportunity.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 26 October 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Local Management of Schools

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his assessment of the impact on local government expenditure if all the primary and secondary schools now allowed to opt out did so.

Mr. Eggar: The impact would depend on what changes were made to the arrangements for funding grant-maintained schools.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Special Constables

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards special constables; and what have been the difficulties in the implementation of that policy.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Our policy is to encourage chief officers of police to increase the numbers of special constables and to deploy them, after suitable training, on interesting and challenging duties in support of the regular police. Over the past 10 years there has been a decline in the number of special constables, but we hope to redress this through a national publicity campaign starting in 1991 and extending over the next three years.

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables there are at present; how many there have been in each of the past 10 years; and how many there are expected to be over the next five years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: At the end of 1989 there were 15,589 special constables in England and Wales. The numbers enrolled on 31 December of each year from 1980 were as follows:

	Special constables
1980	15,108
1981	14,978
1982	15,160
1983	15,331
1984	16,021
1985	16,161
1986	16,070
1987	16,209
1988	15,788

It is not possible to predict the number of special constables for the next five years but we shall be launching a national publicity campaign in 1991 with the aim of increasing the numbers.

Civil Servants

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civil servants are employed by his Department at each grade; and how many in each grade are women.

Mr. Waddington: The Home Office employs some 42,000 non-industrial staff in more than 150 grades. The information requested is therefore provided in the table by occupational group. Each occupational group comprises staff in a number of grades dealing with similar work.

Group or class	*Total staff*	*Females*	
		Number	*Per cent.*
Administration Group	9,189	5,363	58
Cleaners	131	126	96
Immigration Service	2,025	526	26
Instructional Officer Class	1,050	112	11
Medical Officer	227	23	10
Messenger Grades	323	201	62
Paperkeeper Grades	172	123	71
Personal Secretary Class	417	416	99
Prison Officer Grades	3,614	482	13
Prison Service	21,215	1,367	6
Professional and Technical Officer Group	414	10	2
Science Group	661	222	34
Typing Class	814	809	99
Nursing Grades	140	134	96
Reprographics Class	44	30	68
Information Officer Group	36	18	50
Psychologist Class	93	53	57
Other	1,871	274	15
Total	42,436	10,289	24

Prison Population

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the percentage of the prison population, according to latest available figures *(a)* under the age of 21 years and *(b)* under the age of 18 years in (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) France, (iii) Germany, (iv) Italy, (v) Spain and the Republic of Ireland, (vi) Belgium, (vii) Denmark, (viii) Greece, (ix) Luxembourg, (x) the Netherlands and (xi) Portugal.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested is published twice a year by the Council of Europe in its prison information bulletin. The latest information, for 1 September 1988, is given in the table and appears in table 1 of issue No. 12, a copy of which is held in the Library. The information for Denmark and West Germany is not available. The proportion of the prison population aged under 21 in England and Wales has subsequently fallen to 21 per cent. on 31 August 1990.

An article on "International comparisons of prison populations" by Collier and Tarling (Home Office research bulletin No. 23, pages 48 to 54) showed that the figures for different countries are unlikely to be strictly comparable because the definitions of prisons and prisoners vary from one country to another, reflecting different legal and administrative systems. Examples of differences in the definitions are the inclusion or exclusion in a country's figures of juvenile offenders and mentally disordered offenders.

Proportion of prison population under selected ages held in the custody of the prison administrations of selected member states of the Council of Europe on 1 September 1988

Percentage

Member state	*Proportion in age group*
Aged under 18	
Belgium	1
Italy	1
England and Wales[1 2]	1
Aged under 21	
France	12
Greece	6
Ireland	29
Luxembourg	5
Portugal	10
Spain	8
United Kingdom[1] of which:	23
England and Wales[1]	23
Aged under 23	
Netherlands	15

[1] Includes those in police cells.
[2] Proportion on 30 June 1988.

Source: Council of Europe.

Marital Rape

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to bring in legislation to make it a criminal offence for men to rape their wives.

Mr. John Patten: The Law Commission is reviewing the law in this area in conjunction with its work on domestic violence. I understand that it plans to publish a consultation paper next month. We shall consider any final recommendations the Law Commission may make.

Broadcasting Bill

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations in writing he has received *(a)* criticising, *(b)* opposing or expressing reservations and *(c)* supporting his announcement on 4 September that the Government intend to ask the Commons to overturn amendments to the Broadcasting Bill passed by the House of Lords concerning the inclusion in the quality threshold documentaries of programmes with an educational purpose and social action programmes; and if he will list the persons and organisations from whom representations were received.

Mr. Mellor: I have been asked to reply.

By Tuesday 23 October 1990 the Home Office and the Office of Arts and Libraries had received about 120 representations from members of the public or organisations urging us not to seek to reverse these amendments.

Daylight Saving

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to report his conclusions and recommendation on the consultation on possible changes in time to produce daylight saving.

Mrs. Rumbold: The views expressed in response to the Green Paper "Summer Time—A Consultation Document" (Cm 722) disclosed a considerable difference of opinion in the United Kingdom. The Government have not yet reached a decision on what further action might be taken.

Conservative Party Conference

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the total policing costs arising from the Conservative party conference in Bournemouth; and what proportion of the cost will be met by the local authorities in Bournemouth.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the chief constable of Dorset that the additional costs of policing the 1990 Conservative party conference in Bournemouth were estimated at £2 million. The additional costs of policing will be met by the Dorset police authority. Under the normal police funding arrangements, the Government contribute both directly through police grant—which is at 51 per cent.—and indirectly through revenue support grant.

TRANSPORT

Roll-on Roll-off Ferries

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what approaches he has made to the International Maritime Organisation, Lloyd's of London, or other similar insurance markets concerning minimum safety standards of construction and operation of roll-on roll-off ferries or similar ships and where details of such communications may be found; if he will consider setting a date by which a programme of rising standards can be applied to all such ships arriving at or departing from British ports; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: Amendments to the international convention for the safety of life at sea 1974, proposed by the United Kingdom in 1987—concerning safety standards for the construction and operation of ro-ro ferries are now in force. In addition, my Department is urgently seeking agreement at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to higher residual stability standards for existing ferries. The standard proposed is that which came into force earlier this year for new passenger ships. The time scale for implementation within the proposed amendment is three years. I will place copies of the paper to IMO in the House Library.

Approaches to improve ferry safety have also been made to our near European maritime neighbours.

British Rail

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list his Department's statutory responsibilities to overview and control the operations of British Rail trains especially those concerning their *(a)* safety, *(b)* availability of proper accommodation, *(c)* cleanliness and *(d)* punctuality.

Mr. Freeman: The responsibility for running a safe and efficient railway is placed by statute on British Rail. The Secretary of State has powers under the Regulation of Railways Act 1871, the Road and Rail Traffic Act 1933

and level crossing enactments, relating to the approval and inspection of new works and to the investigation of accidents.

The Secretary of State sets British Rail three-year objectives covering financial performance and quality of service on a non-statutory basis, and the Department monitors BR's performance on these matters.

MV Derbyshire

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now initiate an inquiry into the loss of MV Derbyshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: A formal investigation into the loss of the Derbyshire took place between October 1987 and March 1988.

New material is now being examined by the marine accident investigation branch. Once it has concluded its investigations, a report will be sent to the Secretary of State. After consideration of that report, he will decide whether or not the formal investigation should be reopened.

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is now taking to assist the families bereaved after the loss of the MV Derbyshire.

Mr. McLoughlin: I have no plans to offer financial assistance to the dependants of those who were lost in the MV Derbyshire tragedy in 1980.

Pipes and Cables

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 23 October to the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, North, what instructions he has given to local authorities about the depositing of pipes and cables in common ducts; and for what reasons intermittent digging of streets for pipes and cables by a variety of statutory undertakers is permitted.

Mr. Chope: None. It is for local highway authorities to determine whether or not it is feasible or desirable to provide common ducts below streets. The powers of statutory undertakers to break open streets are governed by the Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950, which contains no requirement on highway authorities or undertakers to co-ordinate their digging up of streets. This is a matter we intend to put right in the proposed legislation to implement the recommendations of the Horne report.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what he estimates to be the cost to local authorities of failing to implement the powers granted to them for rationalising the laying of pipes and cables below ground.

Mr. Chope: It is not possible to make any such estimate.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Patrick Sheri

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether a work permit was issued to Mr. Patrick Sheri to allow him to perform in the production of "Land of Dreams" broadcast on BBC television on 8 August; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: A work permit was not issued in respect of this performance.

HEALTH

Osteoporosis

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to fund the development of the new test which identifies women at greatest risk of osteoporosis.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department of Health has commissioned a critical review of screening techniques for detecting osteoporosis. We hope to have the results next year. I understand that the Medical Research Council, which receives its grant in aid from the Department of Education and Science, funds research into biochemical screening techniques for identifying women at greatest risk of osteoporosis.

North East Thames RHA

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list all land sales approved by his Department by North East Thames regional health authority for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department's approval is not needed for land sales carried out by regional health authorities and the information requested is not held in the Department. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of North East Thames RHA for details.

Community Care

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the finances he proposes to make available to local authorities in England in each year of his timetable for the implementation of those parts of the National Health Service and Community Care Act that relate to the development of community-based care for elderly and disabled people.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: For details of the finance to be made available to local authorities for phase 1 of the implementation of our community care proposals in 1991-92, I refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State made on 18 July at columns 999-1014. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment expects to make an announcement shortly on the local authority grant settlement which will include proposals for standard spending assessments for personal social services. Decisions on resources for phases 2 and 3 will be taken in the appropriate public expenditure survey years.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out his timetable for the implementation of those parts of the National Health Service and Community Care Act that relate to the development of community-based care for elderly and disabled people in England.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State made on 18 July at columns 999-1014.

Abortion

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will issue guidelines to the medical profession relating to the interpretation of the clause added to the Abortion Bill about the termination of pregnancies where there may be grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or where there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The category of
"substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped"
is one of the grounds for abortion in the Abortion Act 1967. The application of that test is, and will remain, a matter of clinical judgment for decision by the two doctors who are required under the Act to form their opinion in good faith. That will also be the case for the new ground
"to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman",
a form of words already specified as a ground for abortion in the emergency provisions in section 1(4) of the 1967 Act.

Residential Home Patients

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any proposals to amend local authority regulations concerning the treatment of capital of residents of local authority residential homes to bring them into line with similar regulations for the payment of income support.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The White Paper, "Caring for People", makes it clear that our intention is to align the local authority charging rules for residential care with those for the treatment of resources, both income and capital, under the income support scheme. The details of the alignment have yet to be worked out.

WALES

Community Care

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the finances he proposes to make available to local authorities in Wales in each year of his timetable for the implementation of those parts of the National Health Service and Community Care Act that relate to the development of community-based care for elderly and disabled people in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The cost of implementing the first stage of the changes in 1991-92 has been taken into account in the figures for the revenue support grant settlement announced in July. The indicative amount for local authority expenditure on personal social services will be announced later in the year, along with the level of specific grant for community care training and support purposes. In addition, central expenditure of £330,000 is planned for 1991-92 for the continuation of demonstration projects on assessment and care management begun in 1990-91 with a similar level of central expenditure.

The allocation of earmarked central resources in respect of bids for schemes to promote more flexible forms of community care for elderly people and those with physical or sensory disabilities will be announced in January 1991.

For future years central support for local authority expenditure will be determined as part of each year's local authority revenue settlement and the public expenditure survey. The level of resources to be transferred from social security programmes to the local authorities in 1993-94 to enable them to carry out the full range of their new responsibilities for assessment and the procurement of care will be determined in the 1992 public expenditure survey.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out his timetable for the implementation of those parts of the National Health Service and Community Care Act that relate to the development of community-based care for the elderly and disabled people in Wales.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement made by my right hon. Friend on 18 July and the detailed programme of implementation sent to him under cover of the Department's letter of 10 September—a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House.

ENVIRONMENT

London Docklands Development Corporation

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much the London Docklands development corporation has spent on infrastructure in the area of the Royal Docks since its inception; and how much further it is committed to spend.

Mr. Portillo: The London Docklands development corporation has spent from 1981 to the end of September 1990 £222 million on infrastructure in the royal docks area. A further £28 million is committed. The corporation is also funding the DLR Beckton extension estimated to cost £248 million, most of which falls in the royal docks area.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much of the memorandum of agreement between the London Docklands development corporation and the Newham borough council has been carried out; and what remains to be carried out.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 5 April 1990 by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan) at column 777.

Over £26 million has now been spent on the projects which were listed in that reply.

Of the projects originally identified as possible in the memorandum, 12 have been completed or started, or will start this financial year and two are contingent on the content of future development yet to be determined.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much is in the budget of the London Docklands development corporation for the community services division for the current year; and what it has been in each of the last five years.

Mr. Portillo: The current budget for the community services division in the financial year 1990-91 is £27 million.

The community services division has existed only since 1988. However, expenditure on community projects in the last five years is as follows:

	£ million
1989-90	[1]44
1988-89	9
1987-88	5
1986-87	4
1985-86	4

[1] This figure includes £19·8 million for the development of over 400 new homes by a consortium of housing associations at Winsor Park.

LDDC's major transport programme is also of substantial benefit to local communities.

Golf Courses

Mr. Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the development of new golf courses.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Proposals for the development of new golf courses fall to be considered under normal planning policies. The draft planning policy guidance note on sport and recreation issued on 16 October indicates that sites for recreational use—which could in suitable circumstances include golf courses—may in some areas of the urban fringe act as an important buffer between agricultural and urban uses to protect crops from damage.

River Estuaries

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to ensure that the needs of conservation are taken into account when considering developments in river estuaries.

Mr. Trippier: The majority of our estuaries encompass areas that are important for nature conservation and which are protected as sites of special scientific interest. Those with the most important bird interest are either designated, or under consideration for designation, as special protection areas under the EEC birds directive. The Department's circular 27/87 advises local planning authorities to take full account of the nature conservation importance of all these areas when considering development proposals.

Drinking Water Inspectorate

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total cost of employing the two consulting firms, Watson Hawksley and Rofe, Kennard and Lapworth, to assist the drinking water inspectorate by carrying out inspections of 17 water supply companies.

Mr. Trippier: The drinking water inspectorate is currently negotiating consultancy commissions for inspections beyond those already announced. For commercial reasons, it would not be appropriate to reveal costs while negotiations are proceeding.

Water Companies, Southern England

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which water companies in southern England have not so far imposed a ban on the use of hosepipes during the current year.

Mr. Trippier: The following water companies in southern England (Bristol to The Wash) have not so far this year imposed a ban on the use of hosepipes in any part of their supply areas:

The Bournemouth and District Water Company,
Cambridge Water Company,
Cholderton and District Water Company Limited,
East Anglian Water Company,
Portsmouth Water plc,
Tendring Hundred Waterworks Company,
Wessex Water Services Limited and
West Hampshire Water Company.

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which water companies in southern England draw all or most of their supplies from rivers rather than from reservoirs or other sources.

Mr. Trippier: The following water companies in southern England (Bristol to The Wash) draw most of their supplies direct from rivers rather than from reservoirs or other sources:

The Bournemouth and District Water Company,
East Anglian Water Company,
North Surrey Water Company and
West Hampshire Water Company.

Rivers do, of course, feed reservoirs to varying degrees.

Housing, Congleton

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people have been on the homelessness register in the borough of Congleton in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Local authorities report the number of households accepted and found accommodation under the homelessness provisions of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and the Housing Act 1985.

The available figures for Congleton borough council are as follows:

	Households
1980	43
1981	45
1982	32
1983	42
1984	57
1985	57
1986	[1]54
1987	49
1988	61
1989	64

[1] Estimated from HIP1 return.

The information is published quarterly (half-yearly before 1985) in "Local Housing Statistics: England and Wales", which is in the Library.

London Boroughs (Capital Allocation)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the estimated levels of capitalallocation to London boroughs in 1990-91 by the London residuary body.

Mr. Key: The London residuary body has recently indicated that it does not expect to make a general distribution of capital receipts to London boroughs in 1990-91. The total sum previously distributed is £486 million. There will, however, be a special distribution to

inner London boroughs in 1990-91 to reimburse them for certain items of educational expenditure inherited from the abolished ILEA.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will accept a nomination from the Association of London Authorities for membership of the London residuary body; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: My right hon. Friend is always prepared to consider suggestions for appointment but he sees no need at present to make further new appointments to the London residuary body.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the expected publication date of the 1989-90 annual report of the London residuary body.

Mr. Key: The London residuary body expects to publish its annual report and accounts for 1989-90 shortly.

Historic Houses

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money was given in grants by local authorities to historic houses in each of the last five years: and how many houses were involved.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that this information is not available.

Cornish Coast (Wildlife Losses)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has regarding the loss of wildlife earlier this year on beaches between Portreath and Newquay; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* I have no information of unusual losses of wildlife in the area this year. We know of 28 strandings over the past 12 months; three of which are broadly in the Portreath/Newquay area.

The one individual found in that area that has had a post mortem was obviously young, but suffering from severe parasitic infestation and wasting of the muscles, although (as is often the case) no obvious cause of death had been established. Samples suitable for contaminant analysis have been taken from this individual.

Printing (Toxicity)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what weight of hydrocarbons is released to the atmosphere during a typical hour's operation of platemaking and photographical processes in printworks; and what regulations exist to control such atmospheric discharges.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* Total annual emissions of hydrocarbons—measured as volatile organis compounds (VOCs)—from the printing and ink manufacturing industry are estimated at 41,000 tonnes per year. Disaggregated hourly data for the processes specified are not available.

Should such processes cause statutory nuisance, they are controlled by local authorities under part III of the Public Health Act 1936. In future, subject to the approval of the Environmental Protection Bill, we intend to schedule those printing works with the greatest pollution potential for control under the new air pollution control regime proposed in part I of the Bill.

The United Kingdom is taking a leading part within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which is preparing a protocol on VOCs. This will lead to cuts in emissions from all sources.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what volumes of toxic effluent are discharged each hour from a typical printworks; and what regulations exist to control such discharges.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* Information on discharges from printworks is not held centrally. The registers held by the National Rivers Authority contain discharge consent conditions for individual works and these will include those for volume.

Consents for discharges to sewer are granted by sewerage undertakers under the Public Health (Drainage of Trade Premises) Act 1937, and for discharges to controlled waters by the National Rivers Authority under the Water Act 1989. An application to discharge a prescribed substance into a sewer must be referred by the sewerage undertaker to the Secretary of State under the Trade Effluents (Prescribed Processes and Substances) Regulations 1989, as amended. If an EC list I dangerous substance is discharged into controlled waters, the National Rivers Authority must set a consent consistent with its obligations under the Surface Waters (Dangerous Substances) (Classification) Regulations 1989.

European Council

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what matters in regard to the mitigation of global warming were discussed at the European Environment Council in Luxembourg on 4 October.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* No such meeting took place—the next meeting of the Environment Council is on 29 October.

London Docklands (Toxic Pollution)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any reports from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution on the levels of toxic pollution measurable in London docklands since January 1985.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* I have received no reports from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution (HMIP) on toxic pollution in London docklands. HMIP has no statutory role in regulating toxic waste on land.

Halon 1301

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the environmental and human consequences of fighting a fire with the chemical Halon 1301.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* Halon 1301 is a powerful ozone-depleting chemical and an effective fire-fighting agent of low toxicity. Under the Montreal protocol halon production and consumption

will be cut by 50 per cent. by 1995 and phased out by 2000 except for a limited number of essential uses, to be decided internationally by 1993 and kept under review thereafter.

Drinking Water (Northern Region)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment where the drinking water inspectorate officer responsible for the Northern region is based.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* Responsibility within the drinking water inspectorate for the English regions has not been assigned to individual inspectors. All inspectors are based in London.

SCOTLAND

Road Accidents

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many road accidents there were, both fatal and non-fatal, in each of the years 1984 to 1989 inclusive; and how many involved drivers aged under 24 years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is as follows:

	Reported personal injury accidents		*Reported personal injury accidents involving at least one driver aged under 24*	
	Fatal	*Non-fatal*	*Fatal*	*Non-fatal*
1984	537	19,437	197	8,884
1985	550	20,094	223	8,797
1986	537	19,281	218	8,082
1987	517	18,140	183	7,540
1988	499	18,596	211	7,667
1989	496	20,112	180	8,442

Sea Trout Stocks

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research his Department has commissioned into the decline of sea trout stocks in Scottish waters.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Studies of sea trout by scientists from the DAFS freshwater fisheries laboratory at Pitlochry have concentrated on areas in the north-west of Scotland where catches of sea trout appear to have fallen sharply in 1989. Work so far has included detailed sampling of sea trout fisheries in Loch Hope, Loch Maree, Achiltibuie, Loch Shiel, Loch Morar, Loch Eilt and a group of lochs in Skye with analysis of the size, age, sex composition of the catches and, where possible, of mature fish in the spawning burns. Surveys of juvenile distribution and abundance, including the physical and chemical evaluation of habitats, have also been undertaken in burns flowing into Lochs Hope, Maree and Eilt.

The preliminary results of this work suggest that, as in the west of Ireland, growth and survival rates in fresh water are within the normal range. This points to lower survival rates at sea as the primary reason for the lower number of returning adult sea trout.

The reasons for apparently poorer marine survival are not yet clear. Sea trout at sea, or returning to estuaries, are now being sampled to evaluate their overall condition, diet and status in terms of disease and parasites. It is too early yet to draw any conclusions from this work or the other continuing studies in north-west Scotland.

DAFS scientists are also undertaking long-term studies of the dynamics of migratory trout populations in eastern Scotland and analysis of the sea trout catch statistics collected for Scotland as a whole.

Dental Services

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many dentists operating national health service schemes for their patients have now changed to private practice only; and how many people who cannot afford private dental services have been affected by this change *(a)* in Greater Glasgow, *(b)* in Strathclyde and *(c)* in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is not available centrally.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of the Dental Association of Scotland; and if he discussed the increasing numbers of dentists refusing to operate National Health Service schemes.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Officials of the Scottish Home and Health Department met the Scottish General Dental Services Committee of the British Dental Association on 13 June 1990, to discuss the new contract for general dental practitioners. On 12 July 1990 the British Dental Association agreed that the new contract would be introduced on 1 October 1990, and that the proposals were in the best interests of patients, dentists and dentistry.

Junior Doctors

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of junior doctors in the Scottish national health service were working, on average, more than 70 hours weekly, for each year since 1980.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information on the hours worked by junior doctors is not collected centrally, but just over 82 per cent. of junior doctors were contracted to work more than 70 hours weekly at 30 September 1989—1989 is the first year for which such information is available centrally.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan, *Official Report*, 16 October, column *805*, if he will list all steps taken to improve the working arrangements for junior doctors in Scotland and especially their working hours arrangements.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In 1983 regular rotas more onerous than one night and one weekend on duty in two were banned. In 1985 guidance was issued to health boards on arrangements designed to minimise the occasions when doctors in hard-pressed specialties were required to work rotas more onerous than one in two when covering for absent colleagues. In 1989 we introduced measures aimed at eliminating rotas more onerous than one night and one weekend in three.

A working party, set up by my hon. Friend the Minister for Health, is currently considering at national level how further improvements in junior doctors' working arrangements may be achieved. We are represented on that working party. Meantime we have asked boards to keep all onerous rotas under continuous review and to eliminate them as soon as circumstances permit.

While still continuing to work towards eliminating onerous rotas, in 1988 and again in 1989 the Government accepted the recommendation of the doctors' and dentists' review body to pay enhanced rates to junior doctors working long hours.

Heart Disease

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's new initiatives to prevent further increases in the number of people suffering from heart disease in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The consultation document "Health Education in Scotland: A National Policy Statement", which I launched on 9 October, identified coronary heart disease as a national priority for health education and set out our target of reducing mortality from heart disease for people under age 65 by 25 per cent. by the year 2000.

A twin strategy involving both an individual and a population approach is proposed. The individual strategy envisages family doctors identifying people who are at risk, thus enabling appropriate counselling or necessary treatment to be provided. The population strategy consists of promoting, at national and local levels, the positive life style approach and in particular the aspects of healthy eating, non-smoking and exercise. National campaigns will be undertaken by the Health Education Board, which will replace the Scottish Health Education Group on 1 April 1991, and will be complemented by action at local level by health boards and voluntary organisations.

Premature deaths from coronary heart disease in Scotland declined by 17 per cent. between 1980 and 1988 and the enhanced health education effort now proposed will facilitate further progress towards the target I have set.

Greater Glasgow Health Board

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many times the Greater Glasgow health board has moved its head office during the last three years; what has been the total cost involved in these moves; what was the cost of obtaining, fitting out, equipping and stone cleaning 112 Ingram street; and what was the cost of transferring the accounts, finance and wages departments from Ingram street to other premises.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* Greater Glasgow health board has made only one major relocation of its head office in the past three years.

The total cost was £1·25 million; this includes a cost to the board of £0·62 million for work at Ingram street and of £0·46 million for transferring certain departments. The changes will release savings of £2·9 million on revenue expenditure from January 1989 to June 1992. These savings will be used to improve patient care for the population of Greater Glasgow.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Audit Policy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether he will launch an independent investigation into the influence of major firms on audit policy making;

(2) whether he will investigate the influence of major accountancy firms on the major policy-making committees of the accountancy profession.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 5 April at column *804*.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will list all statutory provisions relating to the making of audit policy by the Auditing Practices Committee.

Mr. Redwood: The Auditing Practices Committee is established by CCAB Ltd., a company registered under the Companies Act, whose shareholders are the chartered bodies of accountants. The committee's activities are therefore not founded on statutory provisions.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to require auditors to actively satisfy themselves that a company is a going concern.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to his questions on 5 March at column *413*, 27 March at column *125* and 2 April at column *399*.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish a table showing how many of Britain's top 100 companies are audited by firms criticised by his Department's inspectors.

Mr. Redwood: The hon. Member is already aware of the auditing firms criticised in inspectors' reports published since June 1979 (*Official Report*, 19 December 1989, column *139* and 21 February 1990, column *789*). In addition two reports were published on 29 August 1990:

Name of Company	*Name of Accountants*
Minet Holdings plc	Black, Geoghegan and Till.
WMD Underwriting Agencies Limited.	Josolyne Layton-Bennett and Co. Arthur Young McClelland Moores and Co.
Alexander Howden Holdings plc.	Josolyne Layton-Bennett and Co. de Paula Turner Lake and Co. Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co., Bermuda. Arthur Young McClelland Moores and Co.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she will provide a list showing the number of accountancy firm partners which have been barred from practising as a result of criticisms in the Department of Trade and Industry inspectors' reports.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 26 March at column *25*.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to enable individual shareholders to sue company auditors for negligence.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his question on 26 February at column *15*.

Industrial Development Policy

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he proposes any changes in industrial development policy following the United Kingdom's entry into the exchange rate mechanism.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have no plans to make changes in our policies towards industry because of ERM entry.

Company Legislation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, arising from the Caparo case, he intends to propose any amendments to company law.

Mr. Redwood: We have no plans to do so.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to require all public companies to publish profit forecasts.

Mr. Redwood: The Companies Act 1985 requires that the directors' report shall contain an indication of the likely future developments in the business of the company and of its subsidiary undertakings. While it is open to directors to include profit forecasts in their report, I have no plans to extend the existing statutory requirement.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss manufacturing industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Ministers and officials of my Department keep in touch with the CBI on a wide range of business matters.

Post Office

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the head of the Post Office; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met the chairman of the Post Office, Sir Bryan Nicholson, on 26 September. They discussed various matters of mutual interest and concern.

Royal Mail

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the head of the Royal Mail; what matters were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met the managing director of the Royal Mail, Mr. Bill Cockburn, on 2 October. They discussed various matters of mutual interest and concern.

Israel

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether it remains the policy of Her Majesty's Government to oppose the Arab trade boycott of Israel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Yes. As I made clear in my recent speech to the CBI conference on Israel, Her Majesty's Government are opposed to and deplore all trade boycotts that lack international support and authority.

Home Accidents

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the 1988 figures on the causes and consequences of accidents in the home were due to be published; when he now intends to publish them; and if he will give the reasons for the delay.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* The 12th report of the home accident surveillance system (HASS) covering 1988 data is expected to be published in November 1990, which is later than projected. A number of factors have contributed to delay, principally the extension of the system to cover leisure accidents in order to collect data that can be supplied to the European Commission for the EHLASS (European home and leisure accident surveillance system) demonstration project. The introduction of leisure accident surveillance into HASS has required extensive and complex changes to the computer system handling HASS data. Work is well advanced to replace the current HASS computer system to ensure these problems do not recur in the future.

Retail Sector

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the factors underlying the performance of major high street retailing companies since 1987, and on their prospects in the next 12 months.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The performance of the retail sector as a whole is clearly influenced by developments in the economy generally. But the performance of individual retailers depends on the extent to which they meet the needs of their customers. This will no doubt continue to be the case in the next 12 months.

Overseas Boards

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the members, and their affiliations, of the British Overseas Trade Board and of the Overseas Projects Board.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* The information sought is as follows:

British Overseas Trade Board

Membership as at October 1990.

The Rt. Hon. Peter Lilley, MP (President) Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Sir James Cleminson, KBE, MC, DL (Chairman) Chairman, Riggs A. P. Bank and Deputy Chairman, Norwich Union.

HRH The Duke of Kent, KG (Vice Chairman) Non-executive Director of BICC plc and Vickers plc.

Mr. D., M. Dell, CB (Chief Executive) Deputy Secretary, Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. D. Saunders (Secretary) Department of Trade and Industry

Mr. J. M. M. Banham Director General, Confederation of British Industry.

Mr. N. P. Bayne, CMG Deputy Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Mr. A. B. Cleaver
Chairman and Chief Executive, IBM United Kingdom Ltd.

Mr. T. P. Frost
Group Chief Executive, National Westminster Bank plc

Mr. A. G. Gormly
Director, Trafalgar House plc and Managing Director, John Brown plc

Dr. A. Hayes
Chairman, ICI Agrochemicals, ICI plc

Sir Derek Hornby
Non-executive member, British Railways Board

Lord Limerick, KBE
Chairman, British Invisibles

Mr. J. W. Parsons, CBE
Chairman, Time and Data Systems International Ltd.

Mr. M. S. Perry, CBE
Director, Unilever plc

Mr. M. G. Stephens,
Chief Executive, Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mr. B. D. Taylor,
Chairman, Medeva plc

Overseas Projects Board
Membership as at October 1990

Mr. A. G. Gormly *(Chairman)*,
Director, Trafalgar House plc and Managing Director, John Brown plc

Mr. W. Hogbin, CBE *(Vice Chairman)*,
Chairman, Taylor Woodrow International Ltd.

Mr. M. B. Abrahams, OBE,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, GEC Alsthom International

Mr. B. P. Dewe Matthews,
Director, J. Henry Schroder Wagg and Co. Ltd.

Mr. R. T. Fox,
Vice Chairman, Kleinwort Benson Group plc

Mr. S. Gillibrand,
Chairman, British Aerospace (Commercial Aircraft) Ltd.

Mr. M. N. John,
Chairman, Kennedy and Donkin Group Ltd.

Mr. D. J. Lee, CBE,
Chairman, G. Maunsell and Partners

Mr. D. O. Lloyd,
Director, Sir William Halcrow and Partners Ltd.

Mr. P. L. Lockton, CBE,
Managing Director, Industrial and Projects Engineering Group Northern Engineering Industries plc

Mr. H. C. B. Malim,
Export Director, Export and Projects Departments Barclays Bank plc

Mr. N. I. Simms,
Chief Executive, Tarmac Construction Ltd.

Mr. F. W. Smith,
Chief Executive, APV plc

Mr. R. J. Tazzyman,
Managing Director, Davy McKee (Poole) Ltd.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Giant Hogweed

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he proposes to take to eradicate giant hogweed in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Departments of the Environment and of Agriculture have co-operated to produce a leaflet which gives advice to landowners on the problem of giant hogweed and its control. Control and eradication is a matter for landowners and occupiers on whose land the plant is growing. Copies of the leaflet are available in the Library.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether giant hogweed is listed as a weed which landowners should destroy; what advice has been given to landowners as to the most successful methods of destruction; and whether he has published a list of weedkillers which can be used with success on this plant.

Mr. Brooke: Giant hogweed is not listed in any Northern Ireland legislation as a weed which landowners shall destroy. The Departments of Agriculture and of the Environment have jointly published a leaflet entitled, "Giant Hogweed: The Problem and its Control", copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to the areas of Northern Ireland where giant hogweed is known to grow.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland has no detailed information on the occurrence of giant hogweed. Its distribution tends to be localised on river banks and lake sides. It is found mostly in the south of Northern Ireland and in particular along the banks of the Rivers Bann, Lagan, Ballinderry and Blackwater.

Hip Replacements

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information is available to indicate the number of hip replacement operations in each of the past three years, indicating the number of patients from each board area and by operating hospital.

Mr. Needham: The information held centrally for each of the last three years for which figures are available is set out in the table. It is likely however that these figures understate the true level of activity at Musgrave Park hospital.

Hip replacement operations by hospital and board of residence

Hospital	*Eastern*	*Northern*	*Southern*	*Western*	*Unknown*[1]	*Total*
1986						
Musgrave Park	398	176	207	51	1	833
Belfast City	1	2	2	—	—	5
Royal Victoria	1	2	—	—	—	3
Ulster	3	—	—	—	—	3
Downe	4	—	—	—	—	4
Coleraine	2	29	—	—	1	32
Route	—	6	—	—	—	6
Altnagelvin	—	23	17	85	35	160
St. Columbs	—	—	—	1	—	1
Total	409	238	226	137	37	1,047

Hospital	Eastern	Northern	Southern	Western	Unknown[1]	Total
1987						
Musgrave Park	270	128	123	35	10	566
Belfast City	6	4	2	—	—	12
Royal Victoria	1	—	—	—	1	2
Ulster	2	—	—	—	—	2
Downe	5	—	—	—	—	5
Coleraine	—	39	—	—	—	39
Route	—	1	—	—	—	1
Moyle	—	1	—	—	—	1
Altnagelvin	—	12	4	45	18	79
St. Columbs	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	284	185	129	80	29	707
1988						
Musgrave Park	164	88	82	27	251	612
Belfast City	7	3	3	—	—	13
Royal Victoria	4	—	—	—	1	5
Ulster	5	1	—	—	—	6
Downe	1	—	—	—	—	1
Lagan Valley	1	—	—	—	—	1
Coleraine	2	53	—	—	—	55
Route	—	—	—	—	—	—
Altnagelvin	—	23	10	64	17	114
St. Columbs	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	184	168	95	91	269	807

[1] or outside Northern Ireland

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what information is available to indicate the number of hip replacement operations by hospital in each of the past three years which followed private consultations;

(2) what information is available to indicate the number of hip replacement operations which were done privately in each of the last three years in national health service hospitals.

Mr. Needham: The information requested is not collected and held centrally.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information is available to indicate current waiting lists for hip replacement operations.

Mr. Needham: The information requested is as follows:

EHSSB (Musgrave Park Hospital)	— 589
WHSSB (Altnagelvin Hospital)	— 203
NHSSB (Coleraine Hospital)	— 20

Kidney Disease

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether any assessment has been made of the number of renal patients who would benefit from erthropoetin; and how many are currently receiving it.

Mr. Needham: No detailed assessment has been made but medical opinion suggests that up to half of the 160 patients receiving dialysis treatment in Northern Ireland would benefit from erthropoetin; 48 are currently receiving it.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what kidney dialysis facilities exist in the Province; and whether there are any plans for opening a unit in *(a)* Coleraine and *(b)* Londonderry.

Mr. Needham: The main renal unit at the Belfast City hospital provides dialysis services for the whole of the Province and is supported by a satellite dialysis unit at Tyrone county hospital, Omagh. There are no plans at present for a unit in either Coleraine or Londonderry.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultant nephrologists are employed in the Northern Ireland health service; and what is the ratio of nephrologists to kidney patients.

Mr. Needham: There are four consultant nephrologists in Northern Ireland. Information on their work load is not collected and the ratio cannot be calculated.

Organ Donor Cards

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many organ donor cards have been distributed in the Province; and what consideration has he given to having them countersigned by next of kin and placing the names of all card-carriers on a computer available to all intensive therapy units.

Mr. Needham: About 125,000 organ donor cards are distributed each year in the Province and arrangements have been made for a donor card section to be included in the new form of driving licence due to be introduced from 1 January next year. Consideration is also being given to a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the supply of donor organs including computerisation of the names of card-carriers and improvements to the existing donor card.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Coins

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate by denomination the number of coins in circulation in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maples: The estimated number of coins in circulation in the United Kingdom, by denomination, at 31 March 1990 is:

Denomination	*Coins (million)*
£1	911
50p	676
20p	1,295
10p	1,510
5p	2,320
2p	3,500
1p	5,600

Oil Production

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the likely increased revenue in corporation tax paid by oil companies as a result of a $1 per barrel increase in the price of oil over a year.

Mr. Maude: It is estimated that extra corporation tax receipts from the North sea from a sustained increase in the oil price of $1 per barrel would be about £50 million in a full year assuming no change in the exchange rate or in company spending in the North sea.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Seals

Mr. John Townend: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will estimate how many seals there are in the North sea and what effect they have on fish stocks.

Mr. Curry: It is estimated that there are approximately 55,000 seals in the North sea. At present, there are no definitive data available as to the exact mix of the many fish species in the North sea, both of commercial and non-commercial interest, in the diet of seals and any local variations and the consequent effect seals have on fish stocks. Both the Scottish Office and this Department have commissioned research on the diet and foraging behaviour of certain seal colonies.

Sea Dumping

Ms. Walley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy on a worldwide ban on sea dumping by 1995; what discussions he has had regarding the proposal for such a ban by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden at the forthcoming London dumping convention; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The Government's policy has been to terminate dumping at sea of liquid industrial wastes and flyash in the United Kingdom as environmentally acceptable practicable alternatives on land become available. The United Kingdom will be seeking at the meeting of the London dumping convention next week to clarify the implications of the proposal made for a global ban on industrial waste dumping.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Border Checks, Europe

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterparts of Germany, France, the Benelux countries and Italy in order to sign the agreement to *(a)* remove all checks of people travelling across the borders with those countries and *(b)* establish closer police and judicial co-operation with them.

Mr. Garel-Jones: My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary holds regular discussions with his counterparts from all European Community member states on matters relating to free movement of people in the Community. We have no plans to join the Schengen arrangements, but are committed to closer police and judicial co-operation with all our partners.

Latin America

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to propose closer and improved economic and cultural co-operation with Latin American democratic countries at the next meeting of the European Council in Rome.

Mr. Garel-Jones: We support closer ties between the European Community and Latin America. I have written to the Italian Foreign Minister proposing ways to strengthen the relationship through increased trade liberalisation in the context of the GATT round. A meeting between Foreign Ministers of the Community and Latin America countries on 20 December will provide a further opportunity to discuss improved co-operation.

British Electricity International Ltd.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will countermand the embargo imposed by British Electricity International Ltd., on the overseas trading decision of National Power, on trade with Israel, in compliance with the Arab trade boycott on Israel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: It would not be appropriate for me to interfere in the running by National Power and British Electricity International of their businesses. Decisions on overseas trade are a matter for them. The Government are opposed to and deplore all trade boycotts that lack international support and authority. This is clearly stated in written guidance by the Department of Trade and Industry. My Department is drawing the attention of National Power and British Electricity International to this guidance, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

DEFENCE

British Forces (Gulf)

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are now stationed in the Gulf region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom has committed a total of some 16,000 service personnel to the multinational effort in the Gulf, of whom some 10,000 are already in the region.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the situation in the Gulf.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the crisis in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: British forces have been deployed to the Gulf at the request of Saudi Arabia and other countries to help deter further aggression by Iraq and in support of United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate Government. So far, Iraq has shown no signs of being willing to comply with the United Nations' demands.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has concerning Her Majesty's forces held in Iraq; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We are in regular contact with our embassy. On the latest information, we believe that all members of the British liaison team are safe. We continue to press for the return of all British hostages.

Royal Marines Reserve

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current numerical strength of the Royal Marines Reserve.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The strength of the Royal Marines Reserve as at 30 September 1990 was 1,132.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further plans he has to strengthen Her Majesty's forces in the Gulf; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are currently no plans for further major United Kingdom deployments in support of the multinational effort in the Gulf, but the situation is kept under constant review.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the running costs of the operations in the Gulf, and what areas of expenditure, are being met by foreign Governments.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Host nations in the Gulf are providing various forms of support for our forces, including free fuel. Other countries have also provided assistance. We are continuing to develop the arrangements for this support, and are discussing further ways in which our allies might assist.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 29 October 1990

TRANSPORT

Vibroplant, Peterborough

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the report on the explosives incident at Vibroplant, Peterborough, will be published; and if he will make a statement on the current position.

Mr. Chope: The report by the Health and Safety Executive of its investigation into the explosion on 22 March 1989 is published today. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

The HSE investigation into the incident concluded that the source of the fire and cause of the resulting explosion was a box of Cerium fusehead combs in transit to a local fireworks manufacturer. The combs were in unauthorised and unsafe packaging. On 11 April 1990, the company operating the vehicle was fined £250,000 at Peterborough Crown court.

In line with the undertaking given at the time by my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) the Health and Safety Commission's advisory committee on dangerous substances sub-committee considering the major hazard aspects of the transport of dangerous substances will study the report both for its general relevance to transport questions and its specific relevance to the safe transport of explosives.

Executive Officers

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many jobs offered by his Department to executive officer recruits offer above the adult minimum starting salaries; what is the spine point that is offered in each case; and whether they are offered in *(a)* London and the south-east or *(b)* elsewhere.

Mr. McLoughlin: The normal minimum starting salary for adult recruits (ie those who are 20 years or above) is minimum of the pay scale plus two spine points. The following figures show the starting salaries awarded to all adult direct entry EO recruits to the Department of Transport from April 1989, the date it split from the Department of the Environment, to the present.

DTp Civil Service Commission EO recruits: April 1989 to September 1990

Starting pay	*London and South-East*	*[1]Elsewhere*	*Total*
Minimum plus 2 spine points	110	67	177
Minimum plus 3 spine points	1	—	1
Minimum plus 4 spine points	—	—	—
Minimum plus 5 spine points	—	—	—
Maximum	1	—	1
Total	112	67	179

[1] Including staff in the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, the Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency, the Driving Standards Agency and the Vehicle Certification Agency.

Red Routes

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has finalised proposals for the implementation of the red route pilot scheme in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Following the announcement to the House on 27 March at columns 222-24 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State of the intention to conduct a pilot scheme for a priority route network in London we have conducted an extensive consultation exercise on it through publications, public meetings, and site visits and discussions. This culminated in exhibitions of our initial proposals from 14 August to 28 September. A brochure and a leaflet were widely circulated and copies are in the Library. As a result of comments received we have accepted certain changes to the proposals largely aimed at increasing provision for loading and unloading to satisfy essential business needs. Plans of the final proposals are being made available to the boroughs concerned and a leaflet will be published for general interest.

We need now to make a start on the pilot scheme itself as soon as possible. We intend to bring the new signing and lining, including bus lanes, into force on the trunk road part of the route—the A1 from Highgate to the Angel—on 7 January. Preliminary works will take place during December. Further measures such as improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will follow as soon as possible. Implementation of measures on local roads will depend on the boroughs concerned. I hope that they will be able to introduce them quickly. Enforcement will be the key to the success of the pilot scheme, and the Metropolitan police have agreed the timetable for this start on 7 January.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the projected date for the introduction of red routes into London.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I have given today to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Summerson) on the implementation of the pilot scheme. Full implementation of the network depends on legislation which will be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to introduce red routes in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to section 2 of the consultation document on the "Traffic in London" legislative proposals published on 23 July.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many representations he has received concerning the proposed red route from Highgate to the City; if any of these have been in its favour; and what replies he has sent.

Mr. Chope: As a result of the public exhibitions of proposals 343 responses were received. Other comments were made, some in favour and some against, at public meetings and numerous on-site discussions. In response to these representations, some of the detailed proposals have been changed.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made by his

Department of the introduction of priority routes in Paris; and if he will make such information available to those currently involved in the consultation exercise about red routes.

Mr. Chope: Officials visited Paris earlier this month to obtain information. Axes rouges (red routes) were introduced last month on 27 km of roads in central Paris. Although it is too early to make a full assessment, a network of 100 km is planned. The initial effect has been to increase average speeds significantly with little increase in traffic.

London Traffic Commissioner

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the powers of London traffic commissioner; to whom this person will report; and what will be the involvement with London borough councils.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to section 2 of the consultation document on the "Traffic in London" legislative proposals published on 23 July.

British Rail

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance is issued to British Rail regarding co-operation with other agencies in planning emergency liaison procedures.

Mr. Freeman: Such guidance as is necessary, depending on the circumstances. If the hon. Member has a specific case in mind perhaps he would write to me.

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet the chairman of British Rail to discuss British Rail's compliance with its quality of service objectives in regard to *(a)* Network SouthEast services and *(b)* the Barking to Gospel Oak service.

Mr. Freeman: My officials will meet the Network SouthEast quality control director on 30 October. I will write to my hon. Friend.

Bulk Carriers

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list by year since 1980 to date *(a)* the number of bulk carrier ships that have sunk and *(b)* the number of crew lost; and if he will show in his answer the number of British ships and crew involved.

Mr. McLoughlin: Figures of vessels which sank, and of the number of crew lost, are not recorded. The numbers of ore/bulk/oil carriers recorded as total losses are as follows:

Year	*Number*
1980	21
1981	16
1982	17
1983	26
1984	17
1985	22
1986	20
1987	18
1988	8
1989	12

Only one ship was United Kingdom registered—the Derbyshire which sank in September 1980 with the loss of 44 lives.

Port of London Authority

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what qualifications, other than a seagoing master's certificate, are required for masters of seagoing vessels loading ballast from land or from other vessels within the limits of the Port of London Authority and proceeding to discharge into places also within those limits; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: In addition to a seagoing master's certificate, required for masters of seagoing vessels loading ballast from land or from other vessels within the limits of the Port of London Authority, the masters or first mates of ships over 50 m in length would require a pilotage exemption certificate if they wished to navigate their ships through the compulsory pilotage area.

Shipping Accidents

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many shipping accidents there have been in the Pentland firth in each of the last 10 years that have involved collisions, groundings and sinkings; and if he will specify the types of vessels involved.

Mr. McLoughlin: This can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

ENVIRONMENT

London Docklands Development Corporation

175. **Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those who have resigned from the employ of the London Docklands development corporation during the last three months.

Mr. Portillo: Staffing matters are for the LDDC board.

Warwickshire

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to decide on the structure plan proposals for Warwickshire.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State expects to publish his proposed modifications to the Warwickshire structure plan early next year and, having considered any objections or representations, to issue his decision on the plan by the middle of next year.

Opencast Mines

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by location for England and Wales the opencast coal sites currently being worked.

Mr. Atkins: This information is not held centrally by my Department. Information about the location of British Coal Corporation opencast sites currently being worked and sites worked by operators under licences issued by the corporation can be obtained from the corporation's Opencast Executive.

Homelessness

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the consultations will be completed on the revised code of guidance on housing and homeless persons under part III of the Housing Act 1985; and when the code will be issued.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the revised draft code of guidance to homelessness legislation will be published in England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My officials have had a number of helpful meetings with the local authority associations about the revision of the code of guidance. We will be consulting the associations and others on a revised draft code shortly. We aim to complete the consultation process and publish a revised code early in the new year.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement listing those initiatives which he is currently undertaking or supporting which are intended to reduce the problem of homelessness in Cheshire; and if he will indicate in each case the resources allocated to these initiatives.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* My right hon. Friend is currently supporting the Chester lodgings and support project which seeks to increase the supply of suitable accommodation for homeless and vulnerable people in Chester. A grant of up to a maximum of £14,530 has been earmarked to be paid this financial year.

In addition, homelessness is a factor which is taken into account in determining local authorities' annual housing investment allocations.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the three locations considered by Nirex for repositories of radioactive waste accessed from an offshore structure.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My right hon. Friend has no information about any locations considered by Nirex for a radioactive waste repository accessed from an offshore structure. The Government have accepted Nirex's proposal that the repository should be in the form of a mine under the land, and site investigations are currently under way at Sellafield and Dounreay.

Disabled People (Access)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the monitoring his Department carries out into how local authorities are making all their property accessible to the disabled.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Local authorities when designing certain new buildings, including offices and public buildings, have a duty under the Building Regulations 1985 to make reasonable provision for access for disabled people. Elsewhere my Department does not monitor how local authorities make their property accessible to the disabled.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice his Department gives to local planning authorities on making private and public buildings accessible to the disabled; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Advice on the scope of planning powers is given in my Department's development control policy note No. 16, "Access for the disabled". The approved document which accompanies the Building Regulations 1985 gives practical guidance on ways to meet the requirements of part M of the regulations, which requires reasonable provision to be made to enable disabled people to gain access to relevant premises of certain new buildings.

Endangered Species

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those species of flora and of fauna which are now protected as endangered species under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, formerly the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act 1975.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This information is contained in schedules 1, 5 and 8 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. A copy of the 1981 Act and subsequent amending orders are available in the Library of the House.

Housing Starts

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will state the number of public sector housing starts in 1978 and so far in 1990;

(2) if he will state the number of housing association starts in 1978 and so far in 1990.

Mr. Key: The latest estimates for starts by housing associations and local authorities, new towns and Government Departments, for 1980 to August 1990, appear in tables 1 and 2 of the housebuilding press release (No. 548) issued by the Department on 5 October. Corresponding figures for 1978 and 1979 appear in table 6.1 of "Housing and Construction Statistics 1978-1988: Great Britain". Copies of both are in the Library.

Algal Blooms

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, for each British region, all the sites at which evidence of eutrophication or the presence of algal blooms has been discovered this summer by the National Rivers Authority.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* I have asked the National Rivers Authority to send the hon. Member a list of the sites in England and Wales where blue-green algae have been identified this year.

Housing, Congleton

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many homes for rent have been owned by Congleton borough council in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The numbers of council-owned dwellings reported by Congleton borough council in its annual housing investment programme returns (HIP1) are as follows:

Stock at 1 April each year

	Number
1981	5,887
1982	5,653
1983	5,457

	Number
1984	5,272
1985	5,245
1986	5,046
1987	4,990
1988	4,831
1989	4,619
1990	4,474

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning *(a)* the average length of time currently taken by a local authority to re-let vacant homes and *(b)* the average length of time taken by the Congleton borough council to re-let vacant homes.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The 1988 survey, "Empty Local Authority Dwellings in England at 1 October and Re-lets between 1 April and 30 September 1988", showed that—at that time—the overall average re-let period for all authorities was eight weeks. The corresponding figure reported by Congleton borough council was six weeks, including vacant dwellings in modernisation programmes. A copy of the national report is in the Library.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what funds have been made available by his Department in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available to Congleton borough council to assist with the provision of housing for rent.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The Department makes housing investment programme (HIP) allocations to local authorities each year, which convey borrowing approval (under the new capital finance system, in the form of credit approvals). Thus housing capital expenditure is funded from borrowing, capital receipts and from revenue contributions. The Department does pay a general housing subsidy, but the costs of borrowing are only one element of this.

Within these totals it is for each local authority to decide how its resources should be spent.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has concerning the amount spent in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available by Congleton borough council on the provision of housing; what percentage of total expenditure by the authority is represented by this figure in each of those years; and what is the national average in the latest single year for which figures are available.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* Capital expenditure by Congleton borough council on housing and all services (including housing) is as follows:

£ thousands per cent.

	Housing	*All services*	*Housing as a percentage of all services*
1981-82	1,542	2,245	69
1982-83	2,256	3.132	72
1983-84	2,760	3,378	82
1984-85	2,134	2,615	82
1985-86	2,067	2,613	79
1986-87	2,779	3,342	83
1987-88	2,964	4,014	74
1988-89	2,942	3,197	92
1989-90	3,931	4,703	84

Nationally, housing capital expenditure is provisionally estimated to be 53 per cent. of capital expenditure on all local authority services in 1989-90; the equivalent figure for non-metropolitan district councils in England is 68 per cent.

Planning Permission

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in the light of the judgment of 21 October, in the High Court on the granting of planning permission by Ealing borough council in 1987 for a mosque and town houses on the Northolt industrial site, he will bring forward proposals to amend the law relating to the restrictions of planning permission by local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* I will consider the implications of this case for the planning system when I have studied the judgment.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers local authorities have to rescind planning permissions granted for the building of religious buildings and town houses on industrial estates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* Under section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, if it appears to the local planning authority that it is expedient to revoke or modify any permission to develop land granted on a planning application made under part III of the Act, the authority may by order revoke or modify the permission to such extent as it considers expedient.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which company is supplying the main door drive units at RAF Mawgan; and whether extensive prototype tests have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Pursuant to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope) on 3 July at column *505*, subsequent investigation has shown that the units have been assembled from a variety of components from various sources by CIMOLAI, the steelwork sub-contractor, to designs developed from the earlier prototype tests. NEUERO'S involvement was restricted to giving limited advice on request to CIMOLAI.

Church Grants

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information he has on the *(a)* number of church grants approved to date in 1990-91, *(b)* their value and *(c)* the sums remaining to be distributed in the current year;

(2) what was the total sum available for church grants in 1990-91;

(3) how many applications he has received for funds under the church grant scheme.

Mr. Trippier: Responsibility for the allocation of historic building repair grant resources to ecclesiastical

buildings, and for holding data on the number of applications for such grants are matters for English Heritage. I have asked its chairman, Lord Montagu, to write to the hon. Member.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prisons

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will institute an inquiry into the leaking of information and photographs from Ford open prison.

Mrs. Rumbold: Ford prison is an open establishment which occupies a 114 acre site and has no secure boundary. It may therefore be surveyed from many points within its grounds as well as from neighbouring properties, and despite all reasonable precautions taken by the governor and the police, certain prisoners were clearly photographed recently in this way. Furthermore, as prisoners have unlimited access to the telephone it is not possible to prevent them from communicating information.

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any recommendations for improved surveillance by the use of video cameras at Her Majesty's prison Kingston (Portsmouth), have been rejected on the grounds of cost during the past year.

Mrs. Rumbold: No. Closed circuit TV cameras have recently been installed at the establishment and a bid for an additional camera is currently under consideration.

Television Licences

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further consideration is being given to providing at reduced cost television licences for pensioners where they are the sole occupiers residing in all types of housing accommodation.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: None. We have no plans to extend the present concessions.

Private Security Industry

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place a copy of the Home Office's recent report on the private security industry in the Library.

Mr. John Patten: We are considering a range of options for improving the regulation of the private security industry. When consideration of this issue has been completed, we will decide what circulation to give to the working group's report.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a regional breakdown of the increase in *(a)* violent crimes and *(b)* all crimes between 1979 and 1989 in percentage terms and also the percentage clear-up rates.

Mr. John Patten: The readily available regional information is published in table 8.1 of "Regional Trends 25", which shows the figures for 1981 and 1988. A copy of this publication is available in the Library.

Special Constables

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he plans a national campaign to encourage the recruitment of special constables.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Yes. A national publicity campaign will be launched early in 1991. Its purpose, over three years, is to enhance public awareness of the role and value of the special constabulary and to increase the number of special constables recruited locally.

Civil Defence Officials

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if any officials specialising in civil defence protection will be attending the fifth international conference of nuclear-free zone local authorities, to be held in Glasgow on 8 to 12 November.

Mr. John Patten: I understand that there are no plans for any officials from our emergency planning division to attend.

Dog Fighting

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been convicted of involvement in dog fighting during the last five years; how many of these have been given custodial sentences; and of the number convicted how many have been sentenced in respect of repeated offences.

Mr. John Patten: Information collected centrally does not distinguish offences relating to dog fights from other offences under the Protection of Animals Act 1911.

"Holocaust News No. 2"

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what investigations are being conducted in respect of the publication and distribution of the publication entitled "Holocaust News No. 2".

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand that inquiries are in progress.

Jamie Lloyd Stewart

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received the Police Complaints Authority report on the circumstances surrounding the death of Jamie Lloyd Stewart in Holloway police station in July 1989; whether he proposes to take any further action; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Police Complaints Authority is independent from both the police and the Government. It is not required to report the outcome of investigations which it supervises to the Home Secretary. However, it is understood that the investigating officer's report on the circumstances surrounding Mr. Stewart's death has been considered by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Police Complaints Authority. They have concluded that there are no grounds for taking criminal or disciplinary action against any police officers.

Prisoners (Deaths)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all deaths that have occurred in 1990 of persons detained in prison department establishments, stating in each case the age and sex of the inmate, and cause of death, the inquest verdict, whether the inmate was sentenced or on remand, the establishment where the inmate was detained, and whether the death occurred there or in an outside hospital, and where the death occurred within the prison, if he will specify if the inmate was segregated either in the hospital wing or in the punishment block.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information is given in the table. Deaths occurred within the establishment unless otherwise indicated. Information about the location of the inmate at the time of death is not readily available in every case and I shall write to the hon. Member. None of the inmates located in the prison hospital at the time of death was segregated under rule 43 of the prison rules.

Deaths of inmates in Her Majesty's Prison Service custody in 1990 (to 24 October 1990)

Date	*Establishment*	*Age*	*Sex*	*Status*	*Cause of death*	*Inquest verdict*	*Location at time of death*[1]
6 January	Durham	20	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
6 January	Bristol	22	M	S	Hanging	Suicide	OL
10 January	Lincoln	46	M	R	Suffocation	Open	PH
14 January	Winchester	69	M	R	Angina	Natural	PH
22 January	Liverpool	47	M	S	Hanging	Open	PH
25 January	Manchester	37	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
10 February	Reading	35	M	S	Brain Haemorrhage	Natural	OH
14 February	Winchester	19	M	R	Hanging	Open	OL
21 February	Camp Hill	24	M	S	Hanging	Suicide	OL
22 February	Bedford	29	M	R	Hanging	Suicide	OL
28 February	Hindley	18	M	R	Hanging	Suicide	OH
2 March	Brixton	29	M	R	Hanging	Open	PH
2 March	Manchester	37	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
3 March	Pentonville	34	M	R	Asphyxiation	Misadventure	[3]—
14 March	Wakefield	56	M	S	Heart Attack	Natural	[3]—
16 March	Durham	27	M	S	Hanging	Suicide	OL
23 March	Bristol	31	M	R	Hanging	Suicide	SEG
29 March	Coldingley	24	M	S	Unknown	Not yet held	[2]—
3 April	Swansea	25	M	R	Hanging	Suicide	SEG(OP)
7 April	Dartmoor	27	M	S	Fire	Suicide	OL
8 April	Highpoint	59	M	S	Asphyxia	Suicide	OL
8 April	Stocken	35	M	S	Heart Attack	Not yet held	[3]—
11 April	Wandsworth	31	M	S	Undetermined	Open	OL
15 April	Wakefield	49	M	S	Heart Failure	Natural	[3]—
19 April	Channings Wood	61	M	S	Carcinomatosis	Natural	OH
23 April	Wayland	50	M	S	Heart Failure	Natural	[3]—
26 April	Wandsworth	27	M	R	Meningitis	Natural	PH
9 May	Wellingborough	54	M	S	Heart Failure	Not yet held	[3]—
11 May	Wakefield	58	M	S	Carcinoma Bronchus	Natural	OH
18 May	Exeter	31	M	R	Coronary Sclerosis	Natural	[3]—
19 May	Wormwood Scrubs	25	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	PH
19 May	Ashwell	61	M	S	Cancer	Not yet held	PH
20 May	Acklington	26	M	S	Hanging	Suicide	OL
28 May	Cardiff	70	M	S	Cancer	Not yet held	OH
4 June	Durham	35	F	S	Hanging	Suicide	OL
20 June	Liverpool	54	M	S	Cancer	Natural	OH
22 June	The Verne	40	M	S	Heart Attack	Natural	[3]—
25 June	Hindley	18	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	SEG(GOAD)
25 June	Hindley	18	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	SEG(GOAD)
26 June	Bedford	27	M	R	Hanging	Suicide	PH
7 July	Wakefield	52	M	S	Cerebral oedema	Open	OH
13 July	Swansea	15	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OH
18 July	Long Lartin	27	M	S	Stab Wound	Not yet held	PH
20 July	Wandsworth	29	M	S	Pneumonia	Not yet held	OH
21 July	Parkhurst	55	M	S	Lung cancer	Natural	OH
25 July	Lewes	32	M	R	Hanging	Suicide	SEG(OP)
29 July	Standford Hill	25	M	S	Heart Attack	Not yet held	[3]—
30 July	Parkhurst	43	M	S	Drug overdose	Accidental death	[3]—
1 August	Parkhurst	42	M	S	Heart Attack	Natural	PH
5 August	Winchester	41	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
12 August	Wakefield	31	M	S	Unknown	Natural	OH
12 August	Leeds	17	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
15 August	Bristol	23	M	S	Hanging	Open	SEG(OP)
1 September	Wandsworth	22	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
5 September	Birmingham	35	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
7 September	Brixton	38	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OH
14 September	North Sea Camp	37	M	S	Heart Attack	Natural	[3]—
15 September	Oxford	23	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
16 September	Brixton	39	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	PH
21 September	Lewes	30	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	SEG(OP)
24 September	Channings Wood	50	M	S	Cerebral oedema	Not yet held	[4]—
28 September	Liverpool	29	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
28 September	Wormwood Scrubs	36	M	S	Diabetes	Not yet held	[5]—

Date	Establishment	Age	Sex	Status	Cause of death	Inquest verdict	Location at time of death[1]
29 September	Hull	20	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	PH
4 October	Grendon	39	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	PH
12 October	Brixton	29	M	R	Cerebral oedema	Not yet held	OH
13 October	Liverpool	27	M	R	Hanging	Not yet held	OH
13 October	Wakefield	36	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	OL
19 October	The Verne	38	M	S	Hanging	Not yet held	SEG

[1] Key to location:
OL—Ordinary location within the establishment.
PH—Located in the prison hospital.
SEG(OP)—Located in the segregation unit for the inmate's own protection (rule 43)
SEG(GOAD)—Located in the segregation unit for reasons of good order and discipline (rule 43)
OH—Outside hospital.
[2] Inmate died while on home leave.
[3] Inmate died after absconding.
[4] Inmate died while trying to escape.
[5] Information about location is not available.

Betting and Gaming

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the Lloyds bank report on the future of the Tote; and whether he will publish that report.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his Department's response to the recommendations of the Lloyds bank report on the Tote; and if he will publish the report.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The report by Lloyds merchant bank will not be published because it was made in confidence and contains commercially and managerially sensitive information. I announced on 3 October that the Government have accepted the case for some restructuring of the Tote Board to include executive members, as recommended by Lloyds merchant bank in its report. This recommendation was independent of the issue of privatisation, on which an announcement of the Government's conclusions will be made in due course.

Sports Grounds

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made by the working party set up to revise the guide to safety at sports grounds in accordance with the recommendations of Lord Justice Taylor's final report into the Hillsborough disaster; and when the revised guide will be published.

Mr. John Patten: Revision of the guide to safety at sports grounds in order to reflect the relevant recommendations by the Hillsborough inquiry has progressed well. A draft of the guide was sent out for wide consultation last August. The draft has been revised in the light of comments received and has been sent to members of the working group which meets again this week. We hope to publish the revised guide very soon.

Magistrates

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many magistrates are *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

The Attorney-General: I have been asked to reply.
As at 1 January 1990, there were 16,090 men and 12,577 women sitting as lay magistrates in England and Wales.

PRIME MINISTER

International Visits

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list each international visit which she has undertaken since 26 July indicating in each case, the purpose, the matters discussed, and the estimated cost of each visit.

The Prime Minister: I have paid official visits to the following countries since 26 July 1990:

2-7 August—United States of America
To address the Aspen Institute and for meetings with President Bush;

28-30 August—Finland
For bilateral discussions and to attend the European Democratic Union in Helsinki;

16-18 September—Czechoslovakia
18-20 September—Hungary
To support political and economic reform in those countries and for bilateral discussions;

20-21 September—Switzerland
For bilateral discussions;

29 September to 1 October—United States of America
To attend the World Summit for Children in New York.
Estimated costs of the visits are not yet available.

Meetings

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister if she will publish a list of meetings which she has hosted since 26 July with *(a)* foreign heads of state, *(b)* other foreign politicians and *(c)* heads of international intergovernmental agencies.

The Prime Minister: Since 26 July I have had interesting and valuable talks with a number of heads of state, foreign politicians and heads of intergovernmental agencies. Contacts at all levels are maintained on a day-to-day basis.

Gulf Crisis

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the discussions which she has had with *(a)* the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and *(b)* the Secretary General of the Western European Union concerning the deployment of United Kingdom forces in the Gulf.

The Prime Minister: I saw Dr. Woerner briefly in Washington on 6 August and was able to tell him at that

time of our decision to send Royal Navy ships to the Gulf. I have had no subsequent discussion with him, nor any with Dr. van Eekelen concerning the deployment of United Kingdom forces in the Gulf. United Kingdom Ministers and officials of course continue to be in close touch with both NATO and the WEU about a range of matters, including the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister what response she made to the United Kingdom National Peace Council and the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Pax Christi following their submission on the Gulf situation, presented on 16 August.

The Prime Minister: We have no trace of having received the submission referred to.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Rent Arrears

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the number of possession orders for rent arrears granted in each English region, for the years *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* 1989.

The Attorney-General: The number of possession orders for rent arrears granted in county courts in England for the years 1986 to 1989 are as follows. The number of such orders made in the six circuits within England are also given:

Possession orders for rent arrears granted in England 1986-1989

Circuit	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
Midland and Oxford	5,268	9,549	13,293	25,607
North Eastern	3,632	5,364	8,495	16,994
Northern	3,978	6,135	9,080	12,403
South Eastern	15,127	14,630	20,881	34,631
Wales and Chester	595	836	1,182	1,836
Western	3,250	4,344	5,488	7,289
England total	31,850	40,858	58,419	98,760

The figures for Wales and Chester circuit exclude possession orders for rent arrears granted in Wales. It should be noted that the figures are for possession orders not evictions since not all orders granted are executed.

Judges

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Attorney-General how many High Court judges are *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

The Attorney-General: There are 81 men and two women High Court judges.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Attorney-General how many county court judges are *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

The Attorney-General: Of the circuit judges, who sit in both the county court and Crown court, 404 are men, and 18 are women. Of the county court registrars, 211 are men, and eight are women.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Attorney-General how many recorders and circuit judges are *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

The Attorney-General: The information requested is as follows:

	Men	*Women*
Circuit judges	404	18
Recorders	724	18
Assistant recorders	359	21

Anti-Jewish Literature

Mr. Latham: To ask the Attorney-General whether he will list all cases of prosecutions brought by the Crown prosecution service since 1986 of anti-Jewish literature which has previously been brought to his attention by hon. Members or by organisations representing the Jewish community; and what was the outcome of those prosecutions.

The Attorney-General: Fifteen prosecutions for incitement to racial hatred have been brought under section 5A of the Public Order Act 1936, or under part III of the Public Order Act 1986, in 1986 and subsequent years. Of these, 11 prosecutions included allegations that anti-Jewish material had been published or distributed. Two such cases were drawn to my attention by hon. Members but none by organisations representing the Jewish community. Proceedings have been begun, but not concluded, in a further case which was brought to my attention by an hon. Member; this case, too, involves an allegation that anti-Jewish material has been distributed. The details requested of prosecutions that have been concluded are as follows:

Name of Defendant	*Result*
J. Kinnon (X 2)	Convicted
J. Kinnon	Bound over
R. Trehane[1]	Convicted
D. Cullingford[1]	Convicted
R. Bearsford-Walker[1]	Convicted
L. Bearsford-Walker[1]	Convicted
K. Rowe[1]	Convicted
S. Knight[1]	Convicted
A. Shotton[1]	Acquitted
A. Waite[1]	Acquitted
D. Owens[1]	Convicted
J. Tyndall[1]	Convicted
J. Morse[1]	Convicted
M. Atkinson	Convicted

[1] Denotes a prosecution involving an allegation that anti-Jewish material was published or distributed.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Attorney-General what consideration has been given by the Director of Public Prosecutions to initiating proceedings in respect of the publication entitled "Jewish Tributes to Our Child Martyrs", distributed by the Gentile Self-Defence League.

The Attorney-General: The Director of Public Prosecutions can consider instituting criminal proceedings only once the police have placed before him evidence against an identifiable individual. The Metropolitan police, at the request of the Director of Public Prosecutions, are conducting inquiries into the publication of this leaflet but to date have been unable to identify or trace the persons responsible.

Serious Fraud Office

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Attorney-General (1) what discussions he has had with the Serious Fraud Office regarding the activities of Michael Ashcroft, chairman of ADT Ltd;

(2) whether permission has been sought by the Serious Fraud Office *(a)* to interview Michael Ashcroft, chairman of ADT Ltd. in Florida and *(b)* to seek his return for interview in the United Kingdom;

(3) what is his most up-to-date estimate of the likely completion date of the Serious Fraud Office inquiries into the activities of Michael Ashcroft, chairman of ADT Ltd.

The Attorney-General: For practical reasons of policy the Serious Fraud Office neither confirms nor corrects assertions or suggestions that it is conducting inquiries into the affairs of any individual or company. No inference as to the truth or falsity of the hon. Member's suggestion arises from adherence to that policy in this instance.

I have frequent discussions with the director of the SFO but for practical reasons of policy their contents are not divulged.

WALES

Roads

13. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the total funding by central Government on roads in Wales since 1979; and how many miles of motorway and trunk roads have been built since that year.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Since 1979 total net spending by central Government on motorway and trunk roads in Wales has exceeded £1·2 billion. In addition over £260 million transport grant has been provided to Welsh local authorities for improvement of their roads.

Twenty-two miles of motorway and 134 miles of trunk road have been completed. Seven schemes totalling 16 miles are currently under construction.

Sheep Farmers

14. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to meet representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales to discuss the problems facing many sheep farmers in Wales.

Mr. David Hunt: I met representatives of the Farmers Union of Wales on 22 October to discuss the state of the industry as part of the autumn review of HLCA rates.

15. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has made to the Commission of the European Community on behalf of Welsh sheep farmers; and whether he has any plans to have direct talks with the Agriculture Commissioner on this subject in the near future.

Mr. David Hunt: I have no immediate plans to meet Mr. MacSharry. In line with long-established practice, my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food takes the lead in European Community discussions and negotiations. I know that my right hon. Friend has the interests of Welsh sheep producers clearly in mind in that context, and I am myself in regular contact with him.

Towyn Sea Wall

16. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has yet received a copy of the Watson Hawksley report on the effectiveness of the repairs to the Towyn sea wall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I have received a copy of extracts from the report which include conclusions and recommendations for the reconstruction of the sea defences at Towyn.

North Wales Economy

17. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what initiatives, since 1980, his Department has taken to develop fully the potential of the north Wales economy.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Our Department has carried out a very wide range of activities to develop the potential of the north Wales economy. Details of the current initiatives and policies were set out fully in the document, "A55—The Road of Opportunity", in December 1989. The potential for developing the north Wales economy has been greatly increased by the huge improvements to road links in north Wales over the last 10 years, especially the £620 million investment in dualling the A55.

Labour Statistics

18. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many men were in employment, and how many women were in full-time employment in June 1979 and the latest date for which figures are available in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Mid Glamorgan.

Mr. David Hunt: In June 1979 there were 618,000 male and 250,000 female employees in full-time employment in Wales. By June 1990, the latest date available, these figures were 527,000 and 273,000 respectively. County data are not available for the period requested but in June 1990 in Wales the civilian work force in employment stood at a record 1,236,000.

Housing

19. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met district council leaders in Wales to discuss housing matters, especially new house building.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend met representatives of the Council of Welsh Districts in September, where a range of issues were discussed including housing. The previous month I met representatives of districts at the Welsh Housing Consultative Committee where matters under discussion included housebuilding.

School Buildings

20. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if schools in Wales which elect to opt out and assume grant-maintained status will receive extra funding provision to cover the costs of repairing dilapidated buildings.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Schools in Wales which are approved for grant-maintained status will qualify for the full range of grants available under the Grant Maintained Schools (Finance) Regulations 1990. These include capital grants which can be used for the repair of premises.

Railway Halts, Gwent

21. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with British Rail concerning proposed new railway halts in Gwent.

Sir Wyn Roberts: None. This is a matter for British Rail and Gwent county council.

Inward Investment

22. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on inward investment in Wales during the last three years.

Mr. David Hunt: During the three years to 31 March 1990, Wales secured a total of 319 inward investment projects—a rate of about two a week. The companies involved estimated the capital investment at some £2 billion. Since March a further 61 projects have been secured with an estimated capital investment of £306 million.

Agriculture

23. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the current state of Welsh agriculture.

Mr. David Hunt: My hon. Friend the Minister of State and I have, over recent months, discussed the current state of the agriculture industry in Wales with the farming unions and other interested bodies and individuals and I am fully seized of the current problems, particularly in the livestock sector. The Government have taken a number of positive steps to help meet present concerns. Intervention support for beef is currently costing over £6 million per week in the United Kingdom. The rate of suckler cow premium has been raised in the LFA to the maximum level permitted under EC rules and the two advance payments of sheep annual premium recently announced will bring an estimated cash flow benefit of £25 million to producers in Wales.

24. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied with the present state of the agriculture industry in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I am well aware of the problems currently being experienced by the agriculture industry in Wales, particularly in the livestock sector. My hon. Friend the Minister of State and I have, in recent months, had discussions with the farming unions and other interested bodies and individuals.

The Government have taken a number of positive steps to help. Intervention support for beef is currently costing over £6 million per week in the United Kingdom. The rate of suckler cow premium has been raised in the LFA to the maximum level permitted under EC rules and the two advance payments of sheep annual premium recently announced will bring an estimated cash flow benefit of £25 million to producers in Wales.

Community Care

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the programme he intends to follow in providing additional finances to local authorities in Wales *(a)* in the present financial year, *(b)* in the 1991-92 financial year and *(c)* in subsequent financial years in order to ensure adequate availability of appropriate housing to match the requirements of his programme for the implementation of care in the community.

Mr. Grist: Allocations and guidance for the current year have already been made available. Decisions on expenditure priorities for 1991-92 and subsequent years will be finalised during the next few weeks and will be announced as soon as possible.

Roads, North Wales

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give a report on progress on modernising the road network in north Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Excellent progress has been made to date on upgrading the A55 between Chester and Bangor to dual carriageway standard; 51 miles are complete, 7·6 miles are under construction, and only one scheme, the Aber improvement, remains in the forward programme. With the completion of the Chirk bypass early next year, the upgrading of the 16 miles of the A483 in Clwyd will be completed.

Health Service Property Maintenance

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales by what date the current maintenance backlog on national health service properties will be cleared on current and planned capital spending for the national health service in Wales.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave on 31 October 1989 at columns *108-9*.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total cost of backlog maintenance for national health service properties in Wales, and by health authority, for the latest available year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: District health authorities in Wales are required to review the cost of backlog maintenance annually and for 1989-90, they estimated that it would cost £163·4 million to bring the whole of the NHS estate in Wales to a standard where it is exhibiting only minor deterioration. This sum may be broken down by district health authority as follows:

DHA	*£ Million*
Clwyd	21·5
East Dyfed	15·0
Gwent	14·1
Gwynedd	10·2
Mid Glamorgan	36·9
Pembrokeshire	0·6
Powys	3·3
South Glamorgan	51·0
West Glamorgan	10·8

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Least-developed Countries

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution was made by Her Majesty's Government to the second United Nations conference on the least-developed countries held in Paris on 3 to 14 September; what communications were developed with non-governmental organisations in attendance; whether a copy of the booklet, "The LDCs in the 1990s: Development or Oblivion", on the non-governmental organisations' views on the new programme

of action was provided to the United Kingdom delegation; and if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's relations with the least-developed countries.

Mrs. Chalker: The Government welcome the outcome of the second United Nations conference on the least developed held in Paris from 3-14 September and will support those least-developed countries which implement the policies outlined in the programme of action.

The British delegation to the conference was led by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The delegation played an active and positive role in the negotiations for the programme of action for the 1990s adopted by the conference. Two new British initiatives relating to aid tying and local costs rules, which will be of direct benefit to the least-developed countries, were announced at the conference. The delegation kept in close contact with British non-governmental organisations, both before and during the conference. The booklet "The LDCs in the 1990s: Development or Oblivion" was also taken into account in formulating the United Kingdom position on the various issues.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what indication he has received from the European Commission as to the county chosen as the site for the European bank for reconstruction and development.

Mrs. Chalker: Prospective member countries of the European bank for reconstruction and development decided last May that London should be the site of the bank's headquarters.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress he has made in choosing a potential site for the European bank for reconstruction and development.

Mrs. Chalker: The bank has temporary headquarters in the City of London. Negotiations on a permanent location in London are in progress.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many jobs he forecasts will be attached to the new European bank for reconstruction and development.

Mrs. Chalker: The president-designate of the bank, M. Jacques Attali, has stated that by the end of its first year of operations the bank expects to employ roughly 200 to 250 people.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to discuss sites for the European bank for reconstruction and development with the Kirklees metropolitan borough council.

Mrs. Chalker: None—the bank's headquarters will be in London.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Civil Service (Wales)

53. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review recruitment, training and promotion procedures within the civil service in Wales to ensure that all those wishing to pursue a career within the civil service can do so within Wales, without prejudicing their career prospects.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend keeps all aspects of the staffing of the civil service under review.

Historic Houses

Mr. Lee: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many maintenance funds there are for historic properties; and how many of these are for £100,000 or less.

Mr. Maude: A total number of 70 heritage maintenance funds have been established. It is not possible to provide a figure for the value of property held by heritage maintenance funds.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Mills: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of value added tax received from listed building repairs each year over the last five years.

Mr. Ryder: The information requested is not available.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Soley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost of adjusting the maximum ceiling for mortgage interest tax relief to *(a)* £35,000, *(b)* £40,000, *(c)* £45,000 and *(d)* £50,000 on the assumption that (i) relief continues to be available at the higher marginal tax rate where applicable and (ii) that relief is restricted to the standard 25 per cent. rate of income tax.

Mr. Maude: Provisional estimates of the costs of increasing the ceiling are given in the table. The estimates exclude behavioural effects which would be substantial for the higher ceilings.

Direct revenue costs at 1990-91 income levels of raising the ceiling for mortgage interest relief

Ceiling £	*Relief at marginal tax rate* £ *million*	*Relief at basic rate of 25 per cent.* £ *million*
35,000	440	−90
40,000	790	230
45,000	1,050	470
50,000	1,250	650

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of manufacturing investment made in each year since 1979 by *(a)* foreign direct investors and *(b)* indigenous manufacturers in (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales; and what percentage annual changes these figures represent.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The following table provides the available information. Current price figures have been

supplied because there are no regional price deflators. Data for 1980 can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Net capital expenditure in manufacturing industry[1] at current prices

	Year								£ million
	1979	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
(a) Foreign-owned enterprises[2]									
United Kingdom	1,490·5	1,402·3	1·363·4	1,397·4	1,547·6	1,844·0	1,714·6	1,989·1	2,528·4
		(¹—)	(−3)	(2)	(11)	(19)	(−7)	(16)	(27)
Scotland	112·6	231·4	213·6	143·3	161·5	272·1	226·1	183·9	342·4
		(¹—)	(−8)	(−33)	(13)	(68)	(−17)	(−19)	(86)
Wales	186·1	120·9	126·6	97·6	139·4	192·2	139·2	213·5	286·8
		(¹—)	(5)	(−23)	(43)	(38)	(−38)	(53)	(34)
(b) United Kingdom-owned enterprises									
United Kingdom	5,455·9	4,090·8	4,150·2	4,663·5	6,041·7	6,898·2	6,990·6	7,764·9	9,641
		(¹—)	(1)	(12)	(30)	(14)	(1)	(11)	(24)
Scotland	484·0	385·9	328·4	347·3	461·4	594·2	551·2	551·6	683·6
		(¹—)	(−15)	(6)	(33)	(29)	(−7)	(0)	(24)
Wales	309·0	250·0	211·3	255·6	331·6	370·8	384·4	419·4	560·8
		(¹)	(−15)	(21)	(30)	(12)	(4)	(9)	(34)

Notes:
1. Orders III-XIX of SIC(68) for 1979, divisions 2-4 of SIC(80) for later years.
2. Foreign-owned enterprises are defined as those controlled or owned by companies incorporated overseas.
3. From 1988, in line with accounting practice, assets leased on a finance leasing basis are included as assets by the lessee rather than by the lessor. This is estimated to have increased total United Kingdom net capital expenditure in 1988 by up to 8 per cent.
[1] not available
The figures in brackets in the above table represent percentage changes from the previous year.
Source: Annual Census of Production

Incomes

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average wage gap in male average weekly earnings between Scotland and the south-east in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989 in current prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Data by region for average gross weekly pay in April of each year for adult males in full-time employment are available in table 12 part A of the annual new earnings survey reports. Information on the RPI to convert the figures to 1990 prices is published in table 6.4 of the *Employment Gazette* and in table 26 of the annual supplement to *Economic Trends*.

Manufacturing Statistics

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish indices for *(a)* industrial production and *(b)* manufacturing output for (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) the United Kingdom and (iv) the south-east from 1979 to the most recent available date.

Mr. Norman Lamont: (i) For Scotland, annual indices for industrial production and for manufacturing output from 1979 to 1989 were last published in the "Scottish Economic Bulletin" No. 41, June 1990. More recent quarterly figures are published in the Scottish index of production and construction quarterly press notice.

(ii) For Wales, annual indices for industrial production and for manufacturing output from 1979 to 1987 are given in the table. More recent annual and quarterly figures are published in the Welsh index of production and construction quarterly press notice.

1985 = 100

	Industrial production	*Manufacturing output*
1979	112·1	104·7
1980	99·5	92·2
1981	97·7	93·7
1982	98·4	92·6
1983	99·6	95·8
1984	94·4	100·4
1985	100·0	100·0
1986	102·3	104·4
1987	111·0	115·7

(iii) For the United Kingdom, indices can be found on the CSO database, which is accessible through the House of Commons Library.

(iv) Regional indices of production for England are not compiled.

Benefit in Kind

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to increase the threshold for benefit in kind above the current limit of £8,500 a year; how this limit has changed in real value over the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 25 October 1990]:* There are no plans to increase the threshold at which special rules apply to the taxation of benefits in kind. In principle all employees should pay income tax on the whole of their earnings whether received in cash or in kind. If this threshold had been indexed over the last 10 years in line with inflation according to the statutory formula for increasing personal allowances and thresholds, the threshold in 1990-91 would be £16,636.

Petroleum Products

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total value added tax paid on petroleum products, monthly, from August 1989 to September 1990.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* Monthly estimates of value added tax paid on petroleum products are not available. However, estimates of value added tax on these products accruing on private consumption can be calculated quarterly and are:

	£ million
1989	
Quarter 3	300
Quarter 4	290
1990	
Quarter 1	290
Quarter 2	310

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 25 October 1990]:* As the information requested is lengthy, I will write to the right hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

ENERGY

Coal-fired Power Stations

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last released financial aid for research into cleaner coal-fired power stations; and when he will be releasing further aid for research into this subject.

Mr. Baldry: On 16 July my Department announced details of a £2·5 million research package for the development of clean coal technologies. The package covered three projects—the design of high temperature high pressure filters for advanced clean coal technologies (for example, pressurised fluidised bed combustion combined cycle and integrated gasification combined cycle systems); research into reducing nitrogen oxide emissions; and modifying combustion processes to reduce harmful emissions contributing to acid rain. My Department's contribution to these projects will be £1·2 million. A copy of the press notice for this announcement is in the Libraries of the House.

A number of further possible clean coal technology projects are being worked up in collaboration with United Kingdom industry, the European Commission and the International Energy Agency.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the total cost of electricity privatisation and the cost of all promotional and of all advisory activity concerned with this privatisation *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* overseas.

Mr. Baldry: It is too early to make any meaningful estimate of the likely gross costs of privatising the electricity supply industry but the costs will be small in comparison to the proceeds.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps have been taken to assess how ex gratia payments in settlement of breach of copyright claims may be avoided in future, in the light of the payment made to Universal Studios relating to the electricity privatisation advertising campaign.

Mr. Baldry: The responsibility for copyright issues lies with the advertising agency. Her Majesty's Government agreed to pay £6,000 as a licence fee in respect of the use of the characters in the flotation advertising campaign, as is normal in such circumstances.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what advice he obtained from copyright lawyers concerning the payment to Universal Studios for unauthorised use of the copyright design of Herman Munster in the electricity privatisation commercials;

(2) how many outside bodies or companies he consulted before the decision was made to settle out of court the breach of copyright claim by Universal Studios regarding Frank N. Stein and Herman Munster.

Mr. Baldry: Any responsibility for this matter lay with the advertising agency. Her Majesty's Government consulted with their advisers to clarify their position on this matter.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when the first approach was made by Universal Studios regarding the alleged breach of contract arising from the similarity between the character Frank N. Stein in the electricity privatisation advertising campaign and the character Herman Munster of "The Munsters"; and on what date he made his decision to settle the claim out of court.

Mr. Baldry: This is a matter between the advertising agency WCRS, and MCA Merchandising Corporation of America, acting on behalf of Universal City Studios Inc.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the cost of *(a)* the settlement of the alleged breach of copyright claim by Universal Studios over the Frank N . Stein figure used in the electricity privatisation commercials and *(b)* the legal and other advice used in responding to Universal Studios' claim.

Mr. Baldry: *(a)* is a matter between the advertising agency and MCA Merchandising Corporation of America, on behalf of Universal City Studios Inc. With regard to *(b)*, responsibility on this matter lies with the advertising agency. Her Majesty's Government consulted with their marketing and legal advisers to clarify their position on this matter. The cost of this advice is commercially confidential, but was a minimal amount.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will make a deduction from the fees agreed to be paid to the WCRS advertising agency equivalent to the cost of the out-of-court settlement with Universal Studios for alleged breach of copyright.

Mr. Baldry: Her Majesty's Government have made no payment in respect of any alleged breach of copyright by WCRS.

National Power (Coal Supplies)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what advice he has received from the European Commission regarding the claim by the Small Mines

Association of south Wales relating to the differential in prices paid by National Power for coal supplies to Aberthaw and Uskmouth power stations;

(2) what representations he has received regarding the claim by the Small Mines Association of south Wales for redress over discriminatory pricing for coal deliveries to National Power stations; what action he now proposes; and at what estimated cost;

(3) when he expects to complete his discussions with the South Wales Small Mines Association and National Power regarding the dispute over discriminatory pricing in coal deliveries to Uskmouth and Aberthaw power stations;

(4) what actions he proposes to take in response to the claim for redress for discriminatory coal pricing made by the South Wales Small Mines Association;

(5) if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter from John Temple Laing of the European Commission to the office of the United Kingdom permanent representative to the European Communities dated 28 August, responding to the claim for redress for unfair coal pricing submitted by the South Wales Small Mines Association.

Mr. Baldry: The South Wales Small Mines Association has made a complaint to the European Commission about the terms on which its members have been able to sell their output. My Department has been actively encouraging the parties to the dispute to achieve a negotiated settlement. The association is currently considering the proposals most recently offered. The European Commission has supported our efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement. It has been the policy of successive Governments to treat correspondence with the Commission as confidential.

Reprocessing Plant, Sellafield

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received about the thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

Mr. Baldry: I receive correspondence covering a wide range of energy topics including matters relating to British Nuclear Fuels' operations at Sellafield.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Leicester Offices (Refurbishment)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will indicate the cost of the refurbishments at his Department's offices in Leicester and the way the expenditure is to be incurred.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The only major refurbishment in Leicester is planned at Yeoman street office. We have a general programme for refurbishing offices over a period of years, which has now been implemented in many local offices and which has substantially improved the facilities and service for the public and enhanced the working areas for staff. The Yeoman street office was due for improvements under this programme and the opportunity is being taken to pilot there a new corporate image for our offices. Work is due to start in November, at an estimated cost of £625,000 in total.

Incomes

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give a breakdown by standard United Kingdom region of the percentage of households in each of the following weekly income groups: *(a)* under £60, *(b)* under £80 and *(c)* under £100 on the most recently available figures.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to table 27 on page 76 of the family expenditure survey 1987-88, copies of which are available in the Library.

Benefit Payments, Leeds

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish tables, using the assumptions in his answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden), on 22 June 1988, *Official Report*, columns *571-76*, but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for families in Leeds, together with a column showing the extent of the differences resulting from the April 1988 social security changes.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: These tables are no longer published, for the reasons given in my reply to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) on 23 February at columns *937-38*.

Residential Care

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what changes he proposes to make in the regulations governing entitlement to housing benefit for people in residential care and nursing homes.

Mr. Scott: The income support scheme contains special provisions related to the fees and other expenses paid by people in residential care and nursing homes. The income support limits established under these provisions, unlike other income support rates, take account of accommodation costs as well as other day-to-day living expenses. They are also set to take account of care costs. These arrangements will continue until the introduction of a new framework for funding community care, now planned for 1993.

Current regulations nevertheless also allow access to housing benefit in such cases. This was intended to assist those in residential care and nursing homes who are unable to claim the special rates of income support—principally disabled people who are in full-time work, or people living in a home run by a close relative. In recent months, however, a number of claims have come forward which go well beyond this limited purpose, and effectively establish housing benefit as an alternative to income support.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said in his uprating statement on 24 October at columns 348-66, this is neither sensible nor appropriate, and in the light of the substantial increases in the income support limits which we then announced, we therefore proposed to consult on amendments to re-establish the policy intention more clearly.

We will shortly be sending to the Social Security Advisory Committee and the local authority associations, and I am today placing in the Library, draft regulations to this end. They provide that those living in registered residential care and nursing homes should not generally have access to housing benefit, while preserving that

access for those who are excluded from the special rates of income support because they are in full-time work or living in a home run by a close relative. Underlying entitlement to housing benefit will, however, be preserved for all those at present living in a registered residential care or nursing home who have successfully claimed housing benefit, and for those who have, on or before today, submitted a claim which is subsequently determined in their favour. In these cases, housing benefit will continue in payment and will be increased as and when appropriate under the current rules, thus fully protecting their position.

Subject to the consultation with the Social Security Advisory Committee and the local authority associations, we intend to bring forward regulations later this year to give effect to these changes from January 1991.

War Pensions

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when Mr. Edward Nutall, reference M2/912642, applied for a war pension; and what are the reasons for the delay in dealing with his claim.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Mr. Nutall applied for a war pension on 11 August 1989. A consultant's report is required before a decision can be made and everything possible is being done to secure an early appointment. If a war pension is awarded it will, of course, commence from the date of claim.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Higher Education

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many persons aged 17 and 19 years, respectively, per thousand are in full-time education in England, Scotland and Britain's major economic competitors.

Mr. Eggar: The readily available information is shown in the table. Data are unavailable for 19-year-olds on this basis. The figures for Scotland are the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Proportion of 17 and 18-year-olds in education training[1] 1986[2]

Percentage of age group

		17			18		
		FT	*PT*	*All*	*FT*	*PT*	*All*[3]
United Kingdom[4]	(1986)	34	27	61	19	24	42
	(1988)	35	40	75	20	22	42
England[4]	(1988)	36	40	76	37	38	76
Australia		50	17	67	25	23	47
Belgium		77	5	82	64	5	69
Canada[5]		77	—	77	53	—	53
Denmark		68	6	75	57	10	67
France		68	10	78	52	4	56
Germany, West[2,6]		43	49	92	33	47	80
Italy[2]		47	23	70	41	15	56
Japan[7,8]		89	3	91	50	2	51
Netherlands[6]		77	10	88	61	11	72
Spain[9]		52	—	52	44	—	44
Sweden[10]		85	1	86	52	4	55
United States of America[7]		87	1	88	55	3	59

Notes:

[1] Includes apprenticeships, YTS and similar schemes.
[2] 1987 for Germany; 1982 for Italy.
[3] Includes higher education for some 18-year-olds.
[4] Includes estimates for public sector evening study and for private sector further and higher education, including training courses with employers.
[5] Excludes certain part-time students, 10 per cent. at 16-18.
[6] Includes compulsory part-time education for 16 and 17-year-olds in Germany and Netherlands.
[7] Includes private sector higher education.
[8] 1988. Estimated for special training and miscellaneous schools, providing vocational training.
[9] Includes estimates for 18-year-olds in universities.
[10] 1985. Includes estimates for part-time.

Sources: DES Statistical Bulletins.
1/90 International Statistical Comparisons of the Education and Training of 16 to 18 Year Olds.
9/90 Education and Economic Activity of Young People Aged 16 to 18 Years in England from 1975 to 1989.

Teacher Training

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will make it his policy to give every teacher and head teacher with at least 25 years' direct experience the opportunity of a short period teaching student teachers in establishments of teacher training; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make it his policy to consider the introduction of an automatic period teaching student teachers in an establishment of teacher training, for every teacher having completed at least five years' full-time classroom experience; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: The Government's criteria for the approval of initial teacher training courses already require institutions to ensure that experienced serving teachers are involved in the planning and evaluation of courses, the selection of students, supervision and assessment of students' practical work and contributions as appropriate to lectures, seminars and other course activities.

It is the responsibility of schools, local authorities, and teacher training institutions to negotiate arrangements which will be of maximum benefit both to students and serving teachers.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the uptake of vacancies of teacher training establishments for the current term; and what were the comparable figures for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Fallon: The total annual intake to initial teacher training in England and Wales since 1983 is as follows:

	Intake
1983	16,218
1984	16,707
1985	16,725
1986	16,889
1987	19,180
1988	20,183
1989	21,757

Comparable data for the years before 1983 are not available.

Data on recruitment to teacher training institutions in the current academic year are in the process of being collected and will be available later on in the term.

Teachers' Pay

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy to allow all schools' boards of governors to negotiate individual salaries with individual teachers up to a maximum of 50 per cent. above the present rates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The governors of schools with delegated budgets already exercise control over the award of incentive allowances, and other pay discretions. The interim advisory committee's recommendations for 1990-91, which are being implemented in full by January 1991, will mean greater flexibility to target resources, tackle local recruitment and retention problems, improve career prospects and reward responsibility and good performance. The remit which my right hon. Friend gave to the committee on 14 September asks the committee to consider what further modifications should be made to the system of selective payments in 1991-92.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what would be the cost to the Exchequer of increasing teachers' salaries by 50 per cent. over the next two years.

Mr. Eggar: The cost of such an increase would depend on several factors, including the number of teachers employed and the proportion on each point of the pay scale. But estimated spending by LEAs in England on teachers in 1990-91 is some £8 billion. So as a broad order of magnitude, a 50 per cent. increase might cost some £4 billion. The Exchequer contribution to this through revenue support grant cannot be separately identified.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what evaluation his Department has made of the proposals made by the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers for a pay review body for teachers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: NASUWT's proposals for a pay review body for teachers were not widely supported during my right hon. Friend's consultations earlier this year on new pay machinery for teachers. Most of those consulted favoured the restoration of negotiating rights for teachers. That is what we have now proposed.

Education Spending

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table showing spending on primary and secondary education in total and per child in 1980-81 and in the last year for which figures are available, inflation adjusted.

Mr. Fallon: The available data are as follows:

	1980-81 £	*1988-89* £
Nursery and primary		
Total school-based spending:		
cash terms:	2,300 million	4,200 million
1988-89 prices:	3,650 million	4,200 million
School-based spending per pupil:		
cash terms:	545	1,100
1988-89 prices:	870	1,100
Secondary		
Total school-based spending:		
cash terms:	2,950 million	5,050 million
1988-89 prices:	4,700 million	5,050 million
School-based spending per pupil:		
cash terms:	765	1,690
1988-89 prices:	1,215	1,690
Total		
Total school-based spending:		
cash terms:	5,250 million	9,250 million
1988-89 prices:	8,300 million	9,250 million
School-based spending per pupil:		
cash terms:	650	1,360
1988-89 prices:	1,035	1,360

Notes to table:

1. The figures relate to net recurrent spending in nursery, primary and secondary schools. They do not include central services provided by local education authorities such as administration, inspection and transport, or capital spending. Nor do they cover special schools.
2. The figures are drawn from LEA returns of expenditure to the Department of the Environment and returns of pupil numbers to the Department of Education and Science.
3. The 1980-81 cash figures are converted to 1988-89 prices using current gross domestic product (market prices) deflators.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the percentages of gross domestic product spent on primary and secondary education in each European Community member state in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The data are available for public expenditure only and are shown in the table.

Public expenditure on education

Country	*Year of data*[1]	*Current expenditure*		
		As a percentage of GNP	*Proportion of which is expenditure*[2] *on 1st level*[3] *percentage*	*2nd level*[3] *percentage*
Belgium[4]	1987	5·1	[5]25·0	46·3
Denmark	1987	7·6	[5][6]43·8	[6]19·2
France[7]	1986	5·3	19·2	40·8
Germany, West	1986	4·0	13·8	49·0
Greece	1985	2·8	31·6	41·3
Ireland	1986	6·5	28·6	39·1

Country	Year of data[1]	Current expenditure: As a percentage of GNP	Current expenditure: Proportion of which is expenditure [2] on 1st level[3] percentage	Current expenditure: Proportion of which is expenditure [2] on 2nd level[3] percentage
Italy[4]	1983	4·5	21·3	37·3
Luxembourg[4]	1987	2·6	38·9	44·3
Netherlands	1985	5·9	[5]22·6	35·9
Portugal[4]	1987	4·0	48·5	28·3
Spain	1986	2·9	[6]58·9	[6]19·3
United Kingdom	1987	4·6	24·9	45·1

[1] Financial year of country commencing in year shown.
[2] Some expenditure is unallocated by level. This varies from country to country.
[3] 1st level broadly equates with primary schools: 2nd level includes secondary schools and further education. However, the age ranges of primary and secondary education vary between countries due to differing educational structures.
[4] Expenditure of Ministry of Education only.
[5] Includes pre-primary expenditure.
[6] Estimated.
[7] France metropolitan.
Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1989.

Teacher Supply

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to respond to the Select Committee on Education Science, and Arts, report on the supply of teachers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend published on 17 July the Government's response (Cm. 1148) to the Select Committee's report. A copy is in the Library.

Iraq (Academic Assistance)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has in regard to United Kingdom university and academic assistance afforded to the Iraq Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialisation since 1979.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Information is not collected centrally, about university and other links within the United Kingdom and internationally. This is a matter for each institution within its own academic policy.

Glynn Research Institute

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet Dr. Peter Mitchell of the Glynn Research Institute in Cornwall to discuss the funding of new scientific projects at the institute.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Research Councils

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will list the members of the Agricultural and Food Research Council, the date of their original appointment and the date on which their current term of office will end;

(2) if he will list the members of the Medical Research Council, the date of their original appointment and the date on which their current term of office will end;

(3) if he will list the members of the Science and Engineering Research Council, the date of their original appointment and the date on which their current term of office will end;

(4) if he will list the members of the Economic and Social Research Council, the date of their original appointment and the date on which their current term of office will end;

(5) if he will list the members of the Natural Environment Research Council, the date of their original appointment and the date on which their current term of office will end.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information for each council is as follows:

Members	Date of original appointment	Date term of office ends
Agricultural and Food Research Council		
Mr. A. Grant (Chairman)	September 1990	August 1995
Dr. B. G. Jamieson	October 1990	(Acting Secretary until 31 December 1990)
Dr. P. J. Bunyan	January 1990	[1]—
Professor E. C. D. Cocking FRS	August 1990	July 1994
Professor J. M. M. Cunningham	June 1987	May 1993
Sir Sam Edwards FRS	August 1990	July 1994
Dr. D. A. Evans	October 1989	July 1992
Mr. D. F. R. George	October 1989	July 1992
Mr. D. F. Goodwin MBE	November 1988	July 1991
Mr. L. P. Hamilton CB	May 1984	[1]—
Mr. B. J. G. Hilton	June 1989	[1]—
Professor W. D. H. Jarret FRS	November 1988	July 1991
Dr. M. E. Knowles	August 1989	[1]—
Professor J. R. Krebs FRS	November 1988	July 1991
Professor C. J. Leaver FRS	August 1990	July 1994
Professor T. A. Mansfield FRS	October 1989	July 1992
Professor J. R. Norris	November 1988	July 1991
Mr J. L. C. Provan	August 1990	July 1994
Mr. G. T. Pryce	June 1986	July 1994
Professor W. V. Shaw	August 1990	July 1994
Dr. D. W. F. Shannon	September 1986	[1]—
Professor R. Whittenbury	June 1984	July 1991

Members	Date of original appointment	Date term of office ends
Economic and Social Research Council		
Professor H. Newby (Chairman)	October 1988	September 1992
Dr. D. Anderson	September 1989	July 1993
Professor M. Anderson	August 1990	July 1993
Professor J. M. Ashworth	September 1989	July 1993
Professor G. S. Bain	October 1986	July 1991
Professor J. Beaumont	September 1989	July 1993
Mr. M. Bichard	September 1989	July 1992
Mrs. E. J. Filkin	August 1990	July 1994
Mrs. J. Firth	August 1988	July 1991
Mr. J. Fox	August 1990	July 1994
Professor A. Hay	August 1990	July 1994
Professor L. C. Hunter CBE	September 1989	July 1992
Mr. H. Liesner	December 1989	July 1992
Mr. J. Monks	August 1988	July 1991
Professor S. J. Nickell	August 1990	July 1994
Mr. G. T. Pepper	December 1989	July 1993
Mrs. P. Perry	August 1988	July 1991
Professor D. K. Stout	March 1989	July 1992
Mrs. M. Tuck	August 1990	July 1994
Professor P. Warr	September 1989	July 1992
Medical Research Council		
Sir David Plastow (Chairman)	October 1990	September 1994
Dr. D. A. Rees FRS	October 1987	July 1991
Sir Donald Acheson	October 1983	[1]—
Professor F. W. O'Grady CBE	September 1986	[1]—
Dr. K. C. Calman	January 1989	[1]—
Dr. J. T. Carter	July 1983	July 1991
Professor I. V. Allen	August 1989	July 1991
Professor D. T. Baird	August 1989	July 1993
Professor C. L. Berry	August 1990	July 1994
Professor M. Bobrow	November 1988	July 1992
Dr. P. Doyle	August 1990	July 1994
Sir Aaron Klug FRS	August 1990	July 1994
Professor C. D. Marsden	February 1988	July 1991
Professor T. J. McElwain	August 1990	JUly 1994
Professor G. K. Radda FRS	November 1988	July 1992
Professor Sir Robert Shields	August 1987	July 1992
Dr. J. W. G. Smith	November 1988	July 1992
Mrs. R. Short	December 1987	July 1991
Natural Environment Research Council		
Professor J. L. Knill (Chairman)	October 1988	September 1993
Professor R. M. Anderson FRS	August 1988	July 1991
Lord Chorley	August 1988	July 1991
Dr. R. F. Coleman	June 1987	[1]—
Professor C. D. Curtis	August 1990	July 1993
Dr. W. D. Evans	December 1989	[1]—
Dr. D. Fisk	September 1987	[1]—
Dr. I. D. Graham-Bryce	August 1989	July 1992
Professor J. S. Gray	August 1986	July 1992
Professor B. J. Hoskins FRS	August 1988	July 1991
Dr. M. E. Knowles	August 1989	[1]—
Mr. D. E. Lennard	August 1988	July 1991
Professor P. S. Liss	August 1990	July 1993
Professor A. R. MacLeary	August 1988	July 1991
Professor J. Ramsay FRS	August 1989	July 1992
Professor D. A. Ritchie	August 1990	July 1993
Mr. D. G. M. Roberts CBE	August 1987	July 1993
Dr. O. Rogne	August 1990	July 1993
Professor A. Warner FRS	September 1987	July 1992
Professor D. Wood	August 1987	July 1993
Science and Engineering Research Council		
Sir Mark Richmond FRS (Chairman)	October 1990	September 1995
Professor T. L. Blundell FRS	August 1989	July 1993
Professor P. Burke FRS	August 1988	July 1992
Dr. R. F. Coleman	June 1987	July 1994
Dr. D. A. Davis	August 1989	July 1993
Professor A. Donnachie	August 1989	July 1993
Dr. G. H. Fairtlough	August 1989	July 1994
Professor R. E. Hester	July 1990	July 1994
Dr. G. R. Higginson	August 1989	July 1993
Dr. N. W. Horne	July 1990	July 1994
Professor C. J. Humphreys	August 1989	July 1992
Dr. A. Ledwith	February 1990	July 1993
Mr. D. P. Nash	August 1988	July 1992

Members	Date of original appointment	Date term of office ends
Dr. J. S. Mason	July 1990	July 1994
Professor E. R. Oxburgh	September 1988	August 1992
Professor J. T. Stuart FRS	August 1989	July 1993
Dr. J. O. Thomas	July 1990	July 1994
Professor D. J. Wallace FRS	July 1990	July 1994
Professor A. W. Wolfendale FRS	August 1988	July 1992

[1] Not more than four members of MRC, NERC and SERC are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on the nomination of such Ministers of the Government as the Secretary of State shall determine. Up to four members of the AFRC are appointed by the Minsiter of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and up to two members by the Secretary of State for Scotland. With the exception of SERC, their length of office is not specified.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the members of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils, the date of their original appointment and the date on which their current term of office will end.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Advisory Board for the Research Councils was reconstituted on 1 April 1990. Its current membership is as follows:

Members	Date of appointment	Date term of office ends
Professor Sir David Phillips (Chairman)	January 1983[1]	March 1993
Professor Sir Eric Ash	January 1989[1]	March 1992
Mr. J. S. Flemming	March 1986[1]	March 1991
Professor R. L. Gardner	April 1990	March 1992
Professor M. Hart	April 1990	March 1993
Sir Charles Reece	January 1989[1]	March 1991
Professor I. A. Shanks	April 1990	March 1993

[1] Date of appointment to the "old" ABRC prior to reconstitution.

The following are ex-officio members:

Heads of Research Councils

Professor J. L. Knill Chairman, Natural Environment Research Council
Sir Mark Richmond Chairman, Science and Engineering Research Council (from October 1990)
Professor H. J. Newby Chairman, Economic and Social Research Council
Dr. D. A. Rees Secretary, Medical Research Council
Dr. B. Jamieson Acting Secretary, Agricultural and Food Research Council (from October 1990)

Assessors

Professor W. D. P. Stewart Chief Scientific Adviser, Cabinet Office (from October 1990)
Mr. J. M. M. Vereker Deputy Secretary, Department of Education and Science

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the prescribed minimum and maximum number of members of (i) the Medical Research Council, (ii) the Science and Engineering Research Council, (iii) the Economic and Social Research Council, (iv) the Natural Environment Research Council, (v) the Agricultural and Food Research Council and (vi) the Advisory Board for the Research Councils.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The maximum and minimum numbers of members of the research councils are prescribed in their charters, as follows:

	Minimum number of members	Maximum number of members
AFRC	20	23
ESRC	14	20
MRC	16	20
NERC	14	20
SERC	15	19

There is no prescribed minimum or maximum for the Advisory Board for the Research Councils, which is an advisory body. As currently constituted, the board has 14 members (an independent chairman, six independent members, the heads of the five research councils and two assessors).

Head Teachers

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many state sector primary schools in England and Wales had a male head teacher and how many had a female head teacher in the school year 1988-89;

(2) how many state sector secondary schools in England and Wales had a male head teacher and how many had a female head teacher in the school year 1988-89, divided between schools with students of 11 to 16 years and those 11 to 18 years.

Mr. Fallon: The information requested for maintained primary and secondary schools in England for January 1989 is as follows:

	Schools with a male head teacher	Schools with a female head teacher
Primary[1]	10,162	9,067
Secondary		
11-16[2]	1,218	213
11-18[3]	1,679	388

[1] Includes middle schools deemed primary.
[2] Includes secondary modern schools, but excludes middle schools deemed secondary.
[3] Includes grammar, technical schools and sixth form colleges.

Similar information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science in the school years 1988 to 1989 and 1989 to 1990, how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female head teachers of primary and secondary schools in England and

Wales left the profession for each of the following reasons: (i) normal retirement, (ii) early retirement and (iii) death in service.

Mr. Fallon: Information is not yet available for the dates specified.

Deaf-blind People

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action is being taken by his Department to follow up the policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department has undertaken a consultation exercise of local education authorities following the policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children. We are also proposing a joint seminar with SENSE early in 1991 to disseminate the results of the consultation exercise.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what services are available to deaf-blind students in higher education.

Mr. Alan Howarth: As autonomous bodies higher education institutions are responsible for determining what provision to make to meet the needs of students with disabilities. This is not monitored centrally. Students can obtain services individually in the light of their needs with the assistance of the disabled students allowances.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what response he has had from local education authorities to his policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children.

Mr. Alan Howarth: To date, the Department has received 52 responses from local education authorities to the consultation exercise on the policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children.

Special Schools

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to publish the report of the feasibility study into the extension of local management of schools to special schools.

Mr. Fallon: The report has been published today. It concludes that the extension of LMS to special schools is both feasible and desirable. The report found that LMS would bring benefits to special schools and their pupils. Copies of the report are being sent to local education authorities and to special schools in both England and Wales. My right hon. Friend will shortly be consulting LEAs and schools on the report's findings. In the light of their views, the Government will consider making the necessary enabling regulations to permit LEAs to extend LMS to their special schools.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Language Learning

Sir Hal Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that young people have an effective grounding in modern foreign language.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what importance he places on language learning.

Mr. MacGregor *[pursuant to the reply, 23 October 1990, c. 159-60.]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are publishing tomorrow our proposals for attainment targets and programmes of study for modern foreign languages in the national curriculum. Our proposals are based on the recommendations of the working group for modern foreign languages, and will be published with the group's final report. Copies of the published document will be placed in the Library.

SCOTLAND

Education Expenditure

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total capital expenditure on schools in Scotland in each year since 1978 in real terms.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is given in the following table which has been compiled from local authority financial returns. The reduction in expenditure in real terms during the period reflects a substantial and progressive decline in pupil numbers which in turn reduced the requirement for new school building.

Capital expenditure by local authorities on schools

Year	*£ million at 1988-89 prices*
1978-79	114·260
1979-80	89·576
1980-81	83·169
1981-82	87·486
1982-83	70·754
1983-84	58·204
1984-85	56·680
1985-86	59·838
1986-87	52·489
1987-88	51·697
1988-89	59·392
1989-90[1]	60·519

[1] Provisional.

The figures include expenditure on nursery, primary, secondary and special schools.

Outturn figures have been converted to 1988-89 prices using the GDP deflator.

British Rail

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan, *Official Report*, 19 October, column *945 (a)* when he last discussed with Sir Bob Reid the improvement of the British Rail services between Glasgow and London and *(b)* what timetable was discussed for such improvements.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: British Rail's plans for the upgrading of the west coast main line between Glasgow and London are likely to be one of the subjects discussed when my right hon. and learned Friend next meets the chairman of British Rail. The timing of individual projects is however a matter for British Rail to determine in the light of other competing investment priorities and the resources at its disposal.

Moray Adventurer

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what investigations are being undertaken by his Department into events on 4 October involving the Buckie-registered vessel Moray Adventurer approximately 15 miles south-east of Peterhead.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The matter has not been reported formally to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland. Officers of DAFS sea fisheries inspectorate are seeking to establish with the skipper of the fishing vessel concerned the facts surrounding the incident.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his reply on radioactive waste to the hon. Member for Newport, West, *Official Report*, 22 October, column *73*, he will list any other sites in Scotland under investigation for a deep repository.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: UK Nirex Ltd. is not investigating any sites in Scotland apart from Dounreay.

Mr. James Wilby

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland for what period Mr. James Wilby was employed by the Scottish Office; what was the period of his contract; and why it was terminated.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There is no record of a Mr. James Wilby having been employed by the Scottish Office. If the hon. Member is referring to Mr. John Wilby, the former director of the Scottish ambulance service, his employment was with the Common Services Agency from 1 November 1985 until 31 July 1990 when he resigned to take up the appointment of managing director to the London ambulance service.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Accountancy Bodies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether, as a condition of granting the supervisory status to accountancy bodies, he will require that the minutes of their policy-making committees be available to any member of the public;

(2) whether, as a condition of the supervisory status, he will require the councils of the accountancy bodies to meet in the open;

(3) whether, as a condition of granting the supervisory status to accountancy bodies, he will require that the minutes of the council meetings be available to all members of that body.

Mr. Redwood: The Secretary of State has no power to impose such conditions. His function is to determine whether applications for recognition meet the criteria laid down in the Companies Act 1989. In any case, the publicity to be given to meetings of this kind is a matter for the bodies themselves.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to require any accountancy firm auditing a public limited company to file information with a designated authority.

Mr. Redwood: We have no such plans. However, I expect that the applications for recognition from supervisory bodies for auditors under the Companies Act 1989 will include requirements as to the filing of information with them by audit firms.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, as a condition of granting the supervisory status to accountancy bodies, he will require that the minutes of their policy-making committees be available to all members.

Mr. Redwood: The Secretary of State has no power to impose such a condition. His function is to determine whether applications for recognition meet the criteria laid down in the companies Act 1989. In any case, the question of whether minutes of its policy-making committees should be made available to all its members is one for the body itself to decide.

Student Complaints

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to amend the Companies Acts to require the qualifying bodies to create an independent ombudsman to hear student complaints.

Mr. Redwood: No. But it is open to a body itself to set up an independent ombudsman to hear student complaints.

Audit Policy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will exercise his powers under part II of the Companies Act 1989 to create an independent statutory body to regulate auditing.

Mr. Redwood: As the Government made clear during the passage of the Companies Bill, we have no present intention to do so.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will create a body equivalent to OFGAS and OFTEL to regulate auditing.

Mr. Redwood: No. Under section 46 of the Companies Act 1989 the Secretary of State may establish a body corporate to exercise his functions under part II of that Act. However, we have no present intention of exercising this power.

Supervisory Bodies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, before granting supervisory status to any organisation, he will ask it to explain its record on nominating women to major policy-making organisations.

Mr. Redwood: No. While the Government would favour the nomination of more women to major organisations, the record of a supervisory body in this respect is of no relevance to a decision by the Secretary of State on whether to recognise the body under the procedures in part II of the Companies Act 1989.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will take powers to provide that each supervisory body has lay observers on its council.

Mr. Redwood: We have no such plans.

Company Legislation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to introduce legislation to define the meaning of auditor independence.

Mr. Redwood: Section 27 of the Companies Act 1989 (which we expect to bring into force early next year) sets out connections between a person and a company which render the person ineligible for appointment as auditor to the company on the grounds of a lack of independence. The Secretary of State will consider whether to exercise the power in section 27(2) to specify by regulations further disqualifying connections once it is clear what professional rules and guidance there will be governing the independence of auditors. Under the 1989 Act the Secretary of State cannot recognise a supervisory body for auditors unless it appears to him to have adequate rules and practices in respect of professional integrity and independence.

Company Acquisitions (Financial Assistance)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many prosecutions have been undertaken involving the use of section 151 of the Companies Act 1985; how many of such charges were subsequently dropped; and how many were ultimately successful.

Mr. Redwood: To the Department's knowledge 19 charges have been brought under section 151 of the Companies Act 1985. In respect of six of these the judge ordered the jury not to bring verdicts and they were left on the file. The other charges have not yet come to trial.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he proposes to review section 151 of the Companies Act 1985.

Mr. Redwood: I have received representations concerning section 151 and am considering them.

Insider Dealing

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he proposes to place before Parliament his proposals for implementing the EC directive on insider dealing.

Mr. Redwood: The Government said in their reply to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry's report on company investigations that they would bring forward legislation to implement the EC directive on insider dealing as soon as the parliamentary timetable permits.

Polly Peck Ltd.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about recent developments at Polly Peck Ltd. and Del Monte.

Mr. Redwood: No representations about Polly Peck plc have been received since I wrote to the company on 25 September 1990.

However, in view of recent developments my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has said that he will look at all the information available to him arising from the move into administration of Polly Peck and the events leading up to it. In particular he has told the administrators that he will want to hear from them at the earliest opportunity whether they think there are any matters that need investigating which require the use of the Secretary of State's powers under the Companies Acts, bearing in mind the investigation being undertaken by the Serious Fraud Office.

No separate representations have been received about Del Monte.

Financial Reporting Council

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure that the Financial Reporting Council conducts its proceedings in public.

Mr. Redwood: The procedural arrangements of the Financial Reporting Council are a matter for the council to decide. I am sure that the council is fully conscious of the need to maximise public understanding and awareness of its work.

Civil Servants

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former civil servants from his Department joined General Electric Company, Plessey, Northern Engineering Industries, BICC, or Trafalgar after leaving the civil service since May 1979.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* The Department of Trade and Industry has existed in its present form only since 1983. Separate Departments of Trade and Industry existed between 1979 and 1983. Totals for DTI, and these predecessor Departments since 1979 are as follows:

	Total
To General Electric	5
To Plessey	0
To Northern Engineering Industries	2
To BICC	0
To Trafalgar House	0

Such figures would not, of course, include any staff who, once having left the Department and having passed the two-year notification period, then joined one of these companies.

Young People (Complaints)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will specify what formal procedures for making complaints and representations, specifying where appropriate under which sections of which Acts, are available locally and nationally to children and young people under 18 years of age who wish to make complaints about matters which are the responsibility of his Department.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 25 October 1990]:* Any member of the public can make complaints or representations to the Department about matters falling within its responsibilities. There are no formal procedures for doing so.

EMPLOYMENT

Tourism

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the estimate of spending by overseas visitors for each of the last five years.

Mr. Forth: The information is published in table 8.2 of the October 1990 issue of *Employment Gazette*.

Small Firms Service

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inquiries were dealt with by the small firms service in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Forth: In 1989-90 the small firms service in England dealt with 317,529 inquiries.

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list, by region, how many inspectors there are in the nuclear installations inspectorate; what is the required manning establishment; how many are in post; and if he will make a statement as to what their terms of reference are.

Mr. Forth: The principal aim of HSE's nuclear installations inspectorate (NII) is to ensure a safe operating regime for civil nuclear installations through programmes of inspection of licensed sites, assessing safety cases provided by licensees, and seeing that appropriate safety standards are developed and maintained by licensees.

The NII is not regionally structured, but based in HSE's Bootle and London headquarters. On 1 October 1990, 160 inspectors were in post in the inspectorate, an increase of some 60 per cent. since 1987. Current plans are to recruit to a level of 172 inspectors.

Legionella

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consultations he had with the Health and Safety Executive regarding the occurrence of legionella in power station cooling towers.

Mr. Forth: None. The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) intends to take statutory action to strengthen existing legislation and guidance applying to the control of legionellosis. The HSC issued a consultative document in November 1989 setting out its proposals. In the light of comments received revised proposals for action have been drawn up and will be considered shortly by the HSC. Existing requirements under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 apply to all wet cooling towers, including those at power stations.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Sri Lanka

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to what extent the question of human rights in Sri Lanka has been discussed in the context of aid negotiations with that country's Government.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have on a number of occasions raised the question of human rights in the context of aid negotiations with the Sri Lanka Government, notably at meetings of the World bank-led aid group.

At the latest meeting of the aid group held in Paris on 25 October, the United Kingdom delegation, in common with other donors, made it clear that human rights performance was one of the factors to be taken into account in future decisions on aid.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his most recent discussions with European Community Foreign Ministers on the subject of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: EC member states have considered this question on several occasions in recent months. Our most recent consideration resulted in a demarche by EC heads of mission in Colombo on 19 October and a statement by the EC presidency at the aid consortium meeting in Paris on 25 October, in which the Community and its member states urged the Sri Lankan Government to observe their international obligations in the field of human rights.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his most recent discussions with the Government of Sri Lanka on the subject of human rights and alleged violations thereof by officials of that Government and the Indian peacekeeping force in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have had no discussions with the Sri Lankan Government about violations of human rights by the Indian peacekeeping force, which withdrew from Sri Lanka in March.

Our high commissioner in Colombo has raised our concerns about human rights abuses by Sri Lankan Government agencies with the President directly, and with his Ministers on many occasions.

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who will attend the Sri Lankan aid consortium meeting in Paris; and if United Kingdom representatives will express formal concern at breaches of human rights by Sri Lankan Government security forces.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We were represented at the aid consortium meeting in Paris on 25 October by officials from the ODA. We have regularly voiced our concerns about human rights abuses by the Sri Lankan Government and on this occasion the British delegation, in common with other donors, made it clear that human rights performance was one of the factors to be taken into account in future decisions on aid.

Yosif Dimant

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Soviet Government about their failure to grant an exit visa to Yosif Dimant, of Chernovtsy.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We will add Mr. Dimant's case to the list of those which we raise regularly with the Soviet authorities. We shall continue to press the Soviet authorities until all such cases are satisfactorily resolved.

Diplomatic Relations

Sir Thomas Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those members of the United Nations with which the United Kingdom does not have diplomatic relations.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Following are those members of the United Nations with which the United Kingdom does not have diplomatic relations:

Albania

Bhutan

Cambodia

Libya

Syria

Nepal

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has made any representation to the Government of the Kingdom of Nepal concerning the introduction of a secular state and freedom of religion with regard to its forthcoming new constitution.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Yes. Her Majesty's ambassador in Kathmandu has expressed our concerns on these points on several occasions including to the Prime Minister of Nepal on 20 September.

COCOM Proscribed Destinations

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with his COCOM colleagues the extension of proscribed destinations and items to include Iraq and Libya.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The COCOM controls were designed to counter the strategic security threat from communist countries. Their purpose is to control the export of goods and technology that would otherwise enhance the threat that still exists. The list of proscribed destinations agreed amongst COCOM partners is based on that strategic threat. The controls reflect the indigenous capabilities of those countries.

Exports are controlled to other destinations for other reasons. Iraq and Libya are prohibited destinations listed in the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1989, as amended, for the export of certain goods and technology.

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether acceptance as a full member of the Council of Europe qualifies a state for removal from the COCOM list of proscribed destinations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The list of destinations proscribed by COCOM comprise those countries that pose a threat to western strategic security interests, or countries whose military and intelligence links with the former are inimical to those interests.

COCOM members are considering a special procedure to facilitate the licensing of certain exports to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This will be dependent on their adopting adequate export control systems together with a commitment to ensure that imported strategic goods and technologies are devoted exclusively to civilian purposes.

Middle East

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council since 2 August on middle east affairs; which of these were initiated by the United Kingdom; and how the United Kingdom ambassador voted on each resolution.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The Security Council has passed 11 resolutions on the middle east since 2 August. The United Kingdom voted for them all, and was closely involved with each initiative, either as a permanent member of the Security Council or as president of the Security Council for the month of October.

Resolution No.	*Subject*
SCR 660 (adopted 2 August)	Condemned invasion and called for immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal.
SCR 661 (6 August)	Imposed sanctions.
SCR 662 (9 August)	Decided annexation of Kuwait by Iraq null and void.
SCR 664 (18 August)	Reaffirmed rights of third state nationals, including the right to leave.
SCR 665 (25 August)	Authorised measures to halt shipping in order to inspect and verify cargoes.
SCR 666 (13 September)	Established system to permit food imports to Iraq and Kuwait in humanitarian circumstances.
SCR 667 (16 September)	Condemned Iraqi attacks against diplomatic premises and personnel.
SCR 669 (24 September)	Called on Sanctions Committee to consider requests for economic assistance under Article 50 of UN Charter.
SCR 670 (25 September)	Measures to tighten air embargo and detain or deny entry to Iraqi-registered ships.
SCR 672 (12 October)	Condemning acts of violence by Israeli Security Forces at the Temple Mount on 8 October, calling on Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention, and requesting the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the mission he had decided to send to the region.
SCR 673 (24 October)	Calling on Israel to accept the Secretary-General's Mission.

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards recognising the right of the Palestinian people to opt for a Palestinian state; and as to what extent this should depend on the agreement of the Israeli Government provided that in such negotiations Israel has been offered borders which Her Majesty's Government consider satisfy that country's reasonable demands for security.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have always supported the Palestinians' legitimate right to self-determination. We also support Israel's right to exist within secure borders. A settlement of the Palestinian problem should be on this basis. Whether it will include a Palestinian state is a matter for resolution between the parties.

Northern Ireland

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all United Nations resolutions passed since 1970 on deaths of civilians in Northern Ireland; and how the United Kingdom voted on each resolution.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No resolutions of this nature have been passed in the United Nations.

Fuel Air Explosives

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, during the next meeting of the European Community Foreign Affairs Council, he will raise with his Spanish counterpart the sale of fuel air explosives from the Spanish company M. S. Systems of Madrid, via a third party in Chile, to Iraq.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We are in constant touch with European and other Governments to exchange information about the practical implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 661.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, during his recent visit to Egypt and the middle east, he discussed the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Gulf region.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No.

Turkey

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last raised the matter of human rights and political prisoners with Ministers or officials of the Turkish Government.

Mr. Garel-Jones: Turkey's human rights performance is regularly discussed between members of Her Majesty's embassy in Ankara and officials in the Turkish Foreign Ministry. At ministerial level, the subject was most recently raised by the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs during a visit to Ankara on 20 June.

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many United Kingdom officials will represent Her Majesty's Government at the amendment conference to the 1963 partial nuclear test ban treaty, to be held in New York in January next year; and if his Department has had any consultation with interested non-governmental organisations over prospects for this conference.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: United Kingdom official representation at the partial test ban treaty amendment conference has not yet been decided. We anticipate that it will be drawn from officials serving at our missions to the United Nations conference on disarmament at Geneva and to the United Nations in New York. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office discussed prospects for the conference at the most recent of meetings with non-governmental organisations on 23 October.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list each outstanding technical verification problem requiring resolution prior to the achievement of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty; and what resources in terms of committed scientific expertise and financial support have been expended by Her Majesty's Government since 1980 on the problems of verification.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: A full explanation of the technical problems with verification can be found in CD/610, a paper submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the United Nations conference on disarmament at Geneva in July 1985. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House. We maintain a specialist seismic research unit known as Blacknest, committed to studying verification. It employs approximately 30 staff.

Mercenaries

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the 1989 United Nations convention on mercenaries.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries was agreed in December 1989 by the General Assembly. We are examining it carefully against the background of current United Kingdom legislation. We hope to come to a decision soon.

Trident

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations in writing or orally he, Ministers or officials of his Department have received since 15 September concerning the status of the United Kingdom Trident programme in the context of nuclear disarmament commitments under article VI of the 1968 nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have not received any representations on the status of our Trident programme under article VI of the NPT.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards *(a)* the threshold test ban treaty and *(b)* the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty; and how the United Kingdom capacity to continue nuclear testing in Nevada will be affected by these treaties.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We welcome the ratification of the threshold test ban treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty. Neither treaty will have any effect on the United Kingdom testing programme. This programme meets the testing limits agreed by the US and the Soviet Union.

Guyana

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what actions are being taken by Her Majesty's Government to ensure that there are free and fair elections in Guyana.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: During several ministerial meetings with Ministers of the Government of Guyana during the

past year we have consistently emphasised that the forthcoming elections in Guyana should be seen to be free and fair. The last such occasion was in London on 16 October when I met the Guyanese Minister of Finance, Mr. Carl Greenidge.

We have welcomed President Hoyte's invitation to the Commonwealth Secretary General to send a Commonwealth election observer mission to monitor the elections and have informed the Secretary General that we will make a significant contribution towards the costs of an observer mission.

Syria

Mr. Madden: ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contacts he has had with the Syrian Government in the past year; whether he has any plans to visit Syria; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has had no contacts with the Syrian Government and has no plans to visit Syria.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether any representatives of the Government of Syria have requested any meetings with Her Majesty's Government in the past year; what written communication there has been between the Syrian Government and Her Majesty's Government in that period; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what contacts officials acting on behalf of Her Majesty's Government have had with Syrian Government officials in the past year; whether there are any plans for British officials to visit Syria; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have remained in contact with the Syrians since the break in relations in 1986. There have been no written communications during the past year, other than routine contact through the Syrian interests section in London and the British interests section in Damascus.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newport, West, *Official Report*, 22 October, column *55*, he will set out when and through what channels the representations to the Chinese Government to which he refers, were made; and when and through what channels the response was received.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Representations were made by the British embassy in Peking to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25 August, and were followed up bilaterally in New York. A formal Chinese response was delivered to the embassy in Peking by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 27 August.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will urgently consider providing the telephone and postal concessionary facilities for the hostages in Iraq and their families in the United Kingdom that are provided by some other western European states; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We are already helping. We have approached British Telecom. From 1 November it will reduce by half the cost of calls to Iraq and give every assistance to families with large bills to pay. We are setting up a PO box arrangement in London for relatives to use. We shall continue to look for ways to reduce the burden on families.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what arrangements he has made to assist the families of United Kingdom citizens detained in Iraq to communicate with those who are detained.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* We are doing everything possible to help families stay in touch. I refer the hon. and learned Gentleman to the answer I have given his other question today. We have also approached British Telecom and it has halved the cost of a five-minute call to Baghdad.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will permit the families of United Kingdom citizens detained in Iraq to communicate with those who are detained by means of the diplomatic bag.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* We are actively looking at all possible ways to help relatives. As I announced on 24 October, we are setting up a PO box in London to which letters can be sent. Our embassy in Baghdad will accept mail for postage in London.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will arrange for letters, books, clothes and other articles to be sent from the United Kingdom by relatives and friends of British citizens held in Iraq by British diplomatic bags; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* We are actively exploring all possible ways to help relatives. As I announced on 24 October, we are setting up a PO box in London to which letters can be sent.

Pakistan

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent elections in Pakistan.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: According to the information so far available to us the elections in Pakistan took place peacefully. We shall study the reports from international observers when they are available. We look forward to working with the Government who emerge.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether British officials made any representations to the Pakistan authorities about the conduct of the Pakistan elections; how many complaints about the conduct of the Pakistan elections have been received by him or British officials; and whether British officials have been in contact with the international delegation monitoring the Pakistan elections.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The Government of Pakistan were aware of the importance which we attach to free and fair

elections. It would not be for us to receive complaints about the conduct of the elections and none has been made to us. British officials have been in contact with international observer groups monitoring the elections.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will arrange for reports by British officials on the conduct of the Pakistan elections to be placed in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No. Reporting from our high commission is classified and will be treated in the usual manner.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what extra resources have been available to the British Council in respect of English language teaching in eastern Europe.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* British Council expenditure on the promotion and development of the teaching of English in central and eastern Europe and the Soviet Union rose to some £2·5 million last year and is scheduled to rise to £5 million this year, the money coming in part from increases in the council's direct grant and in part from the know-how fund.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what extra resources have been made available to the British Broadcasting Corporation foreign language services in light of the developments in eastern Europe; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* We recognise the value of World Service broadcasts to eastern Europe and are in regular touch with the BBC about the resources needed. Funding for the BBC World Service is set for periods of three years. In 1990-91, the final year of the present triennium, funding is 40 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1979-80 and 13 per cent. higher than in 1987-88. Funding for the next such period, beginning in April 1991 falls within the 1990 public expenditure survey and will be announced following the autumn statement.

CIVIL SERVICE

Employment Terms (South-west)

48. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received on civil service terms of employment as they affect the south-west region.

Mr. Mellor: I am not aware of having received any representations on this subject.

Trade Union Lobby

51. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he will agree to meet civil service trade union leaders on 31 October during their lobby of Parliament.

Mr. Mellor: I understand that the lobby has been postponed.

"Next Steps"

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what recent discussions he has held in connection with progress with the "next steps" agency programme.

Mr. Mellor: I have frequent discussions on the excellent progress which is being made in implementing the "next steps" initiative.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

EC Budget

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the latest figure for the provision which has been made for expenditure relating to agriculture in the 1991 EEC budget; and what was the estimate for 1990.

Mr. Curry *[pursuant to his reply, 15 October 1990, c. 764]:* Revision to the sterling-ecu exchange has caused some amendments to the figures originally given in reply to this question.

The provisions for expenditure relating to agriculture in the European Community's 1990 budget and 1991 draft budget are 30·0 billion ecu (£20·9 billion) and 33·4 billion ecu (£23·3 billion) respectively. In addition there is provision in each year for a monetary reserve of a further 1 billion ecu (£0·7 billion), which may be drawn on if unfavourable movements in the ecu-US dollar exchange rate cause an increase in expenditure on agricultural price support of more than 400 mecu (£279 million).

Sea Trout

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has commissioned into the decline of sea trout stocks in United Kingdom waters.

Mr. Curry: I refer to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Scottish Office, to a similar question. For England and Wales, there has been an overall fall in the catches of sea trout by rod and line in 1989 and 1990. This may not, however, be conclusive evidence of a decline in the stocks of sea trout supporting the fisheries. The interpretation of trends is complicated by the fact that there were dry summers in both years, as well as by the natural fluctuations in stock availability.

Departmental scientists are continuing to monitor the situation in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and the National Rivers Authority.

Spongiform Encephalopathies

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what advice he has received on spongiform encephalopathies from Dr. Carleton Gajdusek; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Government take account of all available research findings, including those of Dr. Gajdusek.

Diet Survey

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information was obtained about the dietary intakes of food additives and contaminants from his survey "The Dietary and Nutritional Survey of British Adults"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The survey in question was carried out on behalf of my Department and that of the Department of Health. The intention was to gather information on the current dietary behaviour and nutritional status of the adult population, and in particular to establish a database of the range of food, drink and nutrient intakes of adults. It does not, therefore, contain any information on dietary intakes of food additives and contaminants although it can be used to calculate these in conjunction with data on their levels in individual foods obtained from analytical surveys.

Less-favoured Areas

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received concerning the problems faced by farmers in less-favoured areas.

Mr. Curry: I have recently received a number of representations concerning the problems faced by farmers in less-favoured areas.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement outlining the initiatives currently taken by his Department and his future plans to assist farmers in less-favoured areas.

Mr. Curry: Farmers in less-favoured areas (LFAs) benefit from a range of support measures which are available to producers generally, including particularly the suckler cow premium and sheep annual premium. In addition, Government expenditure on hill livestock compensatory allowances, which are paid only in less-favoured areas, will amount to about £127 million this year; we have recently announced that the suckler cow premium for less-favoured area producers will be increased to the maximum amount payable under the EC regulations; and less-favoured area sheep producers will benefit next year from a special addition to the sheep annual premium of 4 ecus per eligible ewe. We shall continue to keep the position of less-favoured area farmers under review.

Ewe Premium

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make it his policy to bring forward from February 1991 the date of payment of the special £3·10 ewe premium.

Mr. Curry: As part of the price-fixing arrangements earlier this year, the EC Council of Agriculture Ministers agreed that sheep annual premium payments should be supplemented by a payment of 4 ecu per eligible ewe for producers in less-favoured areas. The agreement provided that the supplement should be payable from the 1991 sheepmeat marketing year which begins on 7 January 1991. There is little prospect of any change in timing, which would require a proposal from the European Commission and agreement by the Council of Ministers.

Store Lambs

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has concerning the average current price, in real terms, of store lambs; and what were the comparable figures for such lambs in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Mr. Curry: The table sets out the average price of store lambs in England in September of this year and the previous three years. The figures in brackets reflect the prices at 1990 levels.

	Lowland store lambs		£ *LFA store lambs*
	First quality	*Second quality*	
1987	35·07	29·84	31·99
	(44·28)	(37·68)	(40·39)
1988	35·67	32·70	30·18
	(42·55)	(39·01)	(36·00)
1989	32·05	26·66	29·97
	(35·54)	(29·56)	(33·23)
1990	29·94	25·90	25·89

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current level of hill livestock compensatory allowances; and what was the comparable figure in real terms in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Mr. Curry: The table sets out total payments of hill livestock compensatory allowances in the United Kingdom for this year and the previous three years. The figures in brackets reflect the payments at 1990 price levels.

	£ million
1987	112·8
	(139·3)
1988	114·6
	(134·9)
1989	118·9
	(129·8)
1990	[1]126·8

[1] Provisional.

Sheepmeat

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to bring forward from 7 January 1991 the green pound devaluation for sheepmeat.

Mr. Curry: This devaluation will come into effect at the beginning of the sheepmeat marketing year on 7 January 1991. This is the normal practice and it would be an exception to the usual rules for a devaluation to take place before the start of the marketing year. Such an exception would have to be proposed by the Commission and agreed by the other member states.

Advisory Committees

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the financial remunerations that the chairmen and members of each of his advisory committees receive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Details collected earlier are set out in "Public Appointments" issued by the Women's National Commission in July of which a copy is in the Library.

Animal Feedstuffs

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the occasions in the last 12 months, when animal feedstuffs containing ruminant-derived protein have been shipped abroad, giving the quantities involved, the destinations, the date when the shipment occurred, and whether they reached their destination; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: This information is not available.

European Community

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the joint meeting of the Agriculture and Trade Ministers on 26 October.

Mr. Gummer: I represented the United Kingdom at this meeting together with my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade.

Discussion concentrated on the Commission's proposal for a Community offer on agriculture in the current GATT round. A text was eventually produced by the presidency with Commission support, which made two changes to the draft offer and defined in general terms the Community's attitude to any agricultural measures which might be needed following an agreement in GATT. However, two member states were unable to agree and in these circumstances the presidency felt unable to put the matter to the vote.

I very much regret that, because of the failure of some member states to agree to the implications of commitments they had previously accepted, the Community has been unable to meet the deadline for submitting its offer. This is bad for British farmers, continental farmers and for trade as a whole. A further Council meeting is expected shortly.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what agricultural activities, including the responsibility for the storage and disposal of surpluses, have been transferred from the European Economic Community to member states in each year since 1973; and if he will publish a table indicating the expenditure involved in such transfers from the EEC to member states and to the United Kingdom in particular.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* No significant responsibilities for agricultural policy have been transferred from the European Community to member states since 1973.

Surplus Produce

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what provision has been made in the 1991 EEC budget for the dumping and destruction of surplus food and wine.

Mr. Curry *[pursuant to his reply, 15 October 1990, c. 764]:* Revision to the sterling-ecu exchange has caused some amendments to the figures originally given in reply to this question.

The 1991 European Community draft budget provides for 854 million ecu (£595 million) of expenditure on the withdrawal of agricultural produce, not all of which is destroyed.

THE ARTS

Yorkshire and Humberside Arts Board

27. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Minister for the Arts by what process he intends to appoint the chair of the Yorkshire and Humberside arts board.

Mr. Mellor: I am awaiting advice on these matters from the review team set up by the Arts Council to examine ways of implementing the broad principles for regional funding arrangements that I announced on 24 September.

Arts Council Funding

28. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what proposals he has to revalue the Arts Council funding to keep pace with the rate of inflation.

Mr. Mellor: Arrangements for Arts Council funding will be the same as under my predecessors. Government funding of the Arts Council is now at its highest level ever in real terms, and I shall announce the level of the grant for the next three years next month.

Greater London Arts

29. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what changes he proposes to make in the composition and responsibilities of Greater London Arts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The Arts Council has announced that Greater London Arts will be replaced shortly by a new London arts board. The Arts Council has also announced the arrangements for the management of Greater London Arts in the period before the new London arts board is fully operational. I hope these arrangements will result in greater confidence in London's arts body.

33. **Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how he intends local authorities to be involved in arts administration in Greater London.

Mr. Mellor: I expect the new London arts board to conform to the broad principles that I announced on 24 September, which reserve one third of the membership of the new regional arts boards for local authority nominees.

Theatres

30. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the level of deficits in national and regional theatres.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) earlier today.

Regional Arts

31. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what progress is being made in the restructuring of the regional arts funding bodies.

Mr. Mellor: I announced on 24 September broad principles for regional funding arrangements which are currently being examined by a review team established by the Arts Council, and led by Timothy Marsh.

32. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how he will ensure a wide representation of local authorities on regional arts boards.

34. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what plans he has to involve local authorities in the structure of arts administration.

39. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how he intends to involve local authorities in regional arts boards.

Mr. Mellor: Under the broad principles that I have announced, one third of the membership of regional arts boards will be reserved for local authority nominees.

38. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Minister for the Arts by what process he plans to appoint the chair of the Northern arts board.

40. **Mrs. Golding:** To ask the Minister for the Arts by what process he intends to choose the chair of the West Midlands regional arts board.

44. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what consultation he will require the Arts Council to undertake before the appointment of local authority representatives on regional arts boards.

Mr. Mellor: I am awaiting advice on these matters from the review team set up by the Arts Council to examine ways of implementing the broad principles for further strengthening regional funding arrangements that I announced on 24 September.

43. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what consultations he had with regional arts associations and host authorities before announcing his plans to revise the structure of regional arts boards.

Mr. Mellor: I met the chairmen of the regional arts associations and representatives of the main local authority associations shortly after my announcement was made. I have set aside two months for consultation with all the interested parties.

Theatres and Museums (Repairs)

36. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on the level of backlog of repairs and maintenance in theatre and museum buildings.

Mr. Mellor: I take account of the building and maintenance needs and priorities set out in the corporate plans provided for me annually by the national musuems and galleries which I sponsor. Most of these institutions have now carried out extensive studies of their buildings since untying from the Property Services Agency in 1988. It is for other relevant funding bodies, including local authorities, to determine the requirements for the buildings within their responsibilities.

I understand that the Theatres Trust is carrying out a small pilot study to establish whether a systematic examination of the national state of theatres could be undertaken at reasonable cost.

BBC Chairman

37. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will meet the chairman of the BBC to discuss the arts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I have no immediate plans to do so.

Arts Funding

41. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what have been the percentage increases in arts funding from his Department over the past five years in relation to inflation rates; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The figures requested are as follows:

	Central Government Arts Programme		*Inflation rates retail prices index*
Year	*Cash total £ million*	*Percentage increase on previous year*	*Percentage increase on previous year*
1986-87	343	—	—
1987-88	368	7·3	4·0
1988-89	414	12·5	6·0
1989-90	446	7·7	7·8
1990-91	494	10·8	[1]10·0

[1] Percentage change of first six months of the financial year over the same period of the previous year.

This clearly shows the Government's commitment to support of the arts.

North-west and Merseyside Arts Board

42. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what plans he has to involve local authorities in the administration of the north-west and Merseyside arts board.

Mr. Mellor: Under the broad principles that I have announced, one third of the membership of the regional arts board for the north-west and Merseyside will be reserved for local authority nominees.

National Heritage

45. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for the Arts when he next expects to meet civil service trade union leaders to discuss funding and staffing levels in relation to the national heritage.

Mr. Mellor: I meet representatives of the various civil service trade unions when appropriate to discuss matters of mutual interest. I intend to meet representatives from the IPMS to discuss recent developments at the natural history museum.

HEALTH

Child Patients

Miss Lestor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of child patients discharged from a stay in hospital had been nursed in an adult ward for each year from 1979 to 1989.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is not available centrally. Guidance on the welfare of

children and young people in hospital, on which the Department is currently consulting interested parties, re-emphasises our policy that children should be treated in discrete children's departments, separate from adult wards.

Community Nursing

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, further to the Minister for Health's reply to the hon. Member for Chislehurst, *Official Report*, column *423*, 26 July, he can provide further information as to where responsibility will lie under the National Health Service and Community Care Act for improvement of the recruitment, administration and payment of those involved in community nursing.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authorities, or NHS trusts where appropriate, will have responsibility for the recruitment, administration and payment of community nurses.

The working party set up by the NHS management executive as mentioned in my earlier reply will set out the general principles which should inform the management and organisation of nursing services in the community. Draft guidance explaining those principles will be issued for consultation in December.

Kidney Disease

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the provision of full renal units in England and Wales; what information he has on their provision in France, Germany and Italy; what proposals he has to increase such provision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: A number of representations on a wide range of issues concerning renal services has been received. Planning and provision of renal services is a matter for health authorities. Information on the provision of renal units in this country and in Europe is collected and published annually by the European Dialysis and Transplant Association.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the arrangements to provide suitable transport for patients requiring dialysis outside the home where the nearest dialysis facilities are more than 40 miles distant.

Mr. Dorrell: Ambulance service transport is available free of charge for all patients, including those requiring dialysis, regardless of the distance to be travelled, provided their medical need for transport is certified by their GP or hospital consultant.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what facilities for dialysis outside patients' homes exist within the health authority areas of Somerset, Cornwall, Bath, West Dorset, Gloucester and Cheltenham.

Mr. Dorrell: Somerset health authority does not have any facilities outside patients' homes but it is actively considering services for patients with chronic renal failure.

Cornwall health authority has facilities for acute haemodialysis, which has been available at Treliske hospital in Truro since 1987. In April 1988 a satellite unit at Treliske hospital was established.

In Bath health authority there are two continuous arteriovenous haemodialysis (CAVH) machines for use by patients at the Royal United hospital. Patients also have access to treatment, on referral, at the Southmead hospital, Bristol.

In West Dorset health authority, patients requiring dialysis outside their home are treated at the renal centre in Portsmouth. From 1 November 1990, West Dorset patients will be able to receive dialysis in a self-care dialysis unit at the Dorset county hospital. This new unit will provide facilities for approximately 12 patients per week, and it is expecting delivery of three Fresanious 1008 haemodialysis machines next week.

Continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) training was set up and became autonomous at the Gloucester Royal hospital in January 1988. This service provides for Gloucester and Cheltenham residents. Some patients have care provided jointly by Oxford and Gloucester. A consultant nephrologist is now in place in Gloucester and plans are in progress for a haemodialysis service for Gloucestershire.

Satanic Rituals

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement in respect of what directives his Department has issued for the diagnosis of child satanic ritual abuse.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Diagnosis is a matter for professional judgment and would not be appropriate for issue of a directive. The Department of Health is considering guidance on the handling of cases with an element of organised or possibly ritual abuse when reissuing "Working Together", a guide to inter-agency co-operation for the protection of children from abuse.

Spinal Cord Injury

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what statistics are kept by his Department on spinal cord injury; if he will consider ways in which the collection of statistics can be improved; and if he will consider making spinal cord injury a notifiable condition.

Mr. Dorrell: Statistics are produced from anonymised hospital records which contain details of diagnosis and treatment. The collection of these statistics is improving with new computer systems for patient administration statistics. There are no plans to make spinal cord injury a notifiable condition because only communicable diseases are notifiable under public health law.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning the Spinal Injuries Association's programme for the prevention of spinal cord injury and on the effectiveness of such a programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department is aware from discussions with the Spinal Injuries Association that it has obtained funding for a three-year period from the Monument Trust for a programme for the prevention of spinal cord injury. We have received no representations concerning this programme.

Chronic Arachnoiditis

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research is being carried out into chronic arachnoiditis; whether he has considered making it a notifiable condition; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The main agency through which the Government support biomedical and clinical research in the United Kingdom is the Medical Research Council (MRC) which receives its grant in aid from the Department of Education and Science. The Medical Research Council is not currently supporting any research specifically into chronic arachnoiditis. The Department has not considered making chronic arachnoiditis a notifiable condition.

Abortions

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of abortions over 12 weeks' gestation performed on women under *(a)* 20, *(b)* 20 to 24, *(c)* 25 to 34 and *(d)* over 34 years of age, resident in the South East Thames regional health authority, and in each constituent district health authority thereof, in each of the years (i) 1985, (ii) 1986, (iii) 1987, (iv) 1988 and (v) 1989, respectively.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Number of abortions over 12 weeks gestation performed on women resident in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority 1985

Place of usual residence	Age of woman				
	Under 20	20-24	25-34	Over 34	Total
South East Thames Regional Health Authority	562	582	386	118	1,648
Brighton District Health Authority	46	46	38	9	139
Eastbourne District Health Authority	26	27	17	12	82
Hastings District Health Authority	26	13	13	2	54
South East Kent District Health Authority	43	32	30	14	119
Canterbury and Thanet District Health Authority	34	31	23	9	97
Dartford and Gravesham District Health Authority	32	16	11	5	64
Maidstone District Health Authority	17	13	8	4	42
Medway District Health Authority	40	33	26	4	103
Tunbridge Wells District Health Authority	28	24	18	5	75
Bexley District Health Authority	31	30	9	3	73
Greenwich District Health Authority	40	31	28	8	107
Bromley District Health Authority	41	26	26	11	104
West Lambeth District Health Authority	43	55	31	9	138
Camberwell District Health Authority	62	126	74	12	274
Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority	53	79	34	11	177

Number of abortions over 12 weeks gestation performed on women resident in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority 1986

Place of usual residence	Age of woman				
	Under 20	20-24	25-34	Over 34	Total
South East Thames Regional Health Authority	556	681	416	117	1,770
Brighton District Health Authority	43	55	28	9	135
Eastbourne District Health Authority	26	13	12	5	56
Hastings District Health Authority	24	24	10	6	64
South East Kent District Health Authority	32	33	26	11	102
Canterbury and Thanet District Health Authority	45	29	23	11	108
Dartford and Gravesham District Health Authority	27	17	13	1	58
Maidstone District Health Authority	12	12	10	5	39
Medway District Health Authority	40	41	13	10	104
Tunbridge Wells District Health Authority	14	13	13	4	44
Bexley District Health Authority	13	28	20	5	66
Greenwich District Health Authority	40	43	32	12	127
Bromley District Health Authority	32	39	27	5	103
West Lambeth District Health Authority	48	83	44	8	183
Camberwell District Health Authority	83	147	74	12	316
Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority	77	104	71	13	265

Number of abortions over 12 weeks gestation performed on women resident in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority 1987

Place of usual residence	Age of woman				
	Under 20	20-24	25-34	Over 34	Total
South East Thames Regional Health Authority	601	722	542	117	1,982
Brighton District Health Authority	54	67	39	7	167
Eastbourne District Health Authority	20	19	16	9	64
Hastings District Health Authority	25	17	16	5	63
South East Kent District Health Authority	34	30	24	5	93
Canterbury and Thanet District Health Authority	44	44	27	12	127
Dartford and Gravesham District Health Authority	37	18	17	3	75
Maidstone District Health Authority	16	12	10	7	45
Medway District Health Authority	47	40	30	9	126
Tunbridge Wells District Health Authority	25	22	15	1	63
Bexley District Health Authority	37	27	15	5	84
Greenwich District Health Authority	40	56	49	9	154
Bromley District Health Authority	26	35	17	5	83
West Lambeth District Health Authority	58	80	74	11	223

Place of usual residence	Age of woman				
	Under 20	20-24	25-34	Over 34	Total
Camberwell District Health Authority	60	118	108	10	296
Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority	78	137	85	19	319

Number of abortions over 12 weeks gestation performed on women resident in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority 1988

Place of usual residence	Age of woman				
	Under 20	20-24	25-34	Over 34	Total
South East Thames Regional Health Authority	701	774	573	146	2,194
Brighton District Health Authority	41	61	36	12	150
Eastbourne District Health Authority	36	24	17	10	87
Hastings District Health Authority	26	16	11	5	58
South East Kent District Health Authority	38	33	15	4	90
Canterbury and Thanet District Health Authority	42	32	27	9	110
Dartford and Gravesham District Health Authority	24	22	14	8	68
Maidstone District Health Authority	27	19	9	7	62
Medway District Health Authority	73	44	40	8	165
Tunbridge Wells District Health Authority	22	18	12	2	54
Bexley District Health Authority	41	37	18	9	105
Greenwich District Health Authority	51	50	38	11	150
Bromley District Health Authority	43	46	24	5	118
West Lambeth District Health Authority	58	111	70	13	252
Camberwell District Health Authority	82	132	119	23	356
Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority	97	129	123	20	369

Number of abortions over 12 weeks gestation performed on women resident in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority 1989

Place of usual residence	Age of woman				
	Under 20	20-24	25-34	Over 34	Total
South East Thames Regional Health Authority	600	694	620	133	2,047
Brighton District Health Authority	38	41	42	9	130
Eastbourne District Health Authority	30	26	26	4	86
Hastings District Health Authority	21	21	16	4	62
South East Kent District Health Authority	24	30	16	7	77
Canterbury and Thanet District Health Authority	46	33	19	13	111
Dartford and Gravesham District Health Authority	27	31	16	5	79
Maidstone District Health Authority	18	19	9	3	49
Medway District Health Authority	68	33	36	13	150
Tunbridge Wells District Health Authority	11	17	15	3	46
Bexley District Health Authority	33	24	23	5	85
Greenwich District Health Authority	45	48	42	4	139
Bromley District Health Authority	31	40	35	7	113
West Lambeth District Health Authority	61	95	87	10	253
Camberwell District Health Authority	87	109	118	27	341
Lewisham and North Southwark District Health Authority	60	127	120	19	326

Deaf-blind People

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has undertaken or sponsored any research into the development of the hand-tapper communication system for deaf-blind people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: No. I understand that this system is being developed by University college, London and that funding has been provided by the Science and Engineering Research Council and by the Nuffield Foundation and the National Deaf-Blind League.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether deaf-blind people are able to get hearing and sight-impaired communication systems through social services.

Mr. Dorrell: Items of equipment for disabled people, including people with a sensory disability, may be provided by health authorities or local authority social services departments. Local authorities have a duty under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to meet the needs of people who, in the opinion of the authority, need an item of equipment to provide for their greater safety, comfort or convenience. Local authorities are empowered to recover all or part of the cost of any equipment they provide. Voluntary organisations also make available a range of specialist equipment for people with a sensory disability.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaf-blind people there are currently residing in long-stay mental handicap hospitals.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what action he intends to take to ensure that professionals working with deaf-blind people receive specialist training;

(2) what steps he intends to take to monitor the response of local social services departments to the social services inspectorate report, "Signposts";

(3) what action he intends to take to encourage local social services departments to implement the recommendations of the social services inspectorate report, "Signposts".

Mr. Dorrell: It is the responsibility of health authorities and local authorities to make arrangements for the

training of professional staff. In 1991-92 the specific grant to local authorities for training social services staff will be extended to include staff who work with people who have physical, sensory or mental handicaps and will be increased to support expenditure of £35·5 million.

The recommendations in the report, "Signposts", were discussed at a seminar with directors of social services in October 1989. The seminar, which was co-hosted by the Department of Health, the Association of Directors of Social Services and a number of voluntary organisations, was aimed at promoting models of good practice in the delivery of services for deaf-blind people.

Local authorities will be expected to include in their community care plans services for people with multiple disabilities, including those with a multiple sensory disability. Such community care plans will be open to public inspection. We expect the social services inspectorate will play an active part in inspecting the plans and monitoring performance.

Camelford Pollution (Research)

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his inquiry under the chairmanship of Dame Barbara Clayton will consider epidemiological evidence from the research carried out by Surrey university funded by the Natural Environment Research Council.

Mr. Dorrell: The Lowermoor incident health advisory group considered evidence from the university of Surrey when originally investigating the Lowermoor incident.

The reconvened group has been asked to advise on any recent studies into the health of the population at Camelford.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department will fund the research into the long-term effects of the pollution of the water supply in Camelford, Cornwall, previously funded by the Natural Environment Research Council.

Mr. Dorrell: I have asked the Lowermoor incident health advisory group to advise me on the recent studies of the health of people in the Camelford area. I will be guided by it on the need, if any, for further research.

Health Visiting, Greenwich

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Woolwich on 29 June, *Official Report*, column *369*, when the nursing officer from his Department visited Greenwich health authority; and who was present at the meeting.

Mr. Dorrell: A nursing officer from the Department visited Greenwich health authority on 13 June and held an informal meeting with the then chief nursing adviser/director of training (acting) and the director of community nursing (acting).

Second Sensory Impairments

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is given to local health authorities to ensure that people who are deaf or blind are adequately monitored for the development of a second sensory impairment.

Mr. Dorrell: The Department of Health does not issue guidance to health authorities on such clinical procedures.

Deaf People (Eye Tests)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will consider allowing free eye tests for deaf people, given the problems of dual sensory impairment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government recognise the vital importance of sight to deaf people, especially where they also have visual problems. All children (including deaf children) are already entitled to free sight tests under the NHS, as are full-time students under 19, people on low incomes, people with exceptionally powerful lenses, diabetics, glaucoma sufferers and their relatives aged over 40, and people referred by their GP to the hospital eye service. These categories were decided on in the light of medical advice.

We shall consider carefully the views on this matter which were recently put to officials by a member of the Social Services Select Committee.

Whittington Hospital

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals he has received to convert the Whittington hospital into a self-governing trust; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I am not aware of any proposals for the Whittington hospital to apply to become an NHS trust.

London Ambulance Service

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the cost of the new central computer at the London ambulance service; to whom the contract was let; and what is its expected period of operation.

Mr. Dorrell: A contract was let in 1987 with International Aeradio Ltd. to provide a computer-aided despatch system, in the sum of £3,293,620. The date for operation was scheduled for January 1991, but this is currently under review.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what load testing has been undertaken on the London ambulance service central control system; when this was done; and if he will publish the results.

Mr. Dorrell: Load tests were undertaken on the central control system on 26 June and 13 September 1990. The results did not meet the standards set down in the user specification in either test. We do not intend to publish the results.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of patients who have been regraded from chair to walking by the London ambulance service in the months of April, May, June, July, August and September.

Mr. Dorrell: No patients have been reclassified from chair to walking. The London ambulance service accepts the classification given by the ordering authority unless the crew finds that a patient requires further assistance and needs to be regraded from walking to chair case. The reverse situation is never applied.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the total number of non-urgent patients whose transport has been cancelled by the London ambulance service per week in June, July, August and September.

Mr. Dorrell: Data are not collected in the form requested but monthly figures for the non-emergency service are available as follows:

	Patient journeys cancelled per month
June	4,197
July	4,329
August	4,825
September	7,372

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the cost of the central ambulance control of the London ambulance service for each year since 1989 in constant terms.

Mr. Dorrell: The available figures are as follows:

	£'000 (cash)
1989-90 outturn	2,569
1990-91 budget	2,823

It is not possible to convert the 1989-90 figures to 1990-91 prices as general inflation outturn for 1990-91 is not yet known.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the total number of non-emergency patients carried by the London ambulance service in *(a)* emergency vehicles, *(b)* taxis, *(c)* non-emergency ambulances and *(d)* the hospital car service for the months of April, May, June, July, August and September.

Mr. Dorrell: The information is as follows:

Patient Journeys	*(a) Emergency ambulance*	*(b) Taxi*	*(c) Non-emergency ambulance*	*(d) Ambulance car service*
April	5,270	6,591	64,039	13,894
May	5,463	10,929	71,939	14,020
June	4,302	11,611	72,077	14,892
July	4,615	12,285	74,070	14,097
August	5,101	9,728	67,415	13,549
September	4,887	10,559	61,071	14,785

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what involvement the National Audit Office has had in the installation and funding of the London ambulance service central control computer.

Mr. Dorrell: The National Audit Office has had no involvement in the installation and funding of the London ambulance service central control computer.

Legionella

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will institute a study into the dangers to employee and public health arising from legionella in power station cooling towers.

Mr. Dorrell: Legionella bacteria are naturally occurring organisms widely distributed in the environment and from time to time are known to exist in power station cooling towers. There have however been no documented outbreaks anywhere in the world of legionnaire's disease among employees or the general public, associated with large natural updraft cooling towers such as those used in power stations. Neither has the public health laboratory service found any such association in its outbreak investigations. Research is under way to determine whether or not the absence of any outbreaks of legionnaire's disease can be attributed to the relative isolation of power station cooling towers; or whether some design feature of these towers renders them unable or less likely to disperse legionella in an aerosol form that can be ingested and cause legionnaire's disease. The Department is keeping in close touch with this research.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether those hospitals, units or whole health districts which are granted self-governing trust status will be eligible for regional health authority development funds.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. NHS trusts will receive funding through contracts for the services they provide. In addition they will be able to borrow within external financing limits, which will be set for each trust annually.

Electoral Statistics

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will arrange for the numbers of registered overseas voters in each parliamentary constituency to be published in the 1991 edition of the electoral statistics to be produced by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

Mr. Dorrell: These statistics will be included by the OPCS in "Electoral Statistics 1991" (series EL No. 18) to be published next year, a copy of which will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of people on the electoral roll for England and Wales in 1989 and 1990.

Mr. Dorrell: The total numbers of parliamentary electors on registers in England and Wales in 1989 and 1990 were 38,560,541 and 38,596,117 respectively. Corresponding figures for each constituency have been published by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in "Electoral Statistics 1990" (series EL No. 17), a copy of which is in the Library.

NHS Campaigns

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the national health service spent in the last year for which figures are available on marketing (i) the national health service itself, (ii) health education campaigns, (iii) healthy eating campaigns and (iv) AIDS campaigns.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Expenditure figures for 1989-90 on public information campaigns, in the four areas requested, run by the Department are as follows:

	£ million
National Health Service	0·356
Health Education (Drug Misuse)	3·808
Healthy Eating (Food Hygiene)	0·373
AIDS	1·493

The Department also funds the Health Education Authority whose total expenditure in 1989-90 was just

over £27 million. A large proportion of this money was spent on healthy eating and AIDS health education campaigns.

Health authorities have to date reported spending of over £13·25 million in 1989-90 on local HIV prevention initiatives. They also ran other local health education campaigns, but the financial details of these are not held centrally.

Psychiatric Services

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what sum is currently transferred from Mersey region to Wirral for psychiatric services; and if this sum could be divided between acute services and community support services.

Mr. Dorrell: We do not hold this information centrally. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the Mersey regional health authority.

Ondansetron

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether all patients receiving chemotherapy cancer treatment at a self-governing trust hospital or a directly managed hospital will have the drug Ondansetron available to them if it is prescribed by the senior medical doctor in charge of their treatment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Ondansetron is available for prescription by doctors throughout the national health service for the treatment of nausea and vomiting in patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy for cancer. Some hospitals, however, have drawn up formularies of preferred treatments for many conditions from which the doctors involved would usually prescribe.

HIV

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much is planned to be spent in the HIV budget in the Wirral during the current year.

Mr. Dorrell: Of the £3,602,000 allocated this year to Mersey regional health authority for HIV-related services, I understand that the region has allocated £269,000 to the Wirral health authority.

Hull Health Authority

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the length of the waiting list of orthopaedic operations by hospital in the Hull health authority area; and what is the number of patients awaiting treatment.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* Information about the number of patients on hospital waiting lists is collected according to the specialty in which treatment will be given and not by the diagnosis or type of operation. The information is available centrally only in terms of the district of treatment, not individual hospitals.

The number of patients waiting more than a year in trauma and orthopaedics in Hull district health authority has fallen from 343 in March 1979 to 51 in March 1990. In addition, the number of patients treated in this specialty in this district has risen by 35 per cent. between 1979 and 1990 from 2,300 to 3,100. The total waiting list reduced over the same period, from 874 to 452. The total number waiting in March 1990 therefore represented on average only eight weeks' work in hand, compared with the 20 weeks' work represented by the total list in March 1979.

School Milk

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will make it his policy to provide immediate repayment of moneys spent on the provision of milk for the under-fives for individual schools and nursery units that qualify for free milk under the Welfare Food Regulations 1988; and if this provision is made for private nurseries.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The Welfare Food Regulations 1988 allow for the provision of free milk for the under-fives in registered day nurseries, local education authority day nurseries and schools, or those in the care of registered child minders. Repayment for the milk provided is made as soon as practicable following the receipt of an application under the regulations.

The provision covers all registered private nurseries.

DEFENCE

European Fighter Aircraft

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the future of EFA.

Mr. Alan Clark: The United Kingdom remains committed to the EFA programme. There will be a continuing need to ensure the future air defence of the United Kingdom and British forces wherever they may be located.

Armed Services (Discipline)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he intends to review the disciplinary arrangements for members of the armed services.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Such a review has already been carried out in preparation for anticipated legislation on this subject in the forthcoming Session.

Middle East

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, during his recent meeting with the United States Defence Secretary in London, he discussed the deployment of chemical and nuclear weapons in the middle east.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend discussed a range of current defence issues when he met Mr. Cheney on 15 October.

Kuwait Invasion

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the additional daily cost per vessel incurred by the extended stationing of Royal Navy ships in the Persian Gulf and/or the Indian Ocean in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Costs are not collected in this way.

Fuel Air Explosives

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what stocks of fuel air explosives are held by United Kingdom armed forces; and what research is currently being undertaken on such explosives in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom does not hold stocks of fuel air explosives. It is not the practice to provide information on detailed aspects of our research programme.

Arms Sales Conference

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department has received an invitation to attend or participate in the day-school colloquium "Future of International Arms Sales", organised by the Trust for Research and Education on the Arms Trade, to be held in Liverpool on 17 November.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will institute an inquiry into the long-term health effects of radiation doses received by civilian fitters who worked on the refit of the nuclear reactors in the Royal Navy submarines HMS Renown, HMS Dreadnought, HMS Churchill and HMS Warspite.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I see no need for such an inquiry. I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 19 October, *Official Report*, column *964*.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of the refit of HMS Churchill and on her future deployment.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: My right hon. Friend announced in his statement on 25 July 1990 that the Royal Navy would maintain 16 submarines in the longer term, of which around three quarters would be nuclear powered. Following this announcement, the Government have decided to decommission a number of older nuclear-powered submarines, including HMS Churchill. Work on Churchill's refit has therefore stopped.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will institute an inquiry into the levels of radiation exposure received by civilian refit workers in the reactor room of HMS Renown in the early 1970s.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I see no need to institute such an inquiry. In all submarine refits individual exposure levels have been controlled in accordance with MOD and statutory instructions.

Royal Ordnance Factory, Chorley

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the cause and consequences of the explosion at the royal ordnance ammunition factory at Chorley on 13 October.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: This is not a matter for the Ministry of Defence.

Arms Sales

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will obtain a copy for his departmental library of the videocassette and transcript of the BBC2 television programme, "Death on Delivery" on arms sales, broadcast in the "Open Space" series on 3 July.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role the Defence Export Services Organisation has played in the sale of weaponry and military equipment to Iraq since May 1979.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Defence Export Services Organisation, in all its assistance to industry, has scrupulously followed Government policy as it has developed in relation to military sales to Iraq. Prior to September 1980 all potential exports to Iraq were considered on a case-by-case basis. In September 1980, at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq conflict, all exports of lethal equipment to Iraq were prohibited. This prohibition was further developed in the guidelines announced on 29 October 1985, *Official Report*, column *450*. In conformity with the United Nations resolution, all exports to Iraq, except for some medical and humanitarian exports, are now banned.

Submarine Patrols

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any Royal Navy submarines or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation submarines were on patrol off the Aberdeenshire coast on 4 October.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I assume that the hon. Lady is referring to an incident on 4 October involving the fishing vessel Moray Adventurer. No United Kingdom or NATO submarines were in the vicinity at the time of the incident.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps are taken by his Department to advise coastguards, fishermen and harbour-masters of patrols by Royal Navy or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation submarines in fishing waters off the coast of Scotland; and if he will make a statement on the efficiency of such communications.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: For security reasons details of individual submarine movements are not disclosed. The more usual areas in which submarines exercise in United Kingdom waters are, however, clearly marked on Admiralty charts.

Submarines (Fishing Nets)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents have been recorded by his Department of the snagging of nets of fishing vessels by Royal Navy or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation submarines in each of the past five years giving the location of such incidents.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested is as follows:

Date	*Vessel*	*Location*
18 February 1987	Summer Mourne	Irish Sea
26 September 1987	Heroine	North Channel
6 December 1987	Prevail	North Channel

Date	Vessel	Location
27 October 1988	Brilliant Star	Sound of Bute
3 December 1988	Mount Eden	North West of Mallin Head
17 April 1989	Laurel	Irish Sea
28 June 1989	Huntress	Firth of Clyde
12 September 1989	Contestor	Irish Sea
13 November 1989	Scotia	Butt of Lewis

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if scientists from (i) the atomic weapons establishments, (ii) the Blacknest verification centre or (iii) his Department have *(a)* been given access by the United States Government or weapons development laboratories to data arising from United States nuclear tests in Nevada and *(b)* been permitted to be present to monitor United States nuclear tests since 1979.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Under the 1958 agreement between the United Kingdom and the United States for co-operation in the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes, such information may be exchanged and joint experiments may be conducted. United Kingdom scientists may be present at the nuclear test site in connection with joint United Kingdom/United States tests for periods of several months.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out in the *Official Report* the proportion of overall costs of the United Kingdom nuclear testing programme that is made up by *(a)* research, design and development, *(b)* nuclear testing and *(c)* deployment and storage.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It would not be in the national interest to reveal such details of the United Kingdom's nuclear testing programme.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of nuclear warhead tests conducted by or on behalf of the United Kingdom in Nevada since 1979 were undertaken to check the safety and reliability of the warheads.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Such tests are carried out in order to maintain the effectiveness of the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons capability and it is not our practice to comment on specific aspects.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the total radioactive inventory that has been vented to the atmosphere from United Kingdom nuclear explosive tests conducted underground at the Nevada test site since 1963; and whether his Department has conducted any survey on the potential adverse health effects posed by such releases of airborne radioactivity.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The total radioactive inventory released from United Kingdom underground tests at the Nevada test site amounts to less than 100 Curies—3·7 terabecquerels—and consisted of short-lived gaseous isotopes. No releases were of any health or environmental consequence on site or off site.

Cambodia

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, further to his answer of 18 October, *Official Report*, column *923*, if he will indicate details of the recent exchanges between officials of his Department and Messrs de Normann and Mackenzie Geidt.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The exchanges between officials of my Department and Messrs de Normann and Mackenzie Geidt that followed the Central TV programme "Cambodia—The Betrayal" shown on 9 October related to their concern about allegations made in the media about them and the Ministry of Defence.

Smoke and Noise Emissions

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how he intends to ensure that the emission of smoke and noise on defence property that might cause a public nuisance will be kept to the minimum necessary to protect the national interest.

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how he intends to ensure that the emission of smoke and noise on defence property that might cause a public nuisance will be kept to the minimum necessary to protect the national interest.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The policy of my Department is to act at all times in an environmentally responsible manner. However, essential activities, such as military training and research, unavoidably result in the emission of smoke and noise, in consequence of which an amendment has been made to the Environmental Protection Bill to exempt such nuisances which occur on defence premises. It is intended that the nuisance caused by smoke and noise will be kept to a minimum and I have placed in the Library a policy statement to this effect which is being circulated within the Department and to visiting forces.

Community Charge

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the percentage of service personnel in service accommodation in Britain who are liable for community charges *(a)* below and *(b)* above the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The totals were *(a)* 48·2 per cent. and *(b)* 51·8 per cent.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the percentage of service personnel in service accommodation in Britain who will be responsible for community charges above the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement, but are not eligible for reimbursement of accommodation charges.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* A total of 33·2 per cent. in 1990-91.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the percentage of service personnel in service

accommodation in Britain who will be responsible for community charges above the average, as calculated for the purposes of reimbursement, and will be eligible for reimbursement of accommodation charges.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* A total of 18·7 per cent. in 1990-91.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 30 October 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Grant-maintained Schools

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what estimate he has made of the cost of increasing by 50 per cent. the formula allocation made to grant-maintained schools for equipment and small-scale capital projects for the year 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend announced on 10 October that the formula allocation paid to grant-maintained schools for equipment and small-scale capital projects would be increased by 50 per cent. for the financial year 1991-92. The cost of this increase in 1991-92 for existing grant-maintained schools and schools approved so far for incorporation as grant-maintained schools by April 1991 is £430,000. There are no additional costs in 1990-91.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the cost to date of the grant-maintained schools programme.

Mr. Eggar: The cost of the grant-maintained schools programme up to the end of the 1989-90 financial year was £3·5 million. Of this, £2 million was spent on meeting the cost of inherited capital commitments. The £3·5 million does not include annual maintenance grant payments to schools which were recouped in full from local education authorities.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what estimate he has made of the cost of increasing by 50 per cent. the annual amount of specific grant paid to grant-maintained schools for the year 1990-91 and 1991-92.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend announced on 10 October that the annual amount of specific grant paid to grant-maintained schools would increase by an average of £10,000 for the financial year 1991-92, a 50 per cent. increase on current plans. This specific grant supports staff development and other preparation for implementing the national curriculum and assessment arrangements. The cost of this increase in 1991-92 for existing grant-maintained schools and schools approved so far for incorporation as grant-maintained schools by April 1991 is £530,000. There are no additional costs in 1990-91.

Nursery Education

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the latest figures, in ranked order, for the percentage of under-fives in nursery schools, nursery classes and primary classes by local education authority in England and Wales.

Mr. Eggar: The percentage of children under five attending maintained nursery schools, nursery classes and infant classes and infant classes in primary schools in each local education authority in England in January 1989 in rank order is given in the following table. Similar information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Percentage of under fives in maintained nursery and primary schools in rank order in each local education authority—January 1989

	All under fives	*Nursery schools*	*Nursery classes*	*Primary classes*
Walsall	91·2	11·1	48·2	32·0
Salford	83·6	14·2	38·2	31·3
South Tyneside	81·0	18·2	31·5	31·3
North Tyneside	80·3	5·6	44·5	30·5
Liverpool	79·9	4·3	43·4	32·3
Sandwell	77·4	2·6	43·4	31·5
Cleveland	74·4	1·0	54·3	19·1
Tameside	71·7	5·5	34·6	31·5
Doncaster[2]	71·2	0·0	39·6	31·6
Newcastle upon Tyne	70·7	9·6	31·1	30·1
Wakefield	70·7	6·0	43·1	21·6
Manchester	70·6	4·1	50·9	15·6
Wolverhampton	70·0	11·7	43·4	14·9
Oldham[2]	69·9	0·0	36·2	33·7
Knowsley[2]	69·2	0·0	40·9	28·4
Durham	68·7	16·6	22·3	29·8
Gateshead	66·9	1·3	32·8	32·8
Barking[2]	65·8	0·0	33·3	32·5
Merton[2]	65·1	0·0	43·2	22·0
Ealing	64·3	6·9	30·4	27·0
Hounslow[2]	64·1	0·0	63·1	1·0
Sefton	63·8	4·5	26·7	32·6
Calderdale[2]	63·4	0·0	29·1	34·4
Birmingham	63·4	7·8	24·2	31·4
Bolton	63·2	6·1	28·8	28·4
Barnsley	63·0	3·0	43·5	16·4
Sunderland	61·8	10·9	22·3	28·6
Rochdale	61·4	15·4	15·5	30·6
Solihull[2]	61·0	0·0	29·9	31·1
Brent	60·8	3·8	29·6	27·5
Sheffield	60·8	6·0	36·0	18·8
Wigan	59·9	2·2	24·5	33·2
St. Helens	59·7	1·5	29·1	29·1
Kingston upon Thames	59·2	8·2	22·3	28·7
Haringey	59·0	3·1	31·5	24·4
Newham	58·4	13·5	44·8	0·0
Leeds	58·1	1·3	35·5	21·4
Derbyshire	56·0	5·5	27·9	22·7
Bradford	55·6	3·5	32·8	19·4
Kirklees	55·4	5·6	31·2	18·6
Northumberland	54·2	1·8	24·0	28·3
Rotherham	53·9	5·1	34·4	14·5
Nottinghamshire	53·9	2·3	45·0	6·5
Bury	53·8	3·3	21·6	28·9
Humberside	53·5	4·4	29·1	20·1
Cumbria	52·8	6·6	14·3	31·8
Barnet	52·3	6·4	22·4	23·6
Cheshire	52·2	3·4	17·4	31·4
Hillingdon	51·5	2·0	45·9	3·6
Coventry	51·4	4·9	17·2	29·3
Northamptonshire	51·3	3·9	15·1	32·3
Waltham Forest	49·9	5·3	33·0	11·7
Wirral	49·8	3·2	17·5	29·0
Inner London	48·7	6·8	29·4	12·5
Lancashire	48·6	9·1	7·9	31·6
Enfield[2]	48·4	0·0	20·0	28·3
Warwickshire	48·0	6·3	10·8	30·9
Hertfordshire	47·1	6·5	23·5	17·1
Harrow[2]	46·8	0·0	16·6	30·1
Avon	46·4	6·3	9·3	30·8
Dudley	45·3	3·9	28·1	13·3
Stockport	43·7	10·0	5·1	28·7
North Yorkshire	43·7	2·2	16·5	25·0
Staffordshire	43·5	7·1	14·9	21·5
Cornwall[1]	43·0	0·9	12·9	29·1
Cambridgeshire	41·7	3·9	8·0	29·8
Havering[2]	39·0	0·0	4·5	34·5
Richmond upon Thames	37·4	1·8	17·6	18·1

	All under fives	Nursery schools	Nursery classes	Primary classes
Leicestershire	36·5	0·2	21·3	15·0
East Sussex	36·1	2·0	5·2	28·9
Isle of Wight[2]	35·4	0·0	4·9	30·5
Dorset[2]	35·0	0·0	5·6	29·4
Bedfordshire	34·9	8·3	21·8	4·8
Somerset[2]	34·7	0·0	0·9	33·8
Shropshire	32·6	1·6	10·5	20·5
Croydon	32·5	4·6	2·0	25·8
Gloucestershire[3]	30·6	0·0	0·0	30·6
Lincolnshire	30·5	2·2	5·7	22·5
Suffolk	30·2	0·6	14·7	14·9
Norfolk	29·2	2·3	2·4	24·5
Sutton	25·7	6·0	19·1	0·6
Devon	25·4	1·1	9·2	15·1
Trafford[2]	25·4	0·0	18·0	7·5
Berkshire	25·0	9·5	14·4	1·2
Redbridge[2]	24·8	0·0	10·9	13·9
Bexley	24·1	2·9	10·9	10·3
Surrey	23·1	1·7	9·5	11·9
Essex	21·5	0·7	5·4	15·4
Hampshire	19·6	0·7	4·2	14·7
Wiltshire[2]	18·4	0·0	2·2	16·2
Buckinghamshire	18·3	3·0	7·4	7·9
Oxfordshire	17·8	5·0	9·1	3·7
Hereford and Worcester[2]	15·7	0·0	6·2	9·5
Bromley[2]	15·1	0·0	1·8	13·3
Kent	12·8	0·2	4·7	7·8
West Sussex	9·1	3·0	0·6	5·4
England	44·8	4·1	20·1	20·6

[1] Includes Isles of Scilly.
[2] Have no nursery schools.
[3] Have no nursery schools or nursery classes.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Odette Churchill

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-General how many applications have been received under the Public Records Act 1958 for access to information relating to the activities of Odette Churchill in the second world war; and how many have been refused.

The Attorney-General: Requests for access to information from records that are not open to public inspection are the responsibility of individual Departments. I understand that no information is available about the number of applications that have been made for information relating to Odette Churchill's wartime activities.

WALES

Community Care

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the programme he intends to follow in providing additional finances to voluntary bodies other than housing associations in Wales *(a)* in the present financial year, *(b)* in the 1991-92 financial year and *(c)* in subsequent financial years in order to ensure adequate availability of appropriate housing to match the requirements of his programme for the implementation of care in the community.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on Monday 29 October, c. *360*.

Schools (Surplus Places)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy towards surplus places in schools.

Sir Wyn Roberts: This is set out in Welsh Office circular 20/88, entitled "Educational Quality in Wales: The Response to Falling School Rolls", a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all the planning appeals he has decided for west Swansea since he became Secretary of State; and in which he found in favour of the developer.

Mr. Grist: The information is shown in the following table:

Reference Number	Name and address	Development	Decision
P84/1824	Yeartripple Ltd., Rear of 15 Maliphant Street, Hafod	Commercial Garage and Store	Dismissed
P84/1826	Hakbori and Maghsuoi, 608 Mumbles Road, Swansea	Change of use to Restaurant and Takeaway	Allowed
P84/1831	Mr. A. Evans, Rear of 28 Wimmerfield Crescent, Killay	Single dwelling	Dismissed
P84/1836A	Messrs. SRN Homes Ltd., Whitegates Nursing Home, Mayals Road, Mayals	Extension to Nursing Home	Allowed
P84/1877	Gower Road Developments, Rear of 683, 685 and 687 Gower Road, Upper Killay	Three Houses	Dismissed

Schools (Surplus Places)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy for providing funds for the construction of new schools in areas with surplus places in existing schools.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Most Government financial resources, including educational resources, made available to local authorities are distributed by means of a formula and are not hypothecated to particular services or schemes. It is for local education authorities to determine their needs for new schools, taking account of published policy on the reduction of surplus places, and to decide how these needs can best be met within the resources available to them.

PRIME MINISTER

South Hams

Q23. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make an official visit to South Hams.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Textile Factories

Q65. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to a textile factory.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Territorial Claims

Q155. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Prime Minister what steps she has taken to encourage signatories to the treaty of Rome and the Helsinki agreement to disavow territorial claims over their co-signatories.

The Prime Minister: None. No machinery has been established for considering such questions under the Helsinki final act. The European Communities have no competence in this area.

Food Mountains

Q162. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the issue of the size of food mountains in the EEC.

The Prime Minister: Decisions on what issues to raise at the next European Council in December will best be made nearer the time. At the meeting on 27-28 October I emphasised to my colleagues the importance of the Community playing a more constructive part in the current GATT negotiations over reducing support for agriculture.

Scottish Fishing Industry

Q168. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will establish a Government inquiry into the financial prospects of the Scottish fishing industry.

The Prime Minister: No. The industry's earnings this year have increased, despite reduced volumes of fish being landed.

Funding of the Heritage

Q194. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will meet lobbyists to Parliament from IPMS and other trade unions to discuss the funding of the heritage, on 31 October.

The Prime Minister: I am advised that the meeting has been cancelled. My right honourable Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment set out the Government's approach to the preservation and enhancement of our heritage in the White Paper "This Common Inheritance" (Cm. 1200).

Tanks (Spare Parts)

Q241. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has had on the availability of desert-related spare parts for tanks and armoured vehicles to the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards in the middle east.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of any such representations. Sufficient spare parts and major assemblies are available to meet anticipated requirements.

Engagements

Mr. Adley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 30 October.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an Audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Coastal Defences

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what additional resources are being provided by his Department to help improve Britain's coastal defences.

Mr. Curry: Increased funding for coast and tidal defence works was announced following the 1988 and 1989 public expenditure surveys. By 1992-93 the provision for this work will have increased to £43 million compared with £33 million in the current financial year. The grant supplement paid on sea and tidal defence work was also increased in the last survey from 15 to 20 per cent. In addition, in response to the storms of last winter, increased supplementary credit approval of £2·3 million is to be made available for local authority schemes during the remainder of the current financial year.

Varroa Treatment

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures are being taken by his Ministry to approve treatments of varroa for use in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maclean: Any company wishing to seek approval to market a suitable treatment can apply to the veterinary medicines directorate at Weybridge for a product licence under Medicines Act procedures.

Horses (Export)

Mr. Moate: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are his latest proposals in the European Economic Community negotiations on the question of the export of live horses from the United Kingdom for slaughter and consumption on the continent; if it is still his policy that this trade will not be permitted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: There have been no recent negotiations in the Community on this subject. It remains firm Government policy to press for the retention of controls designed to prevent the export of live horses for slaughter.

Departmental Reorganisation

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what organisations and sections within his Department presently housed in London are being considered for dispersal to provincial areas.

Mr. Curry: My right hon. Friend and I are currently considering relocating some of the Department's headquarters functions away from London. The areas under consideration include work on pesticides and plant health, some of our statistical services and sections of our personnel, management and common services.

Intervention Products

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields of 25 October, about products released from intervention, if he will list the countries which bought the produce listed and the quantities in each case.

Mr. Gummer: Exporters who take products from intervention are not required to sell to particular countries but are free to find markets outside the European Community. Community arrangements allow exporters up to one year to supply proof of export. Consequently, information about the destinations of the products released from intervention in the 12 months to 30 September 1990 is not available.

Research and Development

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to restructure his priorities board for research and development.

Mr. Gummer: The membership of the priorities board for research and development in agriculture and food was expanded in June this year to include two more independent members. It now comprises an independent chairman, six independent members, MAFF's chief scientific adviser, a DAFS scientific adviser and the secretary to the AFRC. The full membership of the board is as follows:—

Dr. N. Brian Smith CBE
Professor T. L. Blundell FRS (with effect from 1 January 1991)
Mr. S. G. Metcalfe
Mr. J. G. Rymer
Dr. P. J. Bunyan FRSC
Dr. T. W. Hegarty
Mr. I. Howie FBIM
Mr. G. E. G. Harvey
Professor C. J. Leaver FRS
Mrs. B. M. Kelly

With the exception of the chairman, each independent board member chairs one of six advisory sectoral groups (ASGs). These provide the board with support and advice on what R and D is being sponsored within Government and industry. They have replaced the 18 occasional research consultative committees which previously reported to the board. The ASGs cover:

Ruminants
Monogastric Animals
Arable Crops
Horticulture
Food
Environment

and bring together representatives from the main funding bodies of R and D from Government and industry in each sector.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has published his response to the food safety and applied nutrition research consultative committee report to the priorities board of November 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The priorities board for R and D in agriculture and food took account of the food safety and applied nutrition research consultative committee report in preparing its 1990 report to agriculture Ministers and the chairman of the AFRC. The board's advice was accepted and is being implemented.

Food Imports

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he intends to take to stop the dumping of foodstuffs from eastern Europe at uneconomic prices in European Community countries via eastern Germany.

Mr. Curry: Foodstuffs imported duty-free into East Germany from eastern Europe during the transitional period following German unification must not exceed traditional trade flows and may be used only on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic. The Commission's "end-use relief" system of control is designed to ensure that these products do not leak into the rest of the EC. It requires permits specifying the "end use" of a product to be issued on import and allows customs authorities to make the necessary checks during processing and trading to monitor stated "end uses". Any other foodstuffs entering East Germany will be subject to normal Community duties and levies.

Agri-chemicals

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the prices of agri-chemicals in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Curry: No. Pricing is a matter for the market to determine.

Liming Grants

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek powers to reinstate grants for liming land.

Mr. Curry: Farmers taking out improvement plans under the Farm and Conservation Grant Regulations are already eligible for grant aid towards the cost of liming land where this is part of a programme of reseeding and regeneration. In the less-favoured areas lime treatment alone is eligible for grant where it can be demonstrated to be genuine restoration and not routine treatment. I have no plans to extend the grant aid to application of lime in other circumstances.

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give a regional breakdown in percentage terms of the number of the unemployed in each region who have been out of work for over one year on the most recently available figures.

Mr. Jackson: The information is available in the Library. Unemployment figures by duration are produced quarterly. The table shows the percentage of unemployed claimants who have been unemployed for 12 months or more for each region in July 1990, the latest available date.

Region	[1] *Percentage*
South East (excluding Greater London)	19·4
East Anglia	21·1
Greater London	28·9
South West	23·2
West Midlands	32·8
East Midlands	27·8
Yorkshire and Humberside	32·2
North West	35·7
Northern	34·0
Wales	27·7
Scotland	35·8
Northern Ireland	51·3
United Kingdom	31·6

[1] Percentage of unemployed claimants who have been unemployed for 12 months or more in each region.

Mr. Lee: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the five travel-to-work areas with the highest percentage of employment in manufacturing and their respective figures.

Mr. Jackson: The most recent estimates of employment in travel-to-work areas are taken from the September 1987 census of employment. They cover employees in employment and exclude the self-employed. The five travel-to-work areas with the highest percentage of employment in manufacturing industry were:

	[1] *Percentage*
Haverill	56·0
Pendle	55·4
Barrow-in-Furness	54·6
Hawick	53·6
Accrington and Rossendale	48·9

[1] Employees in Divisions 2 to 4 of the Standard Industrial Classification 1980, as a percentage of all employees in the travel-to-work area.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many were employed in the *(a)* agricultural industry, *(b)* coal mining industry, *(c)* shipbuilding and ship-repair industries and *(d)* the steel industry as at June of 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Jackson: The information is given in the table:

Employees in employment Great Britain

Thousands

Industries (SIC 1980)	*June 1988*	*June 1989*
Agriculture and horticulture (Class 01)	276·4	262·5
Coal extraction and solid fuels (Group 111)	121·0	101·8
Iron and steel (Group 221)	45·7	36·2
Shipbuilding and ship repairing (Group 361)	52·8	43·7

Small Businesses

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to retain the training and enterprise council structure to enable small businesses to have a say in their local organisations.

Mr. Jackson: Training and enterprise councils are required to include at least one executive on their board who has first-hand experience of running a small business.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to aid the establishment of small firm investment companies to provide equity and loan licensing for small businesses.

Mr. Forth: I have at present no plans to do so. I am, however, always ready to consider suggestions for new ways of helping small firms if there is clear evidence of a gap in market provision.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to establish an industrial development advisory service to provide advice and assistance to small firms and the self-employed.

Mr. Forth: Last year my Department's small firms service provided 50,000 counselling sessions for small firms and answered over 300,000 inquiries. Responsibility for small firms advice is, of course, being transferred to the emerging network of training and enterprise councils. In the training and enterprise council area that encompasses Southport the corporate and business plans are still under development. It is recognised locally that a full and comprehensive service to the small business sector will be necessary.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on investigations into the explosion and fire that occurred recently during construction of the channel tunnel.

Mr. Forth: Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive are still investigating the circumstances of the fire at the channel tunnel site on 22 September.

Textiles and Clothing

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many jobs have been lost in the textile and clothing industries in each of the last 12 months.

Mr. Jackson *[pursuant to his reply, 24 October 1990, c. 240]:* I regret that my reply of 24 October 1990 contained two incorrect figures. The correct information is set out hereafter.

Employers in textile and clothing industries
Textiles and clothing excluding footwear
(Great Britain)

	Net monthly change (thousands)
1989	
August	5·8
September	0·2
October	−1·1

	Net monthly change (thousands)
November	1·1
December	−3·2
1990	
January	−0·6
February	−5·9
March	−0·5
April	−0·8
May	−0·3
June	−0·7
July	1·4
August	−0·8

Deaf-blind People

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consideration he has given to the employment and training needs of deaf-blind people.

Mr. Jackson *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* My Department provides a service for all people with disabilities treating each as an individual and identifying the most appropriate action. People who are deaf-blind can use the full range of Employment Department services available to anyone with a disability including those services offered by the network of employment rehabilitation centres and ASSET centres. Through them we have been able to refer some deaf-blind people for specialist help through the close links maintained with organisations such as RNIB and SENSE. As outlined in the consultative document, "Employment and Training for People with Disabilities", we are intending to expand access to specialist help further by increasingly providing employment rehabilitation through agents such as voluntary bodies. We are also intending to strengthen the training given to disablement resettlement officers and the disablement advisory service with a view to providing a more professional and effective service.

In training we try to encourage integrated provision although there is specialist help available mainly through the residential providers which cater for the particular needs of deaf-blind trainees. Training and enterprise councils now have responsibility for co-ordinating training locally and they will address the particular needs of their local community which may include developing provision for deaf-blind trainees.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether hearing and sight impaired communication equipment is available to deaf-blind people through the disablement advisory service.

Mr. Jackson *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Questions on operational matters in the Employment Service executive agency are the responsibility of Mike Fogden, the Agency's chief executive, to whom I have referred this question for reply.

Footwear and Textile Industries

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the numbers of those employed in the footwear and textile industries per month, by industry, using the latest figures available, since April 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* The numbers of employees in the footwear and textile industries are supplied in the table:

Employees in footwear and textile industries (Standard Industrial Classification 1980) Great Britain

Thousands

	Footwear SIC Group 451	Textiles SIC Class 43
1990		
April	44·7	208·6
May	44·0	207·7
June	44·6	207·1
July	44·9	207·7
August	45·0	207·2

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Investigations

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the results or progress of any investigations into *(a)* Caird Development Ltd. and *(b)* Cleveland Fuels Ltd. in respect of recent acquisitions or any other matters.

Mr. Redwood: I cannot discuss the affairs of individual companies.

Supervisory Bodies

222. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will be seeking any assurances on democracy and openness from the organisations applying for supervisory body status under the Companies Act 1989.

Mr. Redwood: In general these are matters to be determined by the constitution of the body and by its membership. However, under the Companies Act 1989 the Secretary of State can recognise a supervisory body only if it appears to him that its rules and practices relating to membership, eligibility as a company auditor and discipline are fair and reasonable and include adequate provision for appeals.

Company Legislation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to exempt any auditing firms from the monitoring and compliance rules in accordance with schedule 11 (10) of Companies Act 1989.

Mr. Redwood: Under paragraph 10 of schedule 11 of the Companies Act 1989 anybody seeking recognition as a supervisory body under part II of the Act must have adequate arrangements and resources for the effective monitoring and enforcement of compliance with its rules. The Secretary of State must be satisfied that an applicant's proposals meet this requirement before he can recognise the body.

Accountancy Profession

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will provide a list of the disciplinary cases he has asked the accountancy profession to investigate.

Mr. Redwood: Since 1988 my Department has referred 15 cases where members' conduct was thought to warrant consideration by their professional body.

Audit Policy

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to require that before any organisation is granted supervisory status in audit or accountancy, its rules should include disclosure of partners' fees, and partnership donations for political or charitable purposes.

Mr. Redwood: The Secretary of State has no power to refuse recognition on these grounds.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations his Department has made in the years 1989 and 1990 to *(a)* CCAB Ltd. and *(b)* the Auditing Practices Committee; what topics those representations covered; and whether he will place the text of all such representations in the Library.

Mr. Redwood: My Department discusses matters of concern as necessary with representatives of the CCAB. It also participates fully in the work of the Auditing Practices Committee through its non-voting membership of the committee, and it comments on the committee's exposure drafts. Copies of responses to exposure drafts are available in the libraries of the CCAB bodies, and I have placed in the Library a copy of the Department's written comments made since January last year.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his policy on any organisation granted supervisory status in audit or accountancy having rules to prevent auditors from having the beneficial ownership of shares in the companies they audit.

Mr. Redwood: Under the Companies Act 1989, the Secretary of State cannot recognise a supervisory body unless it appears to him to have adequate rules and practices in respect of professional integrity and independence.

Accounting Standards Board

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what indications he now has as to the work programme of the Accounting Standards Board.

Mr. Redwood: As has been indicated in its public bulletins, the Accounting Standards Board has adopted the statements of standard accounting practice extant at 1 August, formulated a policy on statements of recommended accounting practice, and dealt with a number of procedural matters. It is currently engaged in consideration of a number of basic issues of principle as a precursor to work on individual accounting standards.

Company Accounts

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek to ensure that all employees of public limited companies receive a short version of the companies' accounts and a notice telling them where the long version may be consulted.

Mr. Redwood: No. It is for companies to decide how best to communicate with those of its employees who are not shareholders in the company.

Company Management

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in how many public limited liability companies the position of chairperson and chief executive are combined.

Mr. Redwood: This information is not available from Government sources. Information relating to appointments in individual companies is, however, open to public inspection at Companies house.

Import Penetration

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to reduce import penetration.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department's policies aim to foster the competitiveness of British industry.

Brewing Industry

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the Director General of Fair Trading to discuss the developing structure of the brewing industry.

Mr. Redwood: I met the Director General of Fair Trading on 22 August to discuss a wide variety of competition issues. My Department keeps in close touch with the Office of Fair Trading, which is monitoring developments in the brewing industry in the light of the 1989 MMC report on the supply of beer.

Regional Assistance

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish in the *Official Report* the amount of regional preferential assistance paid to each standard region of England, Scotland and Wales in each year from 1978-79 to the most recent available date in *(a)* cash and *(b)* constant prices and with an annual index.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The requested information with regard to regional preferential assistance from 1978-79 to the most recent year is as follows:

Table 1
Government expenditure on regional preferential assistance to industry at current prices[1]

£ million

Region	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Northern	158·9	147·8	145·4	176·6	158·5	129·0	122·6	94·6	136·4	109·2	133·7	117·0
Yorkshire and Humberside	37·4	32·1	52·2	61·6	52·9	35·6	42·5	35·4	41·4	38·6	49·8	32·4
East Midlands[3]	3·4	4·1	4·6	8·6	13·7	16·9	10·2	8·3	10·5	9·4	8·9	9·5
South West	9·6	10·7	11·5	14·8	16·4	11·9	14·2	12·0	22·7	[illegible]	14·6	10·6

Region	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
West Midlands[4]	0·4	0·1	—	—	—	—	—	6·4	10·0	18·8	25·6	20·0
North West	*114·0	*86·7	*130·2	*173·8	*123·8	*103·1	103·9	85·9	128·6	78·8	81·9	74·1
England[2]	323·7	281·5	343·9	435·4	365·3	296·7	293·3	242·6	349·7	269·4	314·6	263·3
Wales	132·1	100·2	171·3	197·5	182·1	120·0	147·5	138·4	150·7	132·4	148·2	131·7
Scotland	156·1	135·2	194·5	232·5	369·4	228·6	187·2	197·0	242·4	153·2	151·2	143·8
Great Britain[2]	611·9	516·9	709·7	865·5	916·9	645·3	627·9	578·0	742·8	555·0	614·1	538·8

Table 2

Government expenditure on regional preferential assistance to industry at 1988-89 prices[1 5]

£ million

Region	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
Northern	349·2	278·3	231·2	255·9	214·2	166·5	150·8	110·4	154·0	116·9	133·7	109·9
Yorkshire and Humberside	82·2	60·5	83·0	89·3	71·5	45·9	52·3	41·3	46·7	41·3	49·8	30·4
East Midlands[3]	7·5	7·7	7·3	12·5	18·5	21·8	12·5	9·7	11·9	10·1	8·9	8·9
South West	21·1	20·2	18·3	21·4	22·2	15·4	17·5	14·0	25·6	15·7	14·6	10·0
West Midlands[4]	0·9	0·2	—	—	—	—	—	7·5	11·3	20·1	25·6	18·8
North West	*250·5	*163·3	*207·0	*251·9	*167·3	*133·0	[illegible]	100·2	145·1	84·4	81·9	69·6
England[2]	711·4	530·1	546·7	631·0	493·6	382·8	36[illegible]	283·1	394·7	288·4	314·6	247·2
Wales	290·3	188·7	272·3	286·2	246·1	154·8	181·4	161·5	170·1	141·8	148·2	123·7
Scotland	343·1	254·6	309·2	337·0	499·2	295·0	230·3	229·9	273·6	164·0	151·2	135·0
Great Britain[2]	1,344·8	973·4	1,128·3	1,254·3	1,239·1	832·6	772·3	674·4	838·4	594·2	614·1	505·9

Table 3

Index	1988-89 prices
1978-79	45·5
1979-80	53·1
1980-81	62·9
1981-82	69·0
1982-83	74·0
1983-84	77·5
1984-85	81·3
1985-86	85·7
1986-87	88·6
1987-88	93·4
1988-89	100·0
1989-90	106·5

Notes to tables 1, 2 and 3:

1. All figures are gross and include payments to nationalised industries.
2. The totals do not always equal the sum of the component parts because of rounding.
3. Includes some minor expenditure in west midlands in respect of Oswestry TTWA which ceased to be an assisted area in 1982-83.
4. Certain TTWAs in the west midlands were designated as assisted areas on 29 November 1984.
5. Expenditure on a 1988-89 price basis for each year is calculated by applying the appropriate deflator to expenditure at current prices.
6. Includes expenditure in Cumbria, otherwise shown within the totals for northern region.

The items included in the expenditure are regional development grants, regional selective assistance and regional enterprise grants; expenditure on land and factories by the English Industrial Estates Corporation, the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies, the Development Board for Rural Wales, and the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

Scottish Companies

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the number of *(a)* Scottish registered public limited companies, *(b)* Scottish companies quoted on the unlisted securities market and *(c)* what has been the change in Scottish quoted companies, in percentage terms, between 1979 and 1989.

Mr. Redwood: At 19 October there were 531 Scottish registered public limited companies.

The number of Scottish companies quoted on the unlisted securities market is a matter for the International Stock Exchange, as therefore is the change in percentage terms between 1979 and 1989.

Textiles

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the amount of textiles *(a)* imported and *(b)* exported by the United Kingdom in each year since 1979.

Mr. Sainsbury: Figures showing the total value of United Kingdom imports and exports of textiles (SITC division 65) are published in the annual editions of Overseas Trade Statistics, which can be consulted in the House of Commons Library.

Company Directors (Disqualification)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the guidelines from his Department to insolvency practitioners as to the requirements for prosecution of a case for disqualification of a company director reported by a liquidator to be unfit to hold the position; and if he will make a statement on any proposed changes to such guidelines.

Mr. Redwood: My Department issues written guidance notes to insolvency practitioners on the completion of statutory returns and reports on the conduct of directors of insolvent companies. The notes, which were last revised in March 1987, are in the process of revision to take into consideration the general attitude of the courts to disqualification applications, recently decided cases and the views of official receivers and insolvency practitioners.

The insolvency service also communicates with insolvency practitioners on disqualification matters through the insolvency practitioners' joint liaison

committee, which represents insolvency practitioners and members of five of the recognised professional bodies on technical matters, and through a series of "Dear IP" letters. Members of the disqualification unit also visit insolvency practitioners frequently to discuss disqualification work.

I have placed copies of the guidance notes in the Libraries of the House.

Agency Recognition

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will outline the terms of remit of the Office of Fair Trading inquiry into agency recognition requirements for all media; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: I understand that officials of the Director General of Fair Trading are in discussion with various associations of publishers concerning the terms of their agency recognition agreements in relation to the provisions of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976.

Monopolies and Mergers

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to make a further reference of a public sector body to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under section 11 of the Competition Act 1980.

Mr. Redwood: As part of its regular programme of efficiency studies of nationalised industries, the commission has been asked to look into the service provided by London Underground Ltd. The formal reference was made today. It asks the MMC to look at whether LUL could improve its quality of service through greater efficiency and at whether cost savings could be made without affecting quality of service or the programme of safety improvements which LUL is already undertaking. The Commission will report in six months. A copy of the reference has been placed in the Library.

Accountancy Bodies

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which accountancy bodies have applied under the Companies Act 1989 for recognition of their professional qualification.

Mr. Redwood: To date, the following bodies have applied for recognition:

(i) The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales,
(ii) The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland,
(iii) The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

I have placed a copy of each application in the Library of the House. Certain material submitted in confidence has been excluded from the copy placed in the Library.

Chartered Institute of Accountants in England and Wales

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what independent advice he proposes to seek in evaluating whether the Chartered Institute of Accountants in England and Wales is a fit body to exercise supervisory powers under the Companies Act 1989.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* My right hon. Friend will carry out such consultation as he thinks necessary to enable him to reach a view on any application for recognition as a supervisory body under the Companies Act 1989.

Company Directors

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when companies will be required to identify the amount of non-audit fees paid to directors.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the power in section 390B of the Companies Act 1985, inserted into that Act by section 121 of the Companies Act 1989, to make regulations requiring the disclosure of non-audit fees paid to auditors or their associates. The Department is currently consulting interested parties on the drafting of the regulations.

Environment Conference

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he, or officials of his Department, have been invited to participate in the conference on environmental opportunities and market forecast organised by the Environment Council in London on 15-16 November.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* I am pleased to report that a speaker from my Department's research agency, Warren Spring Laboratory, will be present at this conference.

Enterprise Initiative

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he is considering extending the enterprise initiative to companies with more than 50 employees.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* The consultancy initiatives are already available to independent firms and members of groups of under 500 employees. There are no plans to extend the small firms merit award for research and technology (SMART) to firms of over 50 employees, but the number of awards has been increased this year from 150 to 180.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he is considering extending the length of the enterprise initiative.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 9 October, the consultancy initiatives are to be extended for a final three years from 1 April 1991.

EC Assistance

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with the European Commission with a view to developing new schemes of assistance for industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* I have had no discussions with the European Commission on this matter.

Company Research Projects

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of any proposed new schemes for the financial support of single company research projects; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* I have reviewed recently our support of research and development for small and medium-sized enterprises. As a result we plan to announce, early in the new year, a scheme to provide support for single companies for product and process development. At present, I am unable to give further details as the operation of the scheme has still to be agreed and European Commission approval obtained.

Business Academic Links

Dr. Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to improve links between business and the academic community.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* My Department actively promotes links between business and academia by providing advice and financial support, and funding up to half the eligible costs of approved collaborative research projects between academic institutions and industry under schemes such as LINK, the advanced technology programmes, and general industrial collaborative projects.

We also support such links through the teaching company scheme which enables graduates to work in industry under joint supervision of a company and an academic; through the national electronics research initiative, which encourages secondment of employees to centres of research excellence at universities and Government research establishments; and through support for a network of regional technology centres (RTCs) which give firms access to technical expertise in universities and polytechnics. The Secretary of State plans to introduce a programme to strengthen RTCs acting as intermediaries between the science base and small and medium-sized firms. Government also provide support for science parks at universities and polytechnics and for interdisciplinary research centres staffed by teams of scientists and people seconded from industry.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give a breakdown of inward investment in the United Kingdom by standard English region and for Scotland and Wales for each year since 1974, showing the amount received in each region as a proportion of the total in each year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: These figures are available only from 1979. However, the tables sets out the number of investment decisions known to the Invest in Britain Bureau for the calendar years 1979 to 1989 and the associated jobs for the United Kingdom by region. Comparable information on the total level of financial investment by inward investors is not available.

The decisions recorded include the establishment of new business, expansion or acquisition of an existing business and involvement in joint venture. The figures are based on information provided by the companies themselves at the time of the investment and take no account of subsequent developments.

Number of inward investment decisions: Regional breakdown

	Scotland				*Wales*				*Northern Ireland*				*North East*			
	Number of projects	*New jobs*	*Safe-guarded jobs*	*Total jobs*	*Number of projects*	*New jobs*	*Safe-guarded jobs*	*Total jobs*	*Number of projects*	*New jobs*	*Safe-guarded jobs*	*Total jobs*	*Number of projects*	*New jobs*	*Safe-guarded jobs*	*Total jobs*
1979	28	2,757	[1]—	2,757	18	854	[1]—	854	18	2,794	[1]—	2,794	21	1,466	[1]—	1,466
	(15·3)	(19·3)	[1]—	(19·3)	(9·8)	(6·0)	[1]—	(6·0)	(9·8)	(19·5)	[1]—	(19·5)	(11·5)	(10·2)	[1]—	(10·2)
1980	31	4,474	[1]—	4,474	16	3,332	[1]—	3,332	20	2,760	[1]—	2,760	19	2,923	[1]—	2,923
	(20·0)	(24·0)	[1]—	(24·0)	(10·3)	(17·9)	[1]—	(47·9)	(12·9)	(14·8)	[1]—	(14·8)	(12·3)	(15·7)	[1]—	(15·7)
1981	28	5,756	[1]—	5,756	20	1,986	[1]—	1,986	15	2,429	[1]—	2,429	14	1,021	[1]—	1,021
	(21·0)	(35·1)	[1]—	(35·1)	(15·0)	(12·1)	[1]—	(12·1)	(11·3)	(14·8)	[1]—	(14·8)	(10·5)	(6·2)	[1]—	(6·2)
1982	28	2,258	[1]—	2,258	17	901	[1]—	901	6	1,893	[1]—	1,893	15	539	[1]—	539
	(21·0)	(21·4)	[1]—	(21·4)	(12·8)	(8·6)	[1]—	(8·6)	(4·5)	(18·0)	[1]—	(18·0)	(11·3)	(5·1)	[1]—	(5·1)
1983	49	5,135	3,432	8,567	31	2,116	1,913	4,029	11	548	1,192	1,740	20	1,066	720	1,786
	(20·8)	(33·0)	(22·5)	(27·8)	(13·1)	(13·6)	(12·5)	(13·1)	(4·7)	(3·5)	(7·8)	(5·6)	(8·5)	(6·9)	(4·7)	(5·8)
1984	74	8,761	1,463	10,224	42	3,958	5,015	8,973	27	2,256	2,876	5,132	29	4,589	230	4,819
	(22·6)	(32·3)	(7·6)	(22·0)	(12·8)	(14·6)	(26·0)	(19·3)	(8·2)	(8·3)	(14·9)	(11·1)	(8·8)	(16·9)	(1·2)	(10·4)
1985	57	4,971	2,922	7,893	45	2,416	1,350	3,766	22	771	1,424	2,195	26	1,987	1,572	3,559
	(15·2)	(19·4)	(15·6)	(17·8)	(12·0)	(9·4)	(7·2)	(8·5)	(5·9)	(3·0)	(7·6)	(5·0)	(6·9)	(7·8)	(8·4)	(8·0)
1986	36	1,881	607	2,488	49	2,364	2,232	4,596	18	693	1,722	2,415	30	1,581	1,158	2,739
	(10·6)	(11·6)	(5·6)	(9·2)	(14·5)	(14·5)	(20·7)	(17·0)	(5·3)	(4·3)	(16·0)	(8·9)	(8·8)	(9·7)	(10·8)	(10·1)
1987	31	3,704	2,061	5,765	58	4,054	877	4,931	17	1,135	1,341	2,486	31	3,491	852	4,343
	(9·5)	(17·1)	(10·2)	(13·7)	(17·8)	(18·7)	(4·3)	(11·8)	(5·2)	(5·2)	(6·6)	(5·9)	(9·5)	(16·1)	(4·2)	(10·4)
1988	58	5,429	1,978	7,407	56	6,006	2,085	8,091	22	2,610	916	3,526	22	2,041	31	2,072
	(16·5)	(19·6)	(10·4)	(15·3)	(15·9)	(21·7)	(11·0)	(17·4)	(6·3)	(9·4)	(5·0)	(7·7)	(6·3)	(7·4)	(0·2)	(4·4)
1989	34	4,551	645	5,196	42	3,564	2,050	5,614	17	1,187	8,558	9,745	46	4,495	1,438	5,933
	(10·4)	(14·8)	(2·4)	(9·0)	(12·7)	(11·6)	(7·2)	(7·0)	(5·2)	(3·9)	(32·0)	(17·0)	(14·1)	(14·6)	(5·4)	(10·3)

[1] Not available

	North West				Yorkshire/Humberside				West Midlands				East Midlands			
	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs
1979	9	379	[1]—	379	27	1,176	[1]—	1,176	11	864	[1]—	864	15	1,174	[1]—	1,174
	(4·9)	(2·6)	[1]—	(2·6)	(14·8)	(8·2)	[1]—	(8·2)	(6·0)	(6·0)	[1]—	(6·0)	(8·2)	(8·2)	[1]—	(8·2)
1980	15	913	[1]—	913	17	890	[1]—	890	3	1,040	[1]—	1,040	5	276	[1]—	276
	(9·7)	(4·9)	[1]—	(4·9)	(11·0)	(4·8)	[1]—	(4·8)	(1·9)	(5·6)	[1]—	(5·6)	(3·2)	(1·5)	[1]—	(1·5)
1981	12	1,177	[1]—	1,177	6	167	[1]—	167	7	425	[1]—	425	8	290	[1]—	290
	(9·0)	(7·2)	[1]—	(7·2)	(4·5)	(1·0)	[1]—	(1·0)	(5·3)	(2·6)	[1]—	(2·6)	(6·0)	(1·8)	[1]—	(1·8)
1982	14	1,291	[1]—	1,291	7	104	[1]—	104	1	100	[1]—	100	13	848	[1]—	848
	(10·5)	(12·3)	[1]—	(12·3)	(5·3)	(0·9)	[1]—	(1·0)	(0·7)	(0·9)	[1]—	(0·9)	(9·8)	(8·1)	[1]—	(8·1)
1983	22	709	1,114	1,823	10	345	502	847	13	1,201	3,179	4,380	12	939	80	1,019
	(9·3)	(4·6)	(7·3)	(5·9)	(4·2)	(2·2)	(3·3)	(2·7)	(5·5)	(7·7)	(20·8)	(14·2)	(5·1)	(6·0)	(0·5)	(3·3)
1984	40	1,135	1,911	3,046	7	119	860	979	14	1,531	5,240	6,771	11	658	303	961
	(12·2)	(4·2)	(9·9)	(6·6)	(2·1)	(0·4)	(4·5)	(2·1)	(4·3)	(5·6)	(27·2)	(14·6)	(3·4)	(2·4)	(1·6)	(2·1)
1985	28	2,271	1,378	3,649	16	2,263	2,969	5,232	63	5,197	1,375	6,572	19	778	0	778
	(7·5)	(8·9)	(7·4)	(8·2)	(4·3)	(8·8)	(15·9)	(11·8)	(16·8)	(20·3)	(7·4)	(14·8)	(5·1)	(3·0)	—	(1·8)
1986	34	1,400	1,389	2,789	11	158	57	215	74	4,393	1,899	6,292	15	557	20	577
	(10·0)	(8·6)	(12·9)	(10·3)	(3·2)	(0·9)	(0·5)	(0·7)	(21·8)	(27·0)	(17·7)	(23·3)	(4·4)	(3·4)	(0·1)	(2·1)
1987	28	1,323	4,896	6,219	23	1,147	961	2,108	59	3,079	2,271	5,350	11	456	398	854
	(8·6)	(6·1)	(24·1)	(14·1)	(7·1)	(5·3)	(4·7)	(5·0)	(18·2)	(14·2)	(11·2)	(12·8)	(3·4)	(2·1)	(2·0)	(2·0)
1988	30	1,763	3,844	5,607	23	1,790	380	2,170	69	3,671	7,840	11,511	18	1,139	880	2,019
	(8·5)	(6·4)	(17·7)	(10·9)	(5·7)	(6·4)	(2·1)	(4·7)	(19·6)	(13·3)	(42·8)	(25·0)	(5·2)	(4·1)	(4·8)	(4·4)
1989	52	2,646	4,538	7,184	11	600	1,100	1,700	87	5,629	7,035	12,664	11	4,073	2,420	6,783
	(15·9)	(8·6)	(17·0)	(12·5)	(3·4)	(1·9)	(4·1)	(3·0)	(26·6)	(18·3)	(26·2)	(22·0)	(3·3)	(13·2)	(9·0)	(11·6)

[1] Not available.

	South East				South West				United Kingdom not Specified				Total United Kingdom			
	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs	Number of projects	New jobs	Safe-guarded jobs	Total jobs
1979	23	908	[1]—	908	13	1,938	[1]—	1,938	—	—	—	—	183	14,310	[1]—	14,310
	(12·6)	(6·3)	[1]—	(6·3)	(7·1)	(13·5)	[1]—	(13·5)	—	—	—	—	—	—	[1]—	—
1980	23	1,046	[1]—	1,046	6	1,008	[1]—	1,008	—	—	—	—	155	18,662	[1]—	18,662
	(14·8)	(5·6)	[1]—	(5·6)	(3·9)	(5·4)	[1]—	(5·4)	—	—	—	—	—	—	[1]—	—
1981	15	967	[1]—	967	8	2,199	[1]—	2,199	—	—	—	—	133	16,417	[1]—	16,417
	(11·3)	(5·9)	[1]—	(5·9)	(6·0)	(13·4)	[1]—	(13·4)	—	—	—	—	—	—	[1]—	—
1982	25	1,300	[1]—	1,300	7	1,295	[1]—	1,295	—	—	—	—	133	10,529	[1]—	10,529
	(18·8)	(12·4)	[1]—	(12·4)	(5·3)	(12·3)	[1]—	(12·3)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1983	59	3,036	2,667	5,703	9	451	458	909	—	—	—	—	236	15,546	15,257	30,803
	(25·0)	(19·5)	(17·5)	(18·5)	(3·8)	(2·9)	(3·0)	(2·9)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1984	70	2,731	810	3,541	14	1,364	586	1,950	—	—	—	—	328	27,102	19,294	46,396
	(21·3)	(10·1)	(4·2)	(7·6)	(4·3)	(5·0)	(3·0)	(4·2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1985	84	3,649	5,712	9,361	15	1,281	19	1,300	—	—	—	—	375	25,584	18,721	44,305
	(22·4)	(14·3)	(30·5)	(21·1)	(4·0)	(5·0)	(0·1)	(2·9)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1986	60	2,118	1,148	3,266	12	1,129	528	1,657	—	—	—	—	339	16,274	10,760	27,034
	(17·7)	(13·0)	(10·7)	(12·1)	(3·5)	(6·9)	(4·9)	(6·1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1987	55	2,698	599	3,297	11	564	328	892	1	—	5,700	5,700	325	21,651	20,284	41,935
	(16·9)	(12·5)	(3·0)	(7·9)	(3·4)	(2·6)	(1·6)	(2·1)	(0·3)	—	(28·1)	(13·6)	—	—	—	—
1988	46	2,400	983	3,383	5	479	0	479	3	325	0	325	352	27,653	18,937	46,590
	(13·1)	(8·7)	(5·4)	(7·1)	(1·4)	(1·7)	(0)	(1·0)	(0·9)	(1·2)	(0)	(0·7)	—	—	—	—
1989	21	2,163	610	2,483	8	1,848	40	1,888	1	0	0	0	330	30,756	28,434	59,190
	(6·4)	(7·0)	(2·3)	(4·3)	(2·4)	(6·0)	(0·15)	(3·3)	(0·3)	(0)	(0)	(0)	—	—	—	—

[1] Not available.

Notes:

Figures in brackets apply to percentage of total for each region.

These figures refer to decisions known to the IBB, and are provided by the companies themselves.

The jobs are those associated with the projects over the long term.

ENERGY

Non-nuclear Energy

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement in respect of what non-nuclear applications for energy he will be financing in 1994.

Mr. Moynihan: My expectation is that the general coverage of my Department's research, development and demonstration work will remain broadly similar to that at present. It is not possible, however, at this time, to be more specific about the detail of individual programmes.

Wave Energy

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy on what date he will conclude his review of Professor Stephen Salter's nodding duck device to produce electricity from wave power; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The wave energy review now in progress is examining the prospects for wave energy in the United Kingdom across the whole range from shoreline to large-scale offshore devices. When the work has been completed, including collection of some additional wave energy data, a final report will be published in 1991.

The review is being conducted in stages. Two progress reports have already been circulated for comment to the wave research and development community and have also been placed in the Library of the House.

It is intended that an interim report will be published early in 1991. This interim report will address offshore wave energy including progress on the assessment of Professor Salter's nodding duck device.

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what research has been carried out over the last 10 years on obtaining energy from wave power; what is currently being carried on; how long those programmes will last; and what costs are involved.

Mr. Moynihan: A major programme of wave energy research and development funded by the Department of Energy was carried out from 1974 to 1983 and cost approximately £15·5 million. The programme is described in ETSU R26, published in March 1985. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library of the House.

Since 1983, wave energy research has focused on near-shore and small-scale shoreline devices. On the island of Islay in Scotland, a project funded by the Department is currently being carried out by Queen's university, Belfast to construct and monitor an experimental oscillating water column shoreline device. Queen's university is also carrying out a survey funded by the Department to assess the near-shore and shoreline wave energy resource.

In addition the Department is updating its earlier wave energy studies and a review is now in hand to examine the prospects for wave energy across the whole range from shoreline to large-scale offshore devices. Two progress reports have already been circulated for comment to the wave research and development community and have also been placed in the Library of the House. It is intended that an interim report will be published early in 1991 and a final report published later that year.

The Department will re-examine its policy on wave energy research and development in the light of the results of the review.

Total funding by the Department since 1983, including committed expenditure, for the Islay project, wave energy surveys, work in support of the review and other wave energy work has amounted to about £2·5 million.

Piper Alpha

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he exects to receive the report of the Cullen inquiry into the Piper Alpha disaster.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) on 22 October 1990, at column *16*.

Research and Development

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list, for the current financial year, a breakdown of the money his Department is spending on research and development.

Mr. Moynihan: The supply estimates 1990-91, class V, vote 2, Department of Energy research and development and industrial support, set out the Department's provision for R and D expenditure by programme, as follows:

	£ million
Nuclear R and D	128·886
Energy Efficiency R and D	10·990
Oil and gas production technology	3·660
Safety in offshore oil and gas operations	6·973
Enhanced oil recovery	0·650
Coal based energy	7·603
Renewables	20·330

Final outturn expenditure may differ in some detailed respects from these figures.

Offshore Oil (Accidents)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date, and by location, the number of offshore oil workers who have *(a)* lost their lives and *(b)* been injured during their employment in the offshore oil fields around the coast of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: The number of fatalities and serious accidents, injuries to persons, on or near to offshore installations on the United Kingdom continental shelf reported to my Department from 1980 to September 1990 are as follows:

	Fatalities	*Serious Accidents*
1980	4	45
1981	6	59
1982	14	39
1983	10	47
1984	13	59
1985	8	103
1986	3	101
1987	6	59
1988	[1]173	[2]85
1989	3	85
[3][5]1990	[4]10	52

[1] 167 relate to Piper Alpha.
[2] Includes 11 of the 61 Piper Alpha survivors.
[3] Provisional.
[4] Six relate to the helicopter crash on the Brent Spar.
[5] January-September.

Information on the location of these incidents could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

National Power

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy with which countries National Power refuses to trade.

Mr. Baldry: Decisions on countries with which to do business are a commercial matter for National Power.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the refusal of National Power to trade with Israel.

Mr. Baldry: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on 26 October at column *338*.

Energy Conservation

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any plans to increase the level of Government funding for *(a)* renewable energy, *(b)* energy conservation and *(c)* energy efficiency.

Mr. Baldry: The Department of Energy's expenditure plans for the next three years are currently being reviewed in the Public Expenditure Survey. A statement on the outcome of the survey will be made shortly. It is our policy to seek to ensure that all economic and environmentally acceptable energy sources should be exploited fully.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the payment to Universal Studios for alleged breach of copyright in respect of the similarity between Frank N. Stein and the character Herman Munster.

Mr. Baldry: The only representation received by the Secretary of State was correspondence from Bridge Wolsey, a firm of solicitors. This representation has been referred to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Renewable Energy

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will set out the financial or other resource contributions made by his Department to renewable energy research undertaken at *(a)* the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth and *(b)* the Centre of Solar Energy at University college, Cardiff; and whether he has any plans to increase contributions to these centres.

Mr. Moynihan: My Department has a substantial programme to promote the use of renewable energy. However, we have not funded any research at the centre for alternative energy nor at the centre of solar energy at University college, Cardiff.

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when the first non-fossil fuel obligation order for renewables came into force; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The first order for renewables under the non-fossil fuel obligation came into force on 29 September 1990.

The order was set in accordance with advice from the Director General of Electricity Supply and specifies the initial levels of renewables-sourced electricity generating capacity that the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales are required to have available from 1 October 1990 until 31 December 1998. They will build up to 102·25 MW declared net capacity at April 1995.

As a result of this order, 75 projects have been contracted by the 12 regional electricity companies and have been approved by the Director General of Electricity Supply as meeting the requirements of the Electricity Act 1989. If these projects come to fruition they will total a declared net capacity of 152·1 MW.

Over half the 75 projects are new projects, which would not have proceeded without the benefit of the above market price available under the non-fossil fuel obligation.

The 75 projects are made up of 25 landfill gas, 26 hydro, eight bio-gas, seven waste incineration and nine wind.

HEALTH

Waiting Lists, Leicestershire

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the current waiting list for each specialty in Leicestershire health authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is given in the table. The number of patients waiting for treatment is not a relevant measure of the quality of service provided. It is the length of time that patients wait that matters, and the number of patients waiting over a year in Leicestershire district health authority has fallen by over 60 per cent. from 2,800 in March 1979 to 1,100 in March 1990. In addition, the number of patients treated in this district has risen by nearly 49 per cent. between 1979 and 1990 from 74,000 to 110,000. The total waiting list also reduced over the same period, from 10,777 to 9,098. The total number waiting in March 1990 therefore represented on average four weeks' work in hand, compared with the eight weeks' work represented by the total list in March 1979.

Leicester Health Authority: Waiting List at 31 March 1990

	Patients waiting	*Over 1 year*	*Percentage over 1 year*
General Surgery	1,135	29	3
Urology	330	4	1
Trauma and Orthopaedics	1,601	152	9
ENT	1,950	249	13
Ophthalmology	438	1	0
Oral Surgery	508	14	3
Neurosurgery	14	0	0
Plastic Surgery	874	480	55
Cardiothoracic Surgery	560	71	13
Accident and Emergency	24	0	0
General Medicine	5	0	0
Cardiology	336	16	5
Nephrology	5	0	0
Neurology	8	8	100
Rheumatology	16	0	0
Paediatrics	2	0	0
Geriatric Medicine	10	0	0
Gynaecology	1,082	47	4
General Practice	147	0	0
Mental Handicap	30	24	80
Mental Illness	18	5	28

	Patients waiting	*Over 1 year*	*Percentage over 1 year*
Radiotherapy	5	0	0
	9,098	1,100	12

Source: KHO6, KHO7 KHO7A.

HIV

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the latest information he has on the percentage of pregnant women in England who are HIV-positive.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The latest published information on the percentage of pregnant women in England who are HIV seropositive is based on a study of the prevalence of infection in newborn babies. The work was published in the *Lancet* on 3 March 1990. A total of 114,515 babies born in North East Thames, North West Thames and South West Thames were tested.

Of the babies born in inner London, 0·49 per 1000 showed evidence of maternal infection. For outer London the rate was 0·33 per 1000, and for babies born outside London the rate was 0·04 per 1000. The overall rate was 0·24 per 1000.

Further information will become available in 1991 from the unlinked anonymous HIV prevalence monitoring programme, which will include samples from 120,000 women attending ante-natal clinics in 40 health districts.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will extend the list of those entitled to free national health service prescriptions to include those suffering from serious mental illness.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. As the result of the present wide-ranging exemption arrangements, over 75 per cent. of all items dispensed in the NHS are provided free. Many patients with mental illness benefit from these arrangements. Those who are not exempt but who need a lot of medication can save money by buying prescription prepayment certificates, or season tickets. Those certificates can lead to significant savings for anyone needing more than 14 items in a year or five items in a four-month period.

To extend the exemption arrangements for all patients who suffer from mental illness would benefit only those whose resources exceed the qualifying threshold for help on low income grounds and would not make the best use of the resources available to the NHS.

Elderly Mentally Ill People

Mr. Whitney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total cost to his Department of the evaluation of three experimental units for elderly mentally ill people at High Wycombe, Liverpool and Hertford conducted by a team from the university of Liverpool under the leadership of Professor Copeland between 1984 and March 1990; and whether the team's report is yet available.

Mr. Dorrell: The total cost of the evaluation was £305,405. Professor Copeland has undertaken to deliver the final report in November.

Hospital Trusts

Sir Cyril Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to what extent he proposes to answer parliamentary questions about hospitals which acquire trust status.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: NHS trusts will remain an integral part of the national health service. We shall continue to answer questions on all national health service matters to the extent that information is available centrally. Hon. Members should continue to look in the first instance to the chairmen of regional, district and family health service authorities for information about day-to-day local management issues in all directly managed NHS hospitals and units. In future, they should look in the first instance to the chairmen of NHS trusts for similar information about self-governing units.

Eggs

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of food poisoning outbreaks has been traced back to eggs in the current year.

Mr. Dorrell: In the first 39 weeks of 1990, 616 outbreaks of salmonellosis were reported to the PHLS communicable disease surveillance centre. Of the 71 in which a vehicle was specified, 33 or 46 per cent. included egg or egg products.

Company Cars

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the district health authorities throughout England which are now providing cars for their district managers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: We do not collect this information centrally.

Confidential Files

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recommendations he has made to local authorities on the disclosure of confidential social services files to the person to whom they relate since the Graham Gaskin case.

Mr. Dorrell: The implications of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in Mr. Graham Gaskin's case are being studied. The need for any further guidance to local authorities on disclosure of personal social services records will be determined when the study is completed.

VAT

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional capital provision will be made to the national health service in the current year to reflect the cessation of value added tax refunds on construction work.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: In 1990-91 £160 million additional funding is being made available to the NHS to compensate for the termination from 1 April 1990 of refunds of VAT paid on construction work and for other minor capital expenditure.

North East Thames Regional Health Authority

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the capital allocations from his Department and the total capital spending by the North East Thames regional health authority per year for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Dorrell: *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

Year	*Capital allocations £ millions*	*Expenditure £ millions*
1980-81	38·267	48·652
1981-82	46·615	51·592
1982-83	49·798	56·016
1983-84	51·005	61·600
1984-85	54·577	66·652
1985-86	55·372	65·932
1986-87	55·920	75·904
1987-88	69·407	92·794
1988-89	70·350	121·074
1989-90	80·423	[1]120·070

[1] Provisional.
All figures at cash prices.

The allocation figures do not include sums generated through land sales or other capital income, other than as a result of brokerage, nor do they take account of virement from revenue to capital or vice versa.

Nephrologists

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the total number of nephrologists employed in the national health service now, in 1985 and in 1980; and what is the ratio of nephrologists to kidney patients for those three dates.

Mr. Dorrell *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The information is not available in precisely the form requested. The number of consultant nephrologists in post in England in 1989, the latest year for which information is available, was 69. The figures for 1985 and 1980 were 69 and 63 respectively. This does not take account of other physicians who have an interest in nephrology. The available information indicates that in 1989 in England and Wales there were 53 other consultants who registered nephrology as a second speciality compared with 45 in 1988.

According to data reported to the European Dialysis and Transplant Association the number of patients in the United Kingdom being treated for end stage renal failure at the end of the years 1988—the latest year for which information is available—1985 and 1980 were 16,155, 12,154 and 7,146 respectively.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Consumption

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to see the changes in law and practice which reflect the recent experiment in Coventry in regard to drink-related anti-social practice brought into effect; and what action he plans to take in regard to this matter.

Mr. John Patten: The results of the byelaw which prohibits the consumption of alcohol in designated areas have been carefully monitored by the Home Office and the local authorities concerned. The effectiveness of the byelaw has been demonstrated sufficiently for it to be made generally available subject to applicant authorities satisfying themselves as to local need and police capacity to enforce it. We will be writing to local authority chief executives next month inviting them to consider applying for the byelaw.

Overseas Voters

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest date that an application can be accepted by an electoral registration officer for an overseas voter to be included on the electoral roll effective from 15 February 1991.

Mrs. Rumbold: Overseas electors' declarations must be made on or before 10 October but, as with returns from domestic electors, need not necessarily be received by the electoral registration officer by that date: they may be treated as claims for inclusion in the draft register or, depending on when they are received, for inclusion in the published register.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of overseas electors applications received by the electoral registration officer in each parliamentary constituency as at 10 October.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

African Immigrants

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has concerning the arrival at Heathrow airport of immigrant minors from Ethiopia and adjacent African countries; what criteria are being operated regarding their admission; what inquiries are being made for financing their travel to the United Kingdom; and what accommodation is available for them and at whose expense.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: We do not record separately the entry to the United Kingdom of minors from Ethiopia or other countries. Their entry is governed by the immigration rules. Under the rules, minors with no support or accommodation to go to would be liable to refusal. If such minors sought asylum it would be necessary to consider their claims to refugee status under the 1951 United Nations convention before a refusal decision could be taken. In fact, very few unaccompanied children seek asylum on arrival in the United Kingdom. We assume that the Ethiopian children whose cases have been publicised recently entered the United Kingdom in another capacity, for example, visiting with an accompanying adult, before being abandoned. We have seen no evidence of organised abuse in arrangements for travel or entry to this country. The statutory responsibility for the care of any child in this country without adult support rests with local authorities.

Food Sabotage

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has of the number of incidents of food sabotage to food manufacturing and

retail outlets in 1990; whether any injuries to persons resulted; and whether any information is available on the number of companies that have given way to this form of blackmail.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that so far this year there have been two confirmed incidents of malicious contamination of a food product linked to an extortion threat. No injuries resulted and the police have no evidence of any companies having given way to such extortion threats.

Prisons

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the publications now available which explain the management changes being introduced in prisons in England and Wales; how hon. Members can obtain copies of such documents; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The joint prison service/PA Consultants report which recommended changes in the management of the service at above establishment level was published on 10 August 1989 and copies were placed in the Library. We announced our acceptance of those recommendations on 11 January 1990. Since then the changes have been published throughout the prison service and the wider Home Office by in-house newsletters named "Briefing" and "Update". I am arranging for copies of the relevant issues of both publications to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how resources are to be provided to ensure that the best results are obtained from management changes now being introduced in prisons in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The recent management changes introduced into the prison service have been at above establishment level and have involved the closure of regional offices and the introduction of area managers based in headquarters but spending a great deal of time in their prisons. Care has been taken to ensure that the necessary resources have followed the introduction of the new management features following the reorganisation.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the new London prison of Belmarsh is to be opened; how the prison is to be staffed; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The proposed date for the opening of Belmarsh is April 1991. There will be a phased introduction of the work during the remainder of the year.

Belmarsh will be staffed by a mixture of experienced staff who have applied to go there, new entrant prison officers on their first posting and those staff invited to take up post at Belmarsh on promotion.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the medical facilities to be provided at the new London prison Belmarsh; what will be the staffing levels and their position; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Belmarsh will have a fully equipped medical centre with 74 beds for in-patients in single rooms and six small wards. The medical team will be led by a senior medical officer who is already in post. The remainder of the medical complement has yet to be decided. The doctors will be supported by a health care team of 69 comprising hospital officers and civilian nurses in about equal proportions and in a range of grades under a governor IV.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the last prison food rations price review took place; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The ration scale in prisons is expressed in terms of weight or volume, not price. Movements in prices do not therefore affect the amount of main food items available for inmates.

Cash allowances for dietary extras, which in total constitute less than 10 per cent. of the total spent on food items, are reviewed each autumn. This year's review is just being completed and revised cash allowances will be promulgated shortly to become effective from 29 November.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether local prison governors are allowed to transfer surplus funding not used on one listed expenditure to another item of expenditure within the same prison; and if he will make a statement on his present policy on local prison expenditure.

Mrs. Rumbold: I will write to the hon. Member.

Prison Officers

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of his Department on helping the families of a serving prison officer who dies, who are living in prison accommodation, to ensure that accommodation continues to be available to the family; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: We cannot undertake to provide accommodation for widows of deceased prison officers, but we treat such cases sympathetically and do not enforce eviction until we are satisfied that they have obtained alternative accommodation.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of new prison officers received into the prison services in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: In the last three years the recruitment and training of new prison officers has reached unprecedented levels. The number of new prison officers posted to establishments in each of these years was:

	Number
1987-88	1,644
1988-89	2,372
1989-90	1,555

Of those officers 3,321 were recruited for the opening of new accommodation for inmates and to meet in full management's commitment under the "fresh start" framework agreement; and 2,270 were recruited to replace wastage.

Electoral Registers

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to require the electoral register to include postal codes; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: No.

Prisoners (Sickness)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* sickness rates and *(b)* long-term sickness rates, that is more than one month, for each prison in the United Kingdom for each quarter year for the two previous years before "fresh start" was implemented and the subsequent years.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Parole

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans his Department has to tighten security measures when prisoners are allowed out on parole;

(2) how many *(a)* life and *(b)* other prisoners have escaped while out of prison on parole for the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to the temporary release of prisoners under rule 6 of the prison rules. In the period 1 October 1989 to 30 September 1990 there were 1,381 recorded instances in which an inmate failed to return on time from a period of temporary release. Separate figures are not available for those prisoners serving sentences of life imprisonment and those serving determinate sentences. The arrangements governing temporary release are under review.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the grounds on which life prisoners can obtain parole.

Mrs. Rumbold: Life sentence prisoners are not eligible for parole, but may be granted temporary release and escorted absences to test them under conditions of trust and responsibility and facilitate their eventual resettlement and reintegration into society. Those with provisional release dates and those in open prisons are generally eligible, as, on a highly selective basis, are some life sentence prisoners in category C prisons who have made good progress during their sentence and where the risks are judged to be acceptably low.

Broadcasting Bill

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from Elderpark housing association about amendments to the Broadcasting Bill; and what replies he has sent.

Mr. Mellor: I have been asked to reply.

The Home Office replied to the letter of 10 October from the director of Elderpark housing association on 26 October. I have today sent the hon. Member a copy of that reply.

Police Interviews

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by police force and by location those police stations that are now equipped with recording machines, so that police interviews with suspects can be recorded.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Violent Crime

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest figures for crimes of violence and the percentage difference since 1978.

Mr. John Patten: Information on notifiable offences of violent crime—violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery—is published in tables 2.8 to 2.10 of "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1988", Cm 847 and in table 4 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin 31/90; copies of these publications are available in the Library. Between 1978 and the 12 months to June 1990 violent crime approximately doubled and represents only 6 per cent. of total recorded crime, similar to the proportion in 1978.

Kingston Prison, Portsmouth

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he plans to review security arrangements at Her Majesty's prison Kingston (Portsmouth), following the escape of John Gary Hilton on 6 October.

Mrs. Rumbold: An immediate review of security arrangements was carried out by the governor of Her Majesty's prison Kingston, Portsmouth following the escape of this prisoner on 6 October 1990. Immediate action was taken to improve the security of the establishment. In addition, a longer-term review of security arrangements is currently being carried out which will include the type of prisoner allocated to the establishment, the overall security of the buildings, the day and night staffing levels and the suitability of the current regime for the present population.

Ticket Touts

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration his Department is giving to counteracting the problem of ticket touts at sporting or entertainment events; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* Lord Justice Taylor has recommended that there should be a new criminal offence to meet the specific problem of ticket touting at football matches. We have not yet reached any final decision, but we see great force in his argument that touting at football matches can have particularly grave implications for public order and public safety and therefore deserves special treatment.

More generally, although touting may be considered offensive, we doubt that it warrants prohibition. The tout will normally simply exploit unsatisfied demand for tickets, without misrepresenting their face value. The more objectionable aspects of touting are already covered by the

criminal law, and promoters of events can take their own steps to deter it. For example, the organisers of the Ryder cup, by attaching conditions to tickets, were able to use the criminal and civil law to impede touting. Similar provisions have now been adopted for the Wimbledon championships by the All England Club, and we wish it every success with the scheme.

Political Asylum

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the total number of persons presently residing in the United Kingdom together with their country of origin, who are seeking political asylum.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The available information is given in the following table:

Estimated number[1] of asylum applications outstanding at 30 September 1990, by nationality

	Number
Europe	
Czechoslovakia	20
Hungary	40
Poland	80
Romania	100
Turkey	1,690
Yugoslavia	20
Others	130
Total	2,080
Americas	
Chile	20
Colombia	130
Others	40
Total	190
Africa	
Angola	700
Ethiopia	1,910
Ghana	1,290
Libya	70
Seychelles	110
Somalia	2,990
South Africa	70
Sudan	240
Uganda	2,910
Zaire	2,460
Others	760
Total	13,500
Middle East	
Iran	1,080
Iraq	1,180
Lebanon	410
Syria	20
Others	80
Total	2,780
Asia	
Afghanistan	140
Bangladesh	50
India	1,890
Pakistan	960
Sri Lanka	4,950
Others	200
Total	8,190
Other and unknown nationality	440
Grand total	27,170

[1] Figures are maxima which overstate the position, because of under-recording of decisions made earlier.

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications were received for political asylum in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and how many were granted.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* Information is given in the following table:

Applications[1] for refugee status in the United Kingdom, and grants[1] [2] of asylum and exceptional leave, in the 12 months ending 30 September 1990.

	Number
Applications received	20,400
Grants of asylum	2,180
Grants of exceptional leave	4,210

[1] Provisional figures which understate because of delays in recording, particularly of grants.
[2] Grants do not necessarily relate to applications made in this period.

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average delay in processing an application for political asylum.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The estimated average length of time between the receipt of an asylum application and the decision, for cases decided in the third quarter of 1990, was thirteen and a half months.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Security

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Brooke: Sixty-three people have died in Northern Ireland this year as a result of the security situation; 40 were civilians, nine members of the RUC or RUC reserve, and 14 members of the armed forces. Up to 31 July 1990, 250 had been charged with terrorist-type offences including six for murder and 42 for attempted murder, and 267 had been convicted of terrorist-type offences, including two for murder and 20 for attempted murder.

Undergraduates

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many undergraduates from Great Britain have enrolled at *(a)* the university of Ulster and *(b)* the Queen's university of Belfast in each of the last five years.

Mr. Needham: The information is as follows:

	University of Ulster	*Queen's University of Belfast*
1985-86	682	85
1986-87	670	107
1987-88	658	108
1988-89	559	136
1989-90	495	154

School Governors

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the South Eastern education and library board have been appointed as board representatives to the governing bodies of schools and further education institutions; and, of this number, how many have been appointed as governors of more than five schools or institutions, and of more than 10 schools or institutions.

Mr. Needham: Eighteen members have been appointed as board representatives to boards of governors of schools and governing bodies of further education institutions. All 18 have been appointed as governors of five schools, and in addition two have been appointed to two FE institutions and 16 to one FE institution. None has been appointed to more than 10 schools or institutions.

Community Employment Schemes

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many action for community employment schemes have had funding withdrawn under the terms of the directive of 22 June 1985; on what dates funding was withdrawn; and on what dates funding was restored subsequently in those cases where this occurred.

Mr. Needham: Funding has been withdrawn from 11 ACE projects in accordance with the Government's policy as set out in the parliamentary answer on 27 June 1985 by the then Secretary of State. The dates of notification of withdrawal were: 27 June 1985; 25 November 1985; 31 January 1986; 21 March 1986; 20 February 1987; 31 March 1987 (two cases); 31 August 1987; 30 November 1989; and 23 August 1990. Funding was subsequently restored in one case notified on 22 July 1986. Initial applications for ACE funding were rejected in three further cases on the following dates: 27 March 1986; 8 May 1986; 10 March 1987.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Chemical Weapons

87. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made through the chemical weapons convention in achieving a comprehensive and verifiable global ban on the production, possession and use of all chemical weapons.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: There was some progress on technical and legal issues during the summer session of the conference on disarmament in Geneva for a comprehensive chemical weapons convention. But a number of key issues remain to be resolved, particularly effective verification. The United Kingdom report on our programme of practice challenge inspections, which my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs presented to the conference on disarmament in July, was well received.

Environmental Treaties

Sir Thomas Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those international treaties, agreements and protocols covering environmental matters to which the United Kingdom is a signatory.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office treaty index contains details of over 10,000 international treaties, agreements and protocols, many of which have environmental implications. The United Nations environment programme recorded in 1989 140 major treaties and other agreements directly concerned with the environment.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage seismic surveys and development of the oil industry in the Falkland Islands area.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The Falkland Islands Government are currently updating their oil and minerals legislation. Once the legislation has been revised surveys may be authorised.

Official Visits

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list each international visit which he has undertaken since 26 July indicating, in each case, the purpose, the matters discussed and the estimated cost of each visit.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has paid official visits to the following countries since 26 July 1990:

10 August Belgium	To attend a European Political Co-operation meeting and a special meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers.
21 August	To attend a Western European Union meeting in Paris.
31 August—5 September The Middle East (Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman, Yemen, Jordan and Saudi Arabia)	For discussions about the Gulf crisis.
8-11 September Japan	For bilateral discussions.
12-13 September Soviet Union	To attend the 2+4 talks on German reunification and bilateral discussions.
17 September Belgium	To attend the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels about which my right honourable Friend has already made a statement on 15 October.

18 September France	To attend a Western European Union meeting in Paris.
23-30 September United States	To attend the United Nations General Assembly.
1-2 October United States	To attend the GSCE Ministerial meeting in New York.
6-7 October Italy	To attend an informal meeting of Foreign Ministers
12-19 October Egypt, Israel and Greece	For bilateral discussions.
22 October Luxembourg	To attend the Foreign Affairs Council about which my right honourable Friend made a Statement on 24 October.
26 October Germany	For bilateral discussions.
27-28 October Italy	To attend an informal European Council meeting in Rome.

The approximate total costs of these visits (including support staff etc.) were as follows:

	£
Belgium	2,792
France	5,713
The Gulf	77,394
Japan and the Soviet Union	63,300
Belgium	4,550
France	5,252
United States	72,000
Italy	10,036
Egypt, Israel and Greece	91,821
Luxembourg	3,412

The costs of my right hon. Friend's recent visits to Germany and Italy are not yet available.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish a list of meetings which he has hosted since 26 July with *(a)* foreign heads of state, *(b)* other foreign politicians and *(c)* heads of international intergovernmental agencies.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Since 26 July, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has had meetings in London with the following:

(a) Heads of State

President Mugabe of Zimbabwe

(b) Foreign politicians

Herr Genscher, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany

Mr. Mbeki, African National Congress, South Africa

Sheikh Sabal Al Ahmed, Foreign Minister of Kuwait

Mr. Yusuf Alawi, Foreign Minister of Oman

Herr Volker Ruehe, Secretary-General, CDU Federal Republic of Germany

Sheikh Ali Khalifa, Finance Minister of Kuwait

(c) Heads of international intergovernmental agencies

Chief Anyaoku, Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Iraq and Kuwait

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 19 October, *Official Report*, column *968*, on the number of British citizens presently in Iraq and Kuwait, what information he has on how many of them have their permanent home in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: From the information available it is not possible to say how many British citizens in Iraq and Kuwait have their permanent homes in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what media resources, through the BBC or otherwise, are available to the residents of the Iraq and Kuwait areas to ensure that accurate information is available to them.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The Iraqi media are strictly controlled. However, residents of Iraq and Kuwait can receive broadcasts by the BBC World Service in Arabic —extended from 9 to 10·5 hours a day from 2 August— and English—extended from 18·5 to 24 hours a day from 8 August. English broadcasts now include the daily half-hour Gulf link programme for relatives to send messages to British people trapped in Iraq and Kuwait. Other international broadcasters, including Voice of America, are also audible. Unsuccessful attempts were made to jam BBC and VOA Arabic transmissions, but those attempts ceased on 12 October.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for the telephone charges incurred through communications with relatives of those people currently being held in Iraq and Kuwait to be met by the embassies; if he will list those countries which meet these costs for their nationals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The Iraqi authorities do not allow detainees in Iraq and Kuwait to make telephone calls. Families in Britain have been advised to stay in touch with the Foreign Office gulf families support centre which will call them immediately there is any news of those held in Iraq and Kuwait. We are also providing a toll-free service giving general information about the crisis. Other countries have made similar arrangements. We do not have full details.

Antarctica

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his present policy towards ratification of the convention on the regulation of Antarctic mineral resource activities following the decision by Australia, France and New Zealand that they are no longer prepared to support the convention.

Mr. Garel-Jones: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to him on 25 October, at column *266*.

African Immigrants

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requirement there is for visas for unaccompanied immigrant minors travelling to the United Kingdom from Ethiopia and adjacent African countries; and what information he has on the number of such immigrants permitted to travel during the last 12-month period for which figures are available.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: All immigrant minors from Ethiopia and adjacent African countries are required to obtain entry clearance before their arrival in the United Kingdom from a British visa issuing office. Entry clearance takes the form of a visa for nationals of Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan and an entry certificate for those of Uganda and Kenya. Information on the number of such entry clearances issued is not kept according to the age of the applicant.

Al-Agsa Mosque (Killings)

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* the text of his initial condemnation of the killings on 8 October outside the Al-Agsa mosque of 21 Palestinians.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: An FCO spokesman said on 8 October:

"We do not yet have all the facts. But we are deeply shocked by the extent of the violence. We appeal to the Israeli authorities and to the Palestinian leaders to do all that they can to restore calm in this highly volatile situation. This dreadful incident demonstrates yet again the need for Israelis and Palestinians to begin the dialogue which is the essential first step for the negotiation of peace and security in the region".

We joined our EC partners in making a further statement on 9 October which strongly deplored the use of excessive force by Israeli forces.

Military Training

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had any contact with British companies involved in the provision of military training to foreign military forces.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have received a few inquiries of a preliminary nature from British companies in recent years.

TRANSPORT

Traffic Consultants

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement announcing the names of the traffic consultants to advise on the line of route of the Burscough, Ormskirk and Scarisbrick by-passes.

Mr. Chope: Consultants have not yet been appointed. I will invite competitive offers from selected firms on 7 November.

Trust Ports

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will list the trust ports.

Mr. McLoughlin: There are over 100 trust ports, but only 23 had a turnover of more than £1 million in 1989. These are: London, Dover, Tees and Hartlepool, Medway, Forth, Tyne, Ipswich, Clyde, Harwich Haven, Aberdeen, Belfast, Milford Haven, Poole, Lerwick, Blyth, Dundee, Great Yarmouth, Shoreham, Peterhead, Cromarty, Montrose, Warrenpoint and Londonderry.

Heavy Goods Lorries

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list for the last 12 months such information as is available to him on the results of the spot checks made by police that have been carried out on heavy goods lorries travelling through the three counties of Yorkshire and Humberside.

Mr. Chope: The following information is provided from road checks carried out by this Department's traffic examiners and vehicle examiners with the support of the police and includes those vehicles checked in the ferry ports in the north-east.

	Number
Traffic examiners	
HGVs examined	48,777
HGVs weighed	17,514
Tachograph charts screened	247,414
Prohibitions issued	1,075
Prosecutions	1,980
Vehicle examiners	
Vehicles examined	19,509
Immediate prohibitions	833
Delayed prohibitions	1,069

These figures are for the north-eastern traffic area which includes the three counties of Yorkshire and Humberside and cover the period for 12 months up to 31 March 1990.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date the number of tonnes of radioactive waste that has been *(a)* imported and *(b)* exported through the ports of (i) Barrow, (ii) Heysham and (iii) Workington;

(2) what equipment is employed currently at *(a)* Barrow, *(b)* Heysham and *(c)* Workington for the handling of radioactive waste; and whether this is to be upgraded within the next five years;

(3) if he will list by year for the last 10 years the amount of radioactive waste imported from *(a)* the United States of America, *(b)* France, *(c)* Japan, *(d)* Sweden, *(e)* West Germany, *(f)* Switzerland, *(g)* Belgium, *(h)* the Netherlands, *(i)* Finland, *(j)* Italy and *(k)* other countries.

Mr. McLoughlin: Radioactive waste is not imported into this country.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list by *(a)* description, *(b)* application and *(c)* maximum external dimensions, the standard waste containers for transportation of (i) low-level waste, (ii) intermediate-level waste and (iii) high-level waste; and if he will show in his answer the recommended means of transport for each category.

Mr. McLoughlin: At present only low and intermediate-level radioactive waste is transported. Containers, of which there are many types, are designed, tested and used in accordance with national and international regulations and where appropriate certified by my Department as complying with the regulations. Safety appropriate to the nature and quantity of the material carried is required to be "built in" to the design, and can normally be carried by all modes of transport.

Data on individual containers are matters for the designers of such containers.

Trunk Roads

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what improvement plans are under review for trunk roads, including bypasses for *(a)* Thursby, *(b)* Wigton, *(c)* Egremont and *(d)* the approaches to Barrow; and if he will show in his answer the estimated (i) cost and (ii) timescale.

Mr. Chope: The answers are as follows:

(a) Thursby bypass was completed in 1987 at a cost of £1·7 million.

(b) Wigton bypass (estimated cost £6·4 million); and

(c) Egremont bypass (estimated cost £10·0 million),

are both in preparation and I hope works will start in 1991-92.

(d) Schemes in the programme for the A590 to Barrow are:

Ulverston-Dalton bypass (£12·8 million. Next stage—preferred route.

High and Low Newton bypass (£17·1 million). Next stage—publication of draft orders.

Dalton bypass (£11·7 million). Next stage—tender invitation.

Light Aircraft

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what provisions exist for making compulsory the holding of insurance cover for passengers and public by pilots of light aircraft used both for business and private purposes.

Mr. McLoughlin: There is at present no legislative provision requiring pilots of light aircraft to hold insurance cover.

M4-A4 Corridor

Mr. Hayhoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive the final report on the M4-A4 corridor study from his consultants, Howard Humphreys and Partners Ltd.; and when he intends to publish it.

Mr. Chope: The consultants are now preparing their final report on this study. I expect to receive this report early in the new year and to publish it as soon after that as possible.

Stockport Bypass

Sir Thomas Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to hold the next public inquiry into the A6(M) Stockport north-south bypass.

Mr. Chope: Early 1992.

Shard Bridge

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the annual traffic flows across the Shard bridge in each of the past five years.

Mr. Chope: The information is:

Year	*Average daily 2 way traffic*[1]	*Approximate annual flow* (2 way)
1986	11,100	4,050,000
1987	10,051	3,670,000
1988	10,226	3,730,000
1989	11,835	4,320,000
1990	10,526	3,840,000

[1]Based on September counts.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has received from Lancashire county council for a bridge at or near Shard bridge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The council has submitted statutory orders for a replacement bridge which require confirmation by my right hon. Friend. A public inquiry is to be held into an objection.

The council has asked for transport supplementary grant support next financial year towards the cost of the replacement bridge and has given it fifth priority in its list of bids for new schemes. A decision will be announced soon.

Small Businesses

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to carry out research into the type of freight provision needed by small businesses.

Mr. Chope: No. Customers of freight services have the freedom to choose, in a highly competitive market, the service best suited to their needs: and the freight industry has shown itself well capable of responding to the requirements of it customers.

Railway Property (Deaths and Injuries)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many deaths and injuries to children and young people have been recorded as taking place on British Railway property in each of the last three years.

Mr. Freeman: The following table shows the number of children under the age of 16 killed or injured while trespassing on BR property. No information is available on child deaths and injuries sustained in other accidents on BR premises.

	Deaths	Injuries
1987	14	19
1988	16	[2]23
1989[1]	7	[2]17

[1] Provisional figures.
[2] Includes attempted suicide.

North Report

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on implementation of the North report.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 10 May 1990, *Official Report*, Vol. 172, c. *216*.

Traffic Lights

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the use of cameras at busy junctions to catch motorists who jump red traffic lights.

Mr. Chope: In the White Paper "The Road User and the Law" (CMD 576) we accepted in principle the use of cameras to detect speeding and traffic light offences. Legislation to allow for more effective use of such equipment will be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

Trains, Merseyside

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* the number, and *(b)* the proportion of the total number this represents, of the trains that did not run in the Merseyside passenger transport authority area of the number specified by the authority under section 20 during the financial year 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: This is a matter for the Merseyside passenger transport executive and British Rail; we do not have detailed statistics on the services which British Rail runs on behalf of the passenger transport executives.

Passenger Transport Authorities (Funding)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will outline the general position relating to the existence of possible mechanisms under section 20 for the withholding of funds by passenger transport authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Section 20 of the Transport Act 1968 provides for passenger transport executives to enter into agreements with British Rail for the provision of local rail services. The terms of the agreements are for the parties to determine. The present agreements provide for the PTEs to withhold a percentage of claims by British Rail in certain circumstances. The general law of contract also applies.

A595, West Cumbria

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about improvements to the A595 in west Cumbria in view of the increased traffic generated by the construction of Thorp.

Mr. Chope: The current roads programme already includes a number of major improvement schemes for the A595 in west Cumbria.

Port of London Authority

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 24 October to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), *Official Report*, column *190*, under what powers the Port of London Authority employs its police force; if he envisages that the new owners of the Tilbury undertaking will be afforded similar powers; and what consultations he has had with the representatives of the members of the Port of London police about the implications for their employment and welfare of his decision outlined in that answer.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Port of London Authority currently has powers to appoint constables under section 154 of the Port of London Act 1968. As I indicated in my answer to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), it is too early to be precise about the division of activities and responsibilities after the Tilbury undertaking has been sold into private ownership. Future employment and welfare conditions for members of the PLA police force are matters for negotiation between the PLA Police Federation and the authority itself.

Vehicles (Pollution Control)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport under which circumstances computer records of vehicle ownership could be made available to pollution control agencies in order to aid the detection of smoky or noisy vehicles.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* Names and addresses of vehicle keepers held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency are freely available to the police and are given to local authorities and other enforcement agencies which request them for purposes connected with the investigation of an offence.

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department will co-operate with the pilot schemes for the reporting of smoking vehicles by the public to environmental health departments in Kirklees and Derby.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* The Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency is co-operating with Derby council. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency will be pleased to co-operate with Kirklees metropolitan council.

Environmental Protection

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on environmental protection and pollution abatement policies introduced by his Department since 1979.

Mr. McLoughlin *[holding answer 25 October 1990]:* Since 1979 the Department of Transport has been working hard to protect the environment across the whole range of transport activities. Following are some examples:

Public Transport: We are encouraging public transport so that individuals have an alternative to using cars. We are supporting massive investment in rail—£3·7 billion in British Rail and £2·2 billion in London Transport over this financial year and the next two. We are prepared to consider grants for light rail schemes in appropriate cases.

The £120 million first phase of the Manchester light rapid transit scheme has been approved, with substantial Exchequer grant. The traffic management and parking proposals for London, including the development of red routes, will help buses to provide better and more reliable services. Between 1985-86, when local bus services were deregulated, and 1988-89 local bus mileage increased by 16 per cent. in Great Britain.

Traffic Management: We have a wide-ranging programme of research and development to improve the techniques of urban traffic management and parking control. This includes work on the provision of better facilities for pedestrians, pedal cyclists and bus operations, more sophisticated systems for co-ordinating traffic lights to prevent congestion and more effective techniques for charging for parking and enforcing waiting restrictions.

Roads: We have built over a hundred bypasses since 1979 which have provided much-needed relief to local communities. We have developed methods of environmental appraisal of roads which anticipated by several years the European Community directive on environmental impact assessment. We have developed the use of indigenous species for the plating and screening of roads. The Department of Transport already plants over 2 million trees each year and this number is set to increase substantially. We have started the funding of English heritage for rescue archaeology. We have appointed consultants to advise on the best landscape and environmental practice on schemes for motorway widening and new trunk roads, and intend also to improve the landscape and appearance of existing roads, especially in urban areas.

Lead in Petrol: We have introduced regulations to reduce the maximum permitted lead content of leaded petrol by two thirds. We have successfully urged the EC to introduce unleaded petrol, which has been generally available in this country for some years now. Encouraged by the increasing duty differentials in its favour, well over one third of all petrol sold in this country is now unleaded. This proportion should continue to climb steadily, as new cars must now be able to run on unleaded petrol.

Vehicle Emissions: We have participated actively in discussions within the EC about controls on vehicle emissions and vehicle noise. These discussions have led to the adoption of much stricter gaseous emission standards for cars in recent years. We are now pressing for the strictest standards being proposed anywhere in the world for gaseous and particular emissions from goods vehicles and buses. As part of the Government's strategy to encourage motorists to seek greater fuel economy, we have already decided to issue better guidance to drivers and to take measures to enforce speed limits more effectively. The proposed emissions check in the MOT test will also have benefits in terms of fuel economy. Noise limits are also much stricter. The noise a new heavy lorry is permitted to make now is roughly half the level permitted in 1980.

Road Freight: We have pressed hard within the EC for the lifting of restrictions on road freight cabotage to reduce the need for empty running. Since July 1990 cabotage has been allowed for the first time under special permits. We shall now press for full cabotage liberalisation. The introduction in 1983 of increased lorry weights from 32 to 38 tonnes has saved 10,000 lorries and reduced lorry traffic by 530 million miles. Since 1979 we have paid £53 million under the freight facilities grant scheme to encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail or water in cases where the commercial decision would have been to use road, but where the transfer has offered environmental benefits. During this period we estimate that, as a result of these grants, over 2·5 million lorry journeys a year have been saved.

Aviation: We have banned older subsonic civil jet aircraft which fail to meet minimum international noise standards and are now in the vanguard of moves to phase out the next noisiest category of aircraft. We have already banned the addition of these types to the United Kingdom register from 1 November 1990. In addition, we ensure that good noise reduction measures are employed at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, the three airports where we have direct responsibility for noise from aircraft landing and taking off. These measures include noise preferential routes, noise insulation grants and night restrictions. We have also implemented international emission standards for aero-engines covering unburnt hydrocarbons, smoke and vented fuel. We are active in international discussions looking at reducing emissions still further.

Shipping: We take an active part in the development and implementation of international marine pollution prevention regulations. Since 1979 we have implemented regulations to reduce the pollution of the sea by oil, noxious liquid substances and garbage. Regulations to control pollution by packaged dangerous goods will shortly enter into force. We are now looking at atmospheric pollution by ships' engine exhaust gas emissions, ozone layer-depleting agents, incineration of dangerous chemical wastes and gas emissions from cargoes. We are also pressing for the liberalisation of shipping cabotage throughout the Community. This will give shipping greater opportunities to compete more successfully with other transport modes, with the consequent environmental benefits that such a transfer of freight will bring. It will also allow ship owners to make the fullest use of their vessels while operating throughout the Community.

Motorway Closures

Mr. Richard Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements were made to advise southbound motorists that the motorway was closed at junction 11 following the closure of the M1 on Tuesday 23 October; what steps were taken to advise motorists to leave the motorway before junction 11; what measures were available to the police to locate and assist motorists during their delay; how long the motorway was closed; what guidelines his Department has issued to cover the emergency closures of motorways; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Following the accident on the southbound carriageway of the M1 near junction 9, Bedfordshire on 23 October police set up diversions using pre-determined routes along the A505 and A5 for HGVs and the A1081 for lighter vehicles. The carriageway was closed for 23 hours while the road was cleared and resurfaced. Details of the accident and the delays were broadcast on local and national radio as soon as they were notified by the police.

I am grateful to the emergency services in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire for the efficient and effective way in which they responded to the incident.

The Department has encouraged the police, in liaison with the relevant highway authorities, to establish recognised diversion routes for large sections of the motorway network. The diversions in this case worked well considering the large volume of traffic carried by the M1 in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, but it was impossible to avoid severe delays.

ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Finance

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, at standard prices, the amount of money given by his Department in each year since 1979 in each spending heading for which comparable statistics exist to *(a)* Nottingham city council and *(b)* Nottingham county council distinguishing, in each case, between cash and loan sanction; and if he will list those spending areas where it is not possible to make effective comparison.

Mr. Key: I have today arranged for the available information to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish, further to his statement of 19 July, *Official Report*, columns 1185-1192, tables for each charging authority in England in receipt of safety net grant, classified by political control and the amount to be withdrawn in (i) 1991-92 and (ii) 1992-93 expressed both in £ millions and £ per head;

(2) if he will publish, further to his statement of 19 July, *Official Report*, columns 1185-92, tables for each charging authority in England presently contributing to the safety net classified by political control and the amount they will gain in grants in 1991-92, expressed both in £ millions and £ per head.

Mr. Portillo: The revenue support grant transition report (England) sets out the adjustments made to revenue support grant in 1990-91 as a result of the safety net. As announced in October 1989, there will be no contributions in 1991-92 when the safety net is replaced by area protection grant financed by the Exchequer.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State proposed on 19 July that, in each area, area protection grant in 1991-92 should be no more than £25 per adult less than the combined 1990-91 benefit of the safety net and low rateable value areas grant. Tables showing the proposed level of area protection grant in 1991-92 will be available shortly when my right hon. Friend announces his proposal for the level of revenue support grant in 1991-92.

Historic Houses

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applications for change of use for historic houses have been made in the last five years; and how many have been approved by grading and by new category of use.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that this information is not available.

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was given in grants to historic houses by English Heritage in each of the last five years; to how many houses grants were awarded; and what percentage of the total of English Heritage grant aid this represented.

Mr. Trippier: I have asked the chairman of English Heritage to write to my hon. Friend about this.

Rents-to-Mortgages Scheme

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what criteria he will use to determine the success or otherwise of the rents-into-mortgages scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: The pilot scheme will test whether buying on rents-to-mortgages terms offers a practical route into home ownership for tenants who cannot afford to exercise the right to buy.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when he will be in a position to extend the rents-into-mortgages scheme to the whole of England and Wales;

(2) if he will consider extending the rents-into-mortgages scheme to the Gloucester area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: The pilot scheme in Basildon is restricted to new town tenants and could not be extended to local authority tenants, in Gloucester or elsewhere, without legislation. The case for any extension will be examined in the light of experience in the experimental scheme.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many tenants have expressed an interest in participating in the Basildon new town rents-into-mortgages scheme;

(2) what representations he has received from *(a)* tenants on new town estates, *(b)* tenants' organisations and *(c)* Basildon district council in connection with the trial rents-into-mortgages scheme.

Mr. Key: Thirteen public sector tenants, including one from Basildon, have made representations welcoming the pilot rents-to-mortgages scheme following its announcement. It is too early to assess the level of interest in participating in the scheme, since the details have only recently been announced.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment for how long the pilot rents-into-mortgages scheme in Basildon will run.

Mr. Key: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning on 23 October 1990 to my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman), (*Official Report*, vol. 178, cols. *185-86*).

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any representations from tenants or their organisation from outside the Basildon new town estates, urging the introduction of rents-into-mortgages schemes on local authority or other new town estates.

Mr. Key: We have received about 90 such representations.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department or the Basildon new town commission has any plans to undertake door-to-door canvassing to promote the rents-into-mortgages scheme.

Mr. Key: I understand that the Commission for the New Towns is writing to tenants at Basildon informing them of the rents-to-mortgages scheme, and will write again with more detailed information and invitations to apply to buy under the scheme in due course.

Approved Leaseholds

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the organisations which have applied for approved leasehold status under the tenants' choice arrangements in Greater London, indicating those which have been approved.

Mr. Key: This is a matter for the Housing Corporation rather than for this Department. I have therefore asked the Housing Corporation to reply to the hon. Member direct.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list for the latest date he has figures available the existing stocks of radioactive *(a)* low-level waste and *(b)* intermediate-level waste;

(2) if he will list the latest projected stock figures he has received from Nirex for *(a)* low-level waste and *(b)* intermediate-level waste;

(3) if he will list by location in England and Wales the establishments that produce radioactive *(a)* high-level waste, *(b)* intermediate-level waste and *(c)* low-level waste.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The establishments producing radioactive waste, together with a description of the wastes produced, are set out in the 1988 United Kingdom Radioactive Waste Inventory, a copy of which is in the Library. The 1989 edition is due to be published in the near future.

Migratory Birds

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many species of migratory bird will be protected by the recent EC directive on the shooting of birds; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many species of non-migratory bird will be protected by the recent EC directive on the shooting of birds.

Mr. Trippier: The EC birds directive, which took effect in 1979, requires member states to legislate for the protection of all birds occurring naturally within their territories but enables member states to derogate from its provision for certain purposes. In order for the United Kindom to meet its obligations under the directive the Government are proposing to remove all species from part II of schedule 2 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and to authorise further control of these species by general licences granted under section 16 of the Act. Two of the 13 species concerned migrate regularly on a significant scale.

Radioactive Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's strategy on minimising the creation of radioactive waste.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The recent Environment White Paper, "This Common Inheritance" (Cmnd. 1200) states that the Government aim to ensure that the creation of radioactive waste is minimised and that it is managed and disposed of safely. All practices giving rise to radioactive wastes must be justified. Further information on the overall strategy is set out in the 1986 White Paper on Radioactive Waste (Cmnd. 9852).

Water Metering

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what results are available from the national water metering trials; when test trials are expected to be concluded; and what research is being done to take account of the special needs of pensioners and people with low incomes.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Information on the costs and problems of installing water meters has been published in the second interim report on the national water metering trials, a copy of which is in the Library. The full results of the trials will not be known until they have been completed in about 18 months' time.

Help is available through the social security system towards the cost of water bills for low-income families and the disabled, although specific amounts are not identifiable. We are considering whether a study should be carried out to see whether metered water charges are causing significant problems for particular categories of customer.

National Rivers Authority

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of staff currently employed by the National Rivers Authority; and what is the minimum number required to staff the National Rivers Authority.

Mr. Trippier: The National Rivers Authority's estimate of total staff in post at 30 September this year is 6,800. That number will be adjusted over time in the light both of the authority's assessment of priorities and of the income it receives from levies, grant and charges.

The Government have recently approved an increase in the authority's head office staffing from its present level of some 80 to 130. This demonstrates the priority that we attach to giving the authority the resources necessary to do its job.

Iraq (British Citizens)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the housing entitlement of British citizens returning from Iraq and Kuwait who are homeless.

Mr. Michael Spicer: British nationals returning from Iraq and Kuwait to the United Kingdom, who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, have the same entitlement as other United Kingdom citizens to assistance under the homelessness provisions in part III of the Housing Act 1985.

Advice on housing options and other matters is available on a 24-hour telephone line from the Gulf families support centre, based at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Officials in my Department are ready to provide additional advice to those experiencing particular difficulties with housing.

Repair Grants (Liverpool)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of Liverpool city council repair and renovation grants from 1987 to 1990;

(2) how much was allocated from central funds to Liverpool city council from 1987 to 1989 for housing repairs and renovation.

Mr. Key: In these years, Liverpool city council has operated an extensive programme of improvement grants to the private stock through a rolling programme in general improvement areas and housing action areas. Expenditure has averaged £10 million per annum from 1986-87 to 1989-90. From 1986-87 to 1990-91, the combined housing investment programme and estate action allocations to Liverpool city council have been:

	£ million
1986-87	27·50
1987-88	24·80
1988-89	19·85
1989-90	21·68
1990-91	37·95

African Immigrants

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the cost to Hillingdon and other similar port authorities of housing immigrant minors from Ethiopia and surrounding African countries; what plans he has to fund the additional expenditure involved by means of Government grant; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: The Department of Health wrote to the local authority association on 22 October to ask for information about the costs faced by authorities, including Hillingdon, in providing child care services for unaccompanied Eritrean refugee minors. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health will consider what action, if any, he should take when he has this information.

Development Corporations

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 24 October, if he will now lay out the timetable for implementation of the recommendations in the Garlick report.

Mr. Portillo: The action which I announced to address the shortcomings identified in Sir John Garlick's report is being taken with all possible speed. I will keep the hon. Member informed of progress.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, in the light of his recent decision to issue a section 14 notice under the Local Government Act 1988 to Hillingdon council, he will issue further guidelines for local authorities on anti-competitive behaviour within the terms of section 7(7) of the Act.

Mr. Portillo: It is the intention of my right hon. Friend to issue a circular on this subject in the near future. A draft of this guidance was circulated in April of this year.

Local Government Contracts

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, with the dates of issue, (1) all local authorities which have been issued with a section 19(a) notice under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980; and if he will make a statement;

(2) all local authorities which have been issued with a section 19(b) notice under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The information requested is as follows:

28 March 1989: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral: Section 19A notice;

23 October 1989: Metropolitan Borough of Wirral: Section 19B direction;

20 December 1989: London Borough of Brent: Section 19A notice;

24 July 1990: London Borough of Brent: Section 19B direction;

10 October 1990: Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council: Section 19A notice.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will continue to make use of the sanction powers available to him under section 19 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 where it appears to him that a local authority had failed to comply with the relevant provisions of the Act in carrying out construction or maintenance work.

Historic Buildings

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made on computerising the statutory lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Mr. Trippier: English Heritage is reviewing 379 of the lists produced during the early years of the national listing resurvey, and these lists will be computer-based. By the end of 1992, when the exercise will have been completed, about 20 per cent. of list entries will be on a computerised database.

The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England is about to commence a pilot study, scheduled to last six months, of the lists for County Durham. The primary objective of the study is to explore whether computerisation of the remaining lists to a standard of information, agreed by the Department and English Heritage, is feasible.

Business Rates

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment by how much he expects business rate bills to rise in 1991-92.

Mr. Portillo: In 1991-92, 20 per cent. of businesses will still be gaining from the revaluation and the introduction of the UBR in cash and real terms. Around 45 per cent. of businesses will have reached their full new rate bill and will face no further real terms increases.

The remaining 35 per cent. of businesses will still be benefiting from the transitional arrangements which were introduced when the new system came into effect on 1 April 1990. Of these, only one fifth—7 per cent. of all businesses—will face the maximum transitional increase of 20 per cent. in real terms.

These figures compare very favourably with the old system where, between 1979-80 and 1989-90, locally set non-domestic rate poundages rose nationally by an average of 37·4 per cent. in real terms.

Urban Development Corporations

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state for each urban development corporation (i) the gross expenditure on capital projects and grants, (ii) the gross expenditure on physical infrastructure and (iii) the proceeds of land and property sales in the last financial year.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Expenditure in 1989-90 was as follows:

Urban Development Corporation expenditure 1989-90 (£ million)

Urban Development Corporation	*Capital projects and grants*[1]	*Physical infrastructure*[2]	*Proceeds from land and property sales*
Black Country	19·6	14·1	0·5
Bristol	1·9	1·0	—
Central Manchester	9·5	—	0·4
Leeds	7·2	0·4	—
London Docklands	133·0	129·0	31·6
Merseyside	19·5	2·4	3·0
Sheffield	6·8	0·5	—
Teesside	24·1	9·6	5·0
Trafford Park	11·3	2·8	3·9
Tyne and Wear	31·4	0·7	3·8

[1] Total expenditure on environmental projects, land purchase, land reclamation, housing and grants to industry and the voluntary sector.
[2] Total expenditure on transport and service infrastructure.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whom he consults before making a decision to list a building under the Town and Country Planning Act.

Mr. Trippier: Section 1(4) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that the Secretary of State shall consult English Heritage and such other persons or bodies of persons as appear to him appropriate as having special knowledge of, or interest in, buildings of architectural or historic interest. In the vast majority of cases the Secretary of State does not look beyond English Heritage for advice, but he does take into account views expressed by other organisations and individuals should they make representations on specific cases.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing local authority expenditure in respect of magistrates courts for each year from 1980-81 to 1990-91, the allowance made for his expenditure in each of those years and the projected level of expenditure for 1991-92.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* The table shows current expenditure in respect of magistrates courts for 1980-81 to 1990-91 and the provision for this expenditure for the years 1982-83 to 1989-90. The figures for 1980-81 and 1981-82 are not available. Within the new arrangements for recording public expenditure, from 1990-91 onwards the provision for magistrates courts is not separately identifiable.

	Current expenditure (£ million)	*Current expenditure provision (£ million)*
1980-81	89·379	n/a
1981-82	102·175	n/a
1982-83	112·216	109·8
1983-84	121·267	122·2
1984-85	129·498	128·7
1985-86	139·268	137·6
1986-87	148·767	145·2
1987-88	167·225	155·2
1988-89	183·136	170·0
1989-90	[1]212·378	196·2
1990-91	[1]233·298	n/a
1991-92	n/a	n/a

[1] New Net Current Expenditure
Note: n/a means not available or not applicable.

Business Rateable Values

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the number of appeals against business rateable value revaluations lodged in each standard region up to 30 September 1990.

Mr. Key *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* The number of proposals to alter a non-domestic rating list reported as received in the regions operated by the valuation office is as follows:

Region	*Proposals*
East Anglia	50,080
East Midland	58,452
Liverpool	35,079
London	107,936
Manchester	41,977
Northern	69,853
South Eastern	38,002
Southern	48,667
Wales	27,336
Western	37,924
West Midland	48,641
Central List	17
Total	563,964

In addition, there have been approximately 68,000 appeals against certifications made by valuation officers for the purposes of the transitional arrangements.

Archery

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list any EEC documents or Council directives that may have an effect on the sport of archery.

Mr. Atkins: I am aware of COM(90) 453 on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy on the control of archery; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Government seek to encourage the development of archery with appropriate regard to public safety.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to seek advice and receive representations from the Grand National Archery Society before enforcing any controls on the sport.

Mr. Atkins: The Government are always willing to consult where appropriate and to receive representations from those involved in the sport of archery.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any representations about Con (89) 446 Final-SYN 98 and the effect it may have on archery.

Mr. Atkins: No.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on moves towards the greater control of archery.

Mr. Atkins: None.

SCOTLAND

Grey Herons

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many licences have been issued to shoot grey herons at Scottish freshwater fish farms in each of the last five years; and how many herons have been shot under each licence.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The details are as follows for the period 1986-90:

Licences granted

Year	*Number*
1986	—
1987	1
1988	1
1989	1
1990	1

Numbers killed under each licence

Year	*Number*
1986	—
1987	3
1988	4
1989	3
1990	[1]4

[1] (Until October) licence limited to maximum of six.

Each licence application to shoot grey herons is assessed by the NCC in advance of any decision by the Secretary of State. It provides advice on the merits of each application and in particular comments on whether other non-lethal alternative techniques should continue to be pursued. This assessment by the NCC and the Secretary of State is rigorous and two, two, one, and one applications were turned down in 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1990 respectively.

Caledonian MacBrayne

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce a temporary scheme to help alleviate fuel costs for Caledonian MacBrayne Ltd. while the Gulf crisis continues.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There are no plans to do so. Caledonian MacBrayne has decided that no immediate fuel surcharge will be applied to its fares and tariffs, but is keeping the situation under review. My right hon. and learned Friend will take into account the estimated cost of fuel in determining the level of the company's deficit grant for 1991-92.

Hospitals

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each hospital closed in Scotland in each year since 1979.

Mr. Rifkind: Since 1979, 51 hospitals have been closed in Scotland, and the information is as follows. During the same period, 66 major new hospitals have been opened.

Hospital Closures since 1979

1979

Argyll and Clyde-Health Board
Broadstone Jubilee Hospital, Port Glasgow
Duncan McPherson Hospital, Gourock
Gateside Hospital, Greenock
Greenock Eye Infirmary
Greenock Royal Informary

Lothian Health Board
Dunbar Cottage Hospital

Tayside Health Board
Kings Cross (West) Hospital, Dundee

1980

Lanarkshire Health Board
Shotts Hospital

Tayside Health Board
Charleton Maternity Home, Montrose
Sidlaw Hospital, Auchterhouse

1981

Greater Glasgow Health Board
Carnbooth Children's Home, Glasgow
Homoeopathic Hospital for Children, Glasgow

Tayside Health Board
Burghmuir Hospital, Perth

1982

Ayrshire and Arran Health Board
Kilmarnock Infirmary
Torrance House, Kilmarnock

Tayside Health Board
Strathmore Hospital, Blairgowrie

1983

Borders Health Board
Peebles County Hospital
Peebles War Memorial Hospital

Greater Glasgow Health Board
Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital, Glasgow

Shetland Health Board
Brevik Hospital, Lerwick

1984

Argyll and Clyde Health Board
Finnartmore Auxiliary Hospital, Kilmun

Ayrshire and Arran Health Board
Buckreddan Maternity Hospital, Kilwinning

Grampian Health Board
County Hospital, Dufftown

Shetland Health Board
Old Gilbert Bain Hospital, Lerwick

1985
Argyll and Clyde Health Board
Caldwell House Hospital

Ffe Health Board
Northern Hospital, Dunfermline

Greater Glasgow Health Board
Centre for Rheumatic Diseases

1986
Argyll and Clyde Health Board
Broadfield Hospital, Port Glasgow
Royal Alexandra Infirmary
Royal Alexandra Infirmary Annex
Royal Victoria Eye Infirmary
Thorn Hospital

Lanarkshire Health Board
Hozier House
Greater Glasgow Health Board
Schaw Hospital, Bearsden
Highland Health Board
Bignold Hospital, Wick

1987
Forth Valley Health Board
Ochil Hills, Milnathort
Windsor
Fife Health Board
Glenlomond Hospital
Highland Health Board
Hilton Hospital
Lothian Health Board
Leith Hospital

1988
Borders Health Board
Galashiels Hospital
Selkirk Hospital
Peel Hospital
Lothian Health Board
Elsie Inglis Maternity Hospital

1989
Lothian Health Board
Bruntsfield Hospital
Beechmount Hospital
Ayrshire and Arran Health Board
Kilmarnock Maternity Hospital
Highland Health Board
Cambusavie Hospital
Culduthel Hospital

1990
Lothian Health Board
Drumshoreland Hospital
Grampian Health Board
Fonthill Maternity Hospital

Scottish Office Spending

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list Scottish Office spending by function in 1978-79 and 1989-90 in *(a)* real terms and *(b)* the percentage change as a proportion of Scottish Office spending.

Mr. Rifkind: Because of the changes to the definition of the public expenditure planning total from 1 April 1990, detailed comparison with years before 1984-85 cannot easily be made.

The table shows the figures for 1978-79 adjusted to the new planning total basis on readily available information. They must be treated as approximate figures only.

	1978-79			*1989-90*			*Real terms percentage change 1978-79 to 1989-90*
	Cash (£ million)	*Real terms[1] (£ million)*	*Percentage of total*	*Cash (£ million)*	*Real terms[1]*	*Percentage of total*	
Central Government Expenditure[2]							
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	74	163	2·2	204	192	2·6	17·8
Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment	77	169	2·3	264	248	3·4	46·8
Tourism	4	9	0·1	11	10	0·1	17·5
Transport	56	123	1·6	177	166	2·3	35·0
Housing	271	596	8·0	269	253	3·4	−57·6
Other Environmental Services	21	46	0·6	105	99	1·3	113·6
Law, Order and Protective Services	42	92	1·2	248	233	3·2	152·3
Education	122	268	3·6	309	290	4·0	8·2
Arts and Libraries	4	9	0·1	25	24	0·3	167·0
Health and Social Work	876	1,925	25·7	2,724	2,558	34·9	32·8
Other Public Services	54	119	1·6	126	118	1·6	−0·3
Grants to local authorities	1,222	2,685	35·9	2,629	2,469	33·7	−8·1
Net Capital Allocations	533	1,172	15·7	784	736	10·0	−37·2
Nationalised Industries Financing Limits	50	110	1·5	−68	−64	−0·9	−158·1
Total	3,406	7,485	100·0	7,807	7,331	100·0	−2·1

[1] 1988-89 prices.
[2] Including public corporations other than nationalised industries.
Notes: (1) Non domestic rates omitted from 1989-90.
(2) Does not take account of some organisational changes between 1978-79 and 1989-90.
(3) Grants to local authorities for 1978-79 are taken from Appropriation Accounts.

Crime Statistics, Strathclyde

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what were the recorded levels of crime by *(a)* the seven standard categories and *(b)* the total number of crimes in each year since 1979 in (i) division K of Strathclyde region police authority and (ii) the average for Strathclyde region police authority; and if he will give the total change in both areas 1979 to 1989 in percentage terms.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is given in the following table.

Number of crimes and offences recorded by the police and percentage change 1979-89
K Division, Strathclyde region police authority

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Percentage change 1979-89
Total crimes and offences	25,585	29,068	28,784	31,390	30,256	33,534	32,758	34,372	36,125	33,301	36,007	41
Total crimes	15,064	16,224	17,330	19,491	19,113	21,633	21,350	22,031	23,346	21,758	23,555	56
Group 1 Non-sexual crimes of violence	394	337	419	443	499	575	584	595	820	714	630	60
Group 2 Crimes of indecency	134	173	178	148	128	163	162	130	150	117	138	3
Group 3 Crimes of dishonesty	11,415	12,430	13,662	15,500	14,831	16,526	15,998	16,594	17,901	16,738	18,048	58
Group 4 Fire-raising, vandalism etc	2,966	3,081	2,817	3,103	3,342	4,007	4,141	4,238	3,857	3,443	3,912	32
Group 5 Other crimes	155	203	254	297	313	362	465	474	618	746	827	434
Total offences	10,521	12,844	11,454	11,899	11,143	11,901	11,408	12,341	12,779	11,542	12,543	18
Group 6 Miscellaneous offences	5,187	5,334	5,291	5,170	5,071	5,305	5,500	5,893	5,844	5,412	5,169	0
Group 7 Motor vehicle offences	5,334	7,510	6,163	6,729	6,072	6,596	5,908	6,448	6,935	6,131	7,283	37

Strathclyde Region Police Authority

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	Percentage change 1979-89
Total crimes and offences	351,269	374,904	384,143	393,682	407,659	417,077	403,637	412,971	435,444	431,863	465,187	32
Total crimes	195,485	198,826	223,685	240,349	243,160	259,502	250,062	246,610	257,722	259,666	275,134	41
Group 1 Non-sexual crimes of violence	7,008	6,715	7,535	7,446	7,895	8,472	9,062	8,852	10,630	10,237	10,519	50
Group 2 Crimes of indecency	2,619	3,027	2,916	2,925	3,099	3,233	3,013	2,648	2,627	2,425	2,601	−1
Group 3 Crimes of dishonesty	151,073	152,937	175,998	188,435	187,349	197,784	187,950	185,150	195,625	197,105	207,053	37
Group 4 Fire-raising, vandalism, etc.	31,261	31,787	32,158	34,757	37,307	41,685	40,958	40,832	38,845	37,773	40,012	28
Group 5 Other crimes	3,524	4,360	5,078	6,786	7,510	8,328	9,079	9,128	9,995	12,126	14,949	324
Total offences	155,784	176,078	160,458	153,333	164,499	157,575	153,575	166,361	177,722	172,197	190,053	22
Group 6 Miscellaneous offences	68,908	69,069	66,592	64,798	63,880	63,662	65,013	66,414	69,297	64,460	65,453	−5
Group 7 Motor vehicle offences	86,876	107,009	93,866	88,535	100,619	93,913	88,562	99,947	108,425	107,737	124,600	43

Notes:
Data for 1979 have been regrouped on the basis of the current Scottish Home and Health Department classification of crimes and offences which was last revised in 1980.
Prior to 1980, the return included crimes and offences reported to the Procurator Fiscal by agencies other than the police in which a prosecution was taken. Since 1980, these cases have been excluded. In 1982, there were about 6,400 such cases in the whole of Scotland, of a total of 762,483 crimes and offences.
Most of the increase in crimes in group 5 is in recorded cases of re-offending while on bail which may in part be explained by changes in recording practice.

Air Pollution, Renfrew

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to announce his decision on the application lodged in July 1990 for a certificate of registration for Cleveland Fuels Ltd. of Clyde street, Renfrew under the Control of Industrial Air Pollution Regulations for incineration of waste residues at Renfrew.

Mr. Rifkind: Technical aspects of the proposals received for Cleveland Fuels Ltd. are being considered by Her Majesty's industrial pollution inspectorate. I will announce my decision as soon as possible.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy, when considering the current application by Cleveland Fuels Ltd. for a certificate of registration in terms of the Control of Industrial Air Pollution (Registration of Works) Regulations 1989 and the statutory notice required, to give consideration to (a) the date of receipt by Renfrew district council of a copy of the application in relation to the date when the notice of application was first published in the *Glasgow Herald* and (b) the timing of the application to coincide with local holidays.

Mr. Rifkind: The procedure for advertising applications made under the terms of the Control of Industrial Air Pollution (Registration of Works) Regulations 1989 is laid down in the regulations. Because of the delay which occurred in making a copy of the application by Cleveland Fuels Ltd. available for inspection locally, I agreed to consider all representations that were received, including those after the statutory deadline.

St. Rollox Site

Mr. Michael J. Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be able to inform the House as to his decision regarding the St. Rollox site planning application; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has decided to dismiss Glasgow district council's appeal against Strathclyde regional council's direction calling in for its determination the applications made by Miller Developments Ltd. and the British Rail Property Board. Letters announcing this decision were dispatched to the councils on 26 October.

Voluntary Training Centres

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many youth training centres will close as a result of the level of funding for voluntary training centres in 1990-91 in *(a)* Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The future of training centres is entirely the responsibility of those organisations, including voluntary organisations, who run them. The Government do not fund youth training centres; they guarantee to provide a youth training place for every eligible young person in Scotland who wishes one and pay managing agents for filled training places.

European Single Market

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action has been taken by his office in order to help or advise Scottish industries and the financial sector to prepare for 1992 in terms of *(a)* competitiveness and *(b)* adequate access to continental markets of their goods and services.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* In addition to the Government's "Europe Open for Business" campaign, which is delivered in Scotland by the Industry Department for Scotland, an extensive range of assistance is available under the enterprise initiative to help Scottish firms prepare for the single market. In particular, the consultancy initiatives assist companies to improve their competitiveness by developing skills in six key areas of management practice, and substantial help is available to assist firms to break into export markets or develop their existing overseas business. In addition, I chair the single market committee of the Scottish Economic Council, which has published a number of reports designed to assist the Scottish business community, including a paper on the implications of the single market for the Scottish financial services sector.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what public body has the specific task of helping Scottish financial sector development such as the ones created in Dublin and Amsterdam in preparation for 1992.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The Government's policies are directed towards creating an environment in which the Scottish financial sector can prepare with confidence for the challenge of 1992. I share the financial community's own view that the development of its activities within that framework is not a matter for public sector direction but for the community itself.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Community Care Grant

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by social security office the percentage refusal rate to community care grant claimants for the last 12 months; and what was the refusal rate for the previous 12 months.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Income Support

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy to amend present benefit regulations to enable 19-year-olds in full-time relevant education to claim income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The Government's position is that young people remaining at school after their 19th birthday to complete their studies, and their families, should turn for any necessary additional financial assistance to the sources of funding available through educational agencies. We are aware of the problems affecting a small number of people in these circumstances.

Refuges

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what sums of money are being paid in hostel transitional protection payments by the central unit within his Department; how many hostels are in receipt of these payments; what arrangements he has agreed for dealing with these payments from 1 April 1991; and which organisations have been consulted.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) on 15 October. A total of 1,519 hostels are receiving payments of varying amounts from the Department's central unit. Details have been given to the other Departments involved. In addition, officials in the Department recently had discussions with the chairman of the special needs housing forum.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how his Department's central unit will ensure that those refuges entitled to receive hostel transitional protection will receive it;

(2) how the hostel transitional protection compensatory payment is to be implemented when it becomes permanent funding from April 1991.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The temporary payments made by the Department's central unit will cease from April 1991, when the money will be transferred to other Departments, as explained in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) on 15 October. Inquiries about the detailed arrangements for distributing the money to hostels would be best directed to those Departments.

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on consultations with the hostels sector on transitional protection payments for hostels from April 1991.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The temporary payments made by the Department's central unit will cease from April 1991, when the money will be transferred to other Departments, as explained in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) on 15 October. Accordingly, the question of further consultation about such payments does not arise. On the arrangements for funding from other sources, departmental officials recently met the chairman of the special needs housing forum.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what his Department's central unit is doing to expedite the payment of housing benefit to women and children in refuges and to rectify the situation in those cases where underpayments have occurred;

(2) how many complaints regarding problems with the housing payment to women in refuges have been received by his Department's central unit office in London.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: A central unit was set up in the Department's headquarters in London to make payments to hostels to compensate them for any shortfall in income as a result of the changes in income support and housing benefit for people living in hostels in October 1989. There have been no complaints about the arrangements for payments by the central unit to hostels.

Although the Department oversees the scope and structure of the housing benefit scheme, it is local authorities that have full responsibility for its day-to-day administration.

Hostages (Dependants)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on the benefit entitlement of people whose spouses are held in the Gulf and whose income has ceased.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Income support can be paid to those spouses resident in Great Britain who satisfy the normal conditions of entitlement, and who will in consequence be awarded maximum housing benefit and/or community charge benefit. Local authorities can award housing benefit, for help with eligible rents, and community charge benefit to help with their liability for any personal or collective community charge liability. The assessment of these benefits will not take into account any income or assets held in the Gulf that cannot be transferred to the United Kingdom.

Special payments are available to people in Great Britain who cannot get income support because their partners are working in the Gulf but are unable to send money home due to hostilities, if there is financial hardship.

Disability

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list, by Department of Social Security office in the Northern region, the number of disablement benefit gratuities paid under regulation 13 of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries and Diseases) Miscellaneous Provisions 1986.

Mr. Scott: This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Vibration White Finger

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will place in the Library a copy of the September/October 1990 guidance note for adjudication officers in Department of Social Security offices dealing with claims arising under regulation 13 of the Social Security (1·1 and Diseases) Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations 1986 for backdating of claims in respect of the prescribed industrial disease vibration white finger.

Mr. Scott: Guidance for adjudication officers is a matter for the chief adjudication officer, although I understand that no such central guidance was issued in September-October 1990.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of claimants is *(a)* male and *(b)* female for the latest available year, broken down, if possible, by benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 15 June 1990]:* The following tables set out such information as is available, for the most recent available date.

	Men per cent.	*Women per cent.*
Industrial Death Benefit	Nil	100
Industrial Injury Disablement Benefit	89	11
Invalidity Benefit	76	24
Maternity Benefit	Nil	100
Retirement Pension	35	65
Sickness Benefit	74	26
Unemployment Benefit	68	32
Widows Benefit	Nil	100
Reduced Earnings Allowance	83	17
Attendance Allowance	37	63
Child Benefit	2	98
One Parent Benefit	9	91
Invalid Care Allowance	18	82
Mobility Allowance	52	48
Severe Disability Benefit	40	60
Family Credit	1	99
Income Support	43	57

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of claimants, national insurance and non-contributory, have been in receipt of benefit for over a year.

Mrs. Gillian Shepherd *[holding answer 25 June 1990]:* The table sets out such information as is available, for the most recent available date.

Percentage in receipt of benefit over a year

	Per cent.
National insurance contributory benefits	
Invalidity benefit	81
Unemployment benefit	3
Non-contributory benefits	
Severe disablement benefit	94
Family credit	35
Income support	73

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish the numbers and percentages of claimants in receipt of benefit for a couple, with or without other dependency additions, who are *(a)* men and *(b)* women broken down by (i) national insurance class A benefits, (ii) non-contributory benefits and (iii) all benefits, giving the most recent figures.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 9 July 1990]:* The tables set out such information as is available, for the most recent available date.

	Men Percent	*Women Percent*
National Insurance Contributory Benefits		
Invalidity Benefit	99	1
Maternity Benefit	—	100
Sickness Benefit	100	—
Unemployment Benefit	63	37

	Men Percent	Women Percent
Non Contributory Benefits		
Severe Disability Benefit	89	11
Family Credit	—	100
Income Support	96	4

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures showing, for each class a national insurance benefit and for each means-tested social security benefit, the numbers and proportions of claimants who are *(a)* women and *(b)* lone parents, giving the most recent figures.

Mrs Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 9 July 1990]:* The tables set out such information as is available, for the most recent available date.

Table 1
National Insurance Benefits

	Women	per cent	Lone Parents	per cent
Invalidity Benefit	266,400	24	[1]—	—
Maternity Benefit	41,500	100	[1]—	—
Retirement Pension	6,522,000	65	[1]—	—
Sickness Benefit	28,000	26	[1]—	—
Unemployment Benefit	94,164	32	[1]—	—
Widows Benefit	371,000	100	[1]—	—

Table 2
Means-Tested Benefits

	Women	per cent	Lone Parents	per cent
Family Credit	319,000	99	125,000	39
Income Support	2,385,000	57	771,000	19
Housing Benefit				
i. Rent Rebate	[1]—	—	448,000	15
ii. Rent Allowance	[1]—	—	89,000	9
iii. Rate Rebate	[1]—	—	553,000	13

[1] Not available

NATIONAL FINANCE

Government Statistics

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates he has of the reductions in the expected values of the balancing items in the personal sector, industrial and commercial companies, financial sector, general Government sector and overseas sector in the national accounts as a result of the improvements in Government statistics made since 15 February 1989; when he expects the reductions to be achieved; and what further improvements he is seeking.

Mr. Maples: It is too soon to judge the long-term effects on sectorial balancing items of the changes in Government statistics proposed in February 1989 and subsequently. However, the initial estimates of sectorial balancing items for 1988 (published in "Financial Statistics" April 1989) have subsequently been reduced, particularly for the overseas sector (by £7·1 billion), the industrial and commercial companies' sector (by £11·4 billion) and the personal sector (by £16·0 billion): see "Financial Statistics" for September 1990, a copy of which is in the Library. Reductions have also been made to the balancing items in earlier years, particularly for the overseas sector. Further reductions are anticipated as the effects of the programme of changes are implemented during the next year or so.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consideration has been given since 15 February 1989 by the Central Statistical Office to the development of the family expenditure survey as a comprehensive data source on all items of household income, expenditure and financial transactions.

Mr. Maples: Households are sensitive to questions regarding their incomes and financial transactions and it is therefore difficult to obtain such data from the family expenditure survey (FES). Priority is therefore being given to pursuing alternative sources of this information. Development of the family expenditure survey will be considered if no satisfactory alternatives are found.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what work has been undertaken since 15 February 1989 by the Central Statistical Office and the Inland Revenue on developing an independent basis for estimating the evasion adjustment for the hidden economy in the income estimate for gross domestic product;

(2) whether the first annual review by the Central Statistical Office of the balance of statistical reporting among industries has been completed; and what action has ensued;

(3) what steps have been taken to incorporate quality changes more adequately into output price indices since 15 February 1989;

(4) whether data on value added tax receipts are now used in constructing the output measure of the gross domestic product;

(5) what steps have been undertaken since 15 February 1989 to contract out the collection and processing of data by the Central Statistical Office;

(6) what investigation has been made by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise since 15 February 1989 into possible under-recording of exports entered prior to shipment; and what actions have been taken as a result;

(7) what feasibility study has been made of the use of company accounting systems to provide information on income, expenditure and financial transactions;

(8) whether the Inland Revenue is using tax records to produce better estimates of monetary sector profits excluding net interest receipts;

(9) what new sources have been used since 15 February 1989 on personal sector financial transactions;

(10) what firm agreements have been made with other Departments by the Central Statistical Office on the definition and quality of their contributions to the national accounts since 15 February 1989.

Mr. Maples: I refer the hon. Member to the implementation report on the Pickford scrutiny of Government economic statistics, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimates he has of the reduction in the expected error in the gross domestic product, as measured by the gap between the income and expenditure measures, as a percentage of the gross domestic product, to be expected from the improvements in Government statistics made since 15 February 1989; when he expects the reduction to be achieved; and what further improvements he is seeking.

Mr. Maples: The gap between the income and expenditure measures of gross domestic product has been reduced by the introduction of (1) national accounts statistical adjustments, which have been made to the expenditure measure GDP(E) in the latest years to bring it more into line with the output GDP(O) and income GDP(I) measures; and (2) alignment adjustments, which are applied to the quarterly estimates of both GDP(E) and GDP(I) so that their short-term growth better reflects that of the preferred GDP(O) measure for indicating short-term movements.

These adjustments are described more fully in the quarterly national accounts articles in "Economic Trends" and in the national accounts Blue Book.

An announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 17 May 1990 of a series of further measures to improve the quality of economic statistics included several aimed at increasing the reliability of the income and expenditure measures. These are collecting more information on companies' investment, stockbuilding and profits, using statutory inquiries where possible; collecting more information on external trade in services; and carrying out a survey into the procedures followed for the valuation of external trade in goods.

The main aim of these measures is to provide timely estimates of better quality. This should lead to a reduction in the national accounts statistical adjustments necessary to produce a coherent set of national accounts.

A comprehensive statement on the current state of official economic statistics, including plans for the future on how further improvements to the statistics can be achieved, was submitted in evidence to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee on Wednesday 24 October 1990, and a copy of this memorandum lodged in the House of Commons Library.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consideration he has given to "Official Statistics: Counting with Confidence", the report of a working party of the Royal Statistical Society under the chairmanship of Professor Peter G. Moore, president of the society, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maples: The working party's report has been considered. The Government welcome its conclusions that there is no evidence of any failure of integrity by members of the Government statistical service. But the Government do not intend to change further the way in which successive Governments have organised official statistical services by centralising all statistical services. I have asked the director of the Central Statistical Office to consider with other Government Departments, and in consultation with the RSS working party, how the other concerns expressed in its report might be met.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what priority he accords to public confidence in the integrity of official statistics; and what steps he is taking to increase it.

Mr. Maples: The Government accord high priority to maintaining public confidence in the integrity of official statistics. Where necessary, steps are taken to improve the quality of official statistics, as in the package of improvements announced by the Chancellor on 17 May in respect of economic statistics.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what safeguards exist to protect the integrity of official statistics against political interference by Ministers; and what steps he proposes to take to strengthen those safeguards.

Mr. Maples: Members of the Government statistical service follow the practices set out in the guidance note on "Integrity in the Government Statistical Service" issued by the then head of the GSS, Sir John Boreham and published in pages 68.19 and 68.20 of "Statistical News" in February 1985, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what public mechanism is available to the head of the Government statistical service in response to a ministerial decision which, in his view, might compromise the integrity of the service.

Mr. Maples: Members of the Government statistical service follow the practices set out in the guidance note on "Integrity in the Government Statistical Service" issued by the then head of the GSS, Sir John Boreham and published in pages 68.19 and 68.20 of "Statistical News" in February 1985, a copy of which is available in the Library.

The head of the Government statistical service, like other civil servants, would have available the remedies set out in the memorandum entitled "The Duties and Responsibilities of Civil Servants", reported by the Prime Minister to the House on 2 December 1987, at columns *572-75*. He also has right of direct access to the Prime Minister if he feels there is any problem on the integrity of statistics.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what account the Government take of needs other than their own in determining the work of the Government statistical service;

(2) what specific consideration is given to the information needs of Parliament, business, academia, the media and the general public in determining the work of the Government statistical service.

Mr. Maples: Government Departments do, where necessary, consult relevant bodies about the collection and use of statistics. In addition some statistical information is collected for the European Community under the terms of certain Community measures.

The large body of data collected is, where practicable, made available outside Government on terms which cover the costs of dissemination.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any plans to review the present arrangements in the Government statistical service for the co-ordination of methodology, definitions, scope, timing of publications, and computer hardware and software, between Departments; and what sanctions are available to the Central Statistical Office to secure the development of a coherent statistical system.

Mr. Maples: I am satisfied that existing arrangements are adequate for ensuring that issues of common concern are resolved satisfactorily between Departments.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) in what form United Kingdom official statisticians will make primary returns available to the Statistical Office of the European Communities for further analysis, with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality of individual returns, after 1992;

(2) whether primary statistical returns which will be made available to the statistical office of the European Communities after 1992 will be available in the same form to other United Kingdom Government Departments and to users outside Government for further analysis.

Mr. Maples: Council regulation 1588/90 of 11 June 1990 on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) came into force on 18 June 1990. The regulation is an enabling measure only. Further regulations will be necessary to specify any information which might be transmitted to Eurostat. It is, however, expected that it would rarely be necessary to transmit primary returns to Eurostat. There are no plans for changing the procedures within the United Kingdom.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he allows the Central Statistical Office to respond when public comment on published statistics is so selective as to distort the overall conclusions from the statistics.

Mr. Maples: When public commentary on its statistics involves statements that are factually incorrect, the CSO can and does draw attention to this publicly.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what statistical surveys have been made statutory since 15 February 1989 to improve the quality of data at less cost to business.

Mr. Maples: Since that date the following inquiries to business have been converted from voluntary to statutory status:

Monthly sales inquiries for the non-engineering sectors.
Supplementary quarterly sales inquiries for Wales and Scotland.
Quarterly inquiry into stockbuilding in the production industries.
Quarterly inquiry into direct investment.
Quarterly inquiry into iron castings (in addition the frequency of this inquiry has been reduced to annual).

Plans for the conversion to statutory status are well advanced for the following additional inquiries:

Quarterly inquiry into wholesalers stockbuilding.
Quarterly inquiry into capital expenditure.

Responsibility for those inquiries was transferred to the Central Statistical Office from the Department of Trade and Industry on 31 July 1989. The conversion to statutory status for those inquiries, excepting the sales inquiries, is being made as part of the package of further improvements announced by the Chancellor on 17 May 1990 and is accompanied by increases in sample size to meet the required standards of reliability. However, the use of statutory inquiries enables results to those standards to be obtained at less cost and with a fairer distribution of response burdens among businesses than would otherwise have been necessary.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make the tables in the Government expenditure plans available in spreadsheet form on floppy discs, complete with the commands, functions and macros which specify the relations between the tables, and between the tables and the national accounts available on floppy discs from the Central Statistical Office.

Mr. Maples: We do not, at present, have any plans to make tables on public expenditure data available on floppy disc.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the scope for improvements in the quality of Government statistics in the absence of the centralisation in a central statistical service of data definition, collection, processing, primary analysis and publication as recommended by the July 1990 report "Official Statistics: Counting with Confidence," of a working party of the Royal Statistical Society under the chairmanship of Professor Peter G. Moore; and what scope he had identified for improvements in statistics and policy units in major Departments and in the reconciliation and mutual checking of information from statistical returns, administrative sources, tax data and company accounts.

Mr. Maples: The Government statistical service seeks continuously to make improvements in the quality of Government statistics where these represent value for money. The centralisation of data definitions, collection processing, primary analysis and publication is not a necessary condition for achieving all these improvements. Where such centralised co-ordination can contribute to making improvements it is carried out by the Central Statistical Office through a system of interdepartmental committees. The reconciliation and checking of information from statistical returns, administrative sources, tax data and company accounts is subject to constraints on the availability of such data, but where necessary and feasible such work is carried out. The organisation of statistical work in other Departments is a matter for the relevant Minister.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what study he is making of the opportunity offered by the requirement to make primary returns available to the statistical office of the European Communities to improve the coherence and accuracy of United Kingdom statistics and the use made of modern information technology.

Mr. Maples: None. It is not expected that many primary returns will be made to the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what arrangements exist for the systematic evaluation of Government statistics and for research upon statistical methodology by which they can be improved.

Mr. Maples: The evaluation of statistics is a normal part of the function of those responsible for their production and methodological research is also carried out in the relevant parts of the Government statistical service. Since the reorganisation of the Central Statistical Office, a unit concerned with the overall quality of the national accounts has carried out evaluation work in selected areas. In addition, two statistical techniques units in the Central Statistical Office, one in London and one in Newport, are responsible for the application of existing statistical methodology to improve the quality of statistics; these units also undertake research to develop new techniques or extend the scope of existing ones.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what provision has been made in 1990-91 for expenditure specifically on the evaluation of statistics and research into statistical methodology by the Central Statistical Office.

Mr. Maples: Seven posts are devoted full time to the evaluation of statistics and research into statistical

methodology. In addition, the statisticians concerned with the regular production of statistics will be involved in the evaluation of their output. About £65,000 of the budget for external research has been earmarked for work in evaluation and research in methodology.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many visiting and exchange appointments were made by the Central Statistical Office in 1989-90 to other statistical organisations outside Government and abroad, respectively.

Mr. Maples: In 1989-90 the Central Statistical Office seconded two members of staff to the Statistical Office of the European Communities. In addition there are regular working contacts with statistical organisations outside Government in the United Kingdom and with other national and international statistical organisations.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what control the Central Statistical Office has over the timing of the publication of Government statistics.

Mr. Maples: The Central Statistical Office publishes its statistics as soon as possible after they are compiled. Information about the date and time of release of its major statistical outputs is generally announced one month in advance by means of a regular press notice. Exceptionally, notification of the release of the monthly overseas trade statistics is provided six months in advance and for the retail prices and tax and price indices, notification is given annually in advance.

The CSO has no responsibility for the publication of statistics produced by other Departments. The release dates of some of the major series are covered by the special press notice referred to. I understand that, as a general rule, departmental practice is to publish statistics as soon as possible after their compilation.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the practices controlling guidance given to outsiders by Ministers and officials based on estimates and access to final figures of statistics before their publication.

Mr. Maples: Most economic statistics are published to prearranged timetables, with minimum delay once they are finalised. Circulation to Ministers and officials before publication is strictly limited on a "need to know" basis. Ministers are fully aware of their responsibility to observe strict propriety in their use of any information obtained in their ministerial capacity. Officials are similarly aware of their responsibility and are subject to departmental discipline in the event of any inappropriate use of information obtained in their official capacity.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what embargos and controls by the Government statistical service exist on access to figures before Government statistical results are publicly available.

Mr. Maples: The Central Statistical Office restricts advance notification of the figures it compiles to those with an operational need to know them. Similar rules apply throughout Government but their precise application is obviously a matter for individual Departments.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether *(a)* the Government statistical service or *(b)* any independent outside advisory body advises Ministers about which statistics should be collected or discontinued; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maples: The Government statistical service is decentralised and it is therefore for Ministers with departmental statistical directorates to comment on the advice about statistics which they receive.

The Chancellor receives advice on the collection of statistics from the director of the Central Statistical Office, from Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise directors of statistics and from Treasury officials. At the request of Ministers the Retail Prices Index Advisory Committee has from time to time considered specific issues and made recommendations. The Census of Production Advisory Committee also advises on census of production matters from time to time. In addition the Chancellor receives representations on the collection or discontinuation of statistics from many organisations.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes have been made in the size of the purchases inquiry for input-output tables since 15 February 1989; and what changes in the accuracy of the tables will result.

Mr. Maples: Since 15 February 1989, two major changes have been made to the size of the purchases inquiry being conducted for the year 1989 in order to reduce the burden on business.

The number of forms sent out to industry has been reduced from the proposed 10,600 to 9,300. This has reduced expected overall coverage in terms of employment from 78 per cent. to 72 per cent.

The average number of questions asked on the forms has been reduced from 32 to 17.

The needs of the input-output tables were a major consideration in deciding how to minimise the effect of the reductions on the results. There will be a small reduction in accuracy in that part of the tables showing the industrial structure of production industries, due to the reduced coverage and number of questions asked. This reduction in accuracy will not significantly affect the use of the tables in Government, both as an aid in industry economic analysis and as a framework within which to evaluate estimates for components of the national accounts.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which of the recommendations of the Pickford review of Government economic statistics which the Government accepted in whole or in part were not implemented by the dates given in the note by the Central Statistical Office of 15 February 1989.

Mr. Maples: There were delays in implementation of recommendations 3, 14, 24, 27 and 30 beyond the target dates given in the action plan dated 15 February 1989. Implementation of recommendations 7 and 8 in July 1989, involving the introduction of new monthly sales inquiries to manufacturing industry, was in advance of the target date of January 1990. The reasons for any delay, which include the modification or extension of the original recommendations, are given in the implementation report on the Pickford scrutiny of Government economic statistics, which has been placed in the Library.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many statisticians are employed in the statistical techniques units in the Central Statistical Office and the Business Statistics Office in monitoring technical aspects of existing surveys and in planning new ones.

Mr. Maples: Two professional statisticians.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what Central Statistical Office data are issued on floppy disc with the printed publications, along the lines of the 1990 annual review of Government-funded research and development.

Mr. Maples: The latest edition of input-output tables for the United Kingdom included a floppy disc with the printed publication. In addition, the Central Statistical Office's databank service offers a range of regularly updated macro-economic and related statistical data on floppy disc. This includes the contents of "Economic Trends", "Monthly Digest of Statistics", "Financial Statistics", and the "Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics" as well as the annual Pink Book and Blue Book publications and a number of other datasets prepared for release alongside the main macro-economic press notices.

Dr. Bray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Business Statistics Office proposes to integrate its registers with those of the Department of Employment.

Mr. Maples: Treasury and Department of Employment Ministers have agreed to a feasibility study of a proposal to integrate the Central Statistical Office and Department of Employment's registers of businesses. The study is due to report during 1991 on the costs and benefits of implementing the proposal.

Small Businesses

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to simplify corporation tax return and PAYE payment procedures for small businesses.

Mr. Maude: The Government are introducing new arrangements for making returns and payments of corporation tax. These new procedures, which are known as pay and file, will come into effect in 1993 on present plans. They are designed to simplify and streamline the corporation tax system for all companies, including small incorporated businesses.

There has been a recent efficiency scrutiny on PAYE payment dates and the scrutineer made a number of detailed recommendations for improvements to administrative procedures and working arrangements which are being considered.

Loan Interest (Tax Relief)

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the cost of tax relief on interest payments on bridging loans for the purchase of residential property in *(a)* 1989 and *(b)* the first half of 1990; and how many taxpayers benefited in each period.

Mr. Maude: I regret that information is not available centrally to answer this question.

Budget Council

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting of the European Community's Budget Council in July.

Mr. Maude: The Budget Council met in Brussels on 27 July. The Paymaster General represented the United Kingdom. The Council established a first reading draft budget for 1991 totalling 54·7 becu (£38·1 billion) in commitment appropriations and 52·4 becu (£36·5 billion) in payment appropriations, respectively 830 mecu (£578 million) and 586 mecu (£408 million) below the figures proposed by the Commission in the preliminary draft budget (PDB).

The 1991 budget is the third to be subject to the arrangements for budgetary discipline arising from the 1988 European Council and the inter-institutional agreement between the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament which incorporates expenditure ceilings for 1988-92. The table shows that the first reading draft budget is some way within those ceilings:

	Financial perspective		*Draft budget*	
	mecu	[2]*£ million*	*mecu*	[2]*£ million*
Commitment appropriations				
1. FEOGA guarantee	33,000	22,997	30,104	20,976
2. Structural funds	14,054	9,794	13,897	9,684
3. R and D and integrated Mediterranean programmes	2,516	1,753	2,129	1,484
4. Other policies	4,255	2,965	3,853	2,685
5. Reimbursements and administration	4,559	3,177	3,699	2,578
6. Monetary reserve	1,000	697	1,000	697
Total	59,384	41,383	54,682	38,106
Total payment[1] appropriations	56,950	39,686	52,423	36,532

[1] There is only a global ceiling for payments.
[2] The ERM central rate of £1 = 1·435 ecu is used throughout this reply.

Provision for agricultural guarantee expenditure is about 2,896 mecu (£2,018 million) below the financial perspective. The draft budget also includes provisions of 810 mecu (£564 million) for the cost of depreciating existing agricultural stocks, and of 1,000 mecu (£697 million) for a monetary reserve which can be drawn up only to cover part of any additional agricultural expenditure arising from a change in the $-ecu exchange rate.

Non-obligatory expenditure (DNO) in the draft budget totals 20·9 becu (£14·6 billion) in commitments and 18·6 becu (£13·0 billion) in payments. In accordance with the conclusions of the 1988 February European Council, the Budget Council distinguished without these totals between so-called "privileged" and "non-privileged" expenditure. The draft budget established by the Budget Council marginally reduced privileged expenditure. As regards non-privileged DNO, the Council agreed that the maximum rate doctrine would not be applied this year. However, the draft budget in effect reduced non-privileged expenditure as against the PDB by more than in previous years; and the Council endorsed a robust declaration making clear that non-application of the maximum rate in

relation to this year's budget was an inevitable consequence of developments in eastern Europe, and implied no weakening of budgetary discipline.

The budgetary implications of German unification were not reflected in the PDB and the Budget Council did not attempt to make provision for this in its draft budget. The Commission has now put forward a proposal to revise the financial perspective as a result of German unification. An amending letter to the PDB or a supplementary budget will be required to take account of the consequences of agreement on this proposal for the 1991 budget.

The European Parliament considered the draft budget at its October plenary. The Parliament's amendments and modifications will be considered by the Budget Council on 15 November.

Luncheon Vouchers

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by what amount the yield from the taxation of luncheon vouchers, over the minimum allowed tax free, exceeds the cost of collection; what is the amount of yield and the costs of collection in the last full year for which figures are available; and if he has any plans for ending this form of taxation.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 25 October 1990]:* The estimated yield from the taxation of meal vouchers is about £5 million at an estimated Revenue staff cost of £60,000. There are no plans to end this form of taxation.

Oil Production

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total tax on North sea oil production, including royalties, paid by oil companies, monthly, from August 1989 to September 1990.

Mr. Maples *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* The information is as follows:

	Tax £ million
August 1989	318
September 1989	205
October 1989	357
November 1989	68
December 1989	252
January 1990	193
February 1990	85
March 1990	679
April 1990	89
May 1990	87
June 1990	−15
July 1990	88
August 1990	106
September 1990	489

The figures include royalties, petroleum revenue tax and North sea corporation tax before ACT set-off.

Tax Havens

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to end the tax havens provided by offshore islands and other places; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* No; the United Kingdom has no power to dictate the tax regimes of other jurisdictions.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Ward: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to change the method of calculating the retail prices index so that the figure given is more closely in line with those of other members of the EEC.

Mr. Moate: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to standardise the method of calculating the retail prices index to conform with other European countries; and if this has been proposed to other member states of the European Economic Community or European Free Trade Association.

Mr. Maples *[holding answer 26 October 1990]:* My right hon. Friend has no immediate plans to change the method of calculating the retail prices index in the interest of international comparability.

A variety of methods is used by other European countries in constructing their consumer price indices, and although a recent consultant's report has identified possible scope for harmonisation, each country has kept its own index.

DEFENCE

Regiment Names

6. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will complete his review of the regiments of the line together with any changes in name or area affiliation; and if he will ensure that the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment is retained as one of them.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Work on the future force structure of the British Army is continuing. No decisions have yet been taken and I am not yet in a position to comment on the future of individual units.

Defence Equipment Sales

14. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has or will set up a register of all sales of arms and defence equipment by private firms to foreign Governments.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

The Gulf

15. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the pay and conditions of United Kingdom service men and women in the Gulf.

22. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the pay and conditions of United Kingdom service men and women in the Gulf.

71. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the pay and conditions of United Kingdom service men and women in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has already announced measures which will ensure that no service men or women will suffer a net reduction in pay and allowances as a result of service in the Gulf. Many of our service

personnel in the Gulf are living in difficult conditions, but I am satisfied that the services are doing their very best to ensure that the general welfare and morale of our troops is maintained.

26. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had concerning the reaction of NATO countries to the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has had a number of discussions with NATO colleagues about the response of NATO countries to the Gulf crisis.

28. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his counterparts within the EC to discuss the Gulf crisis.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There is no forum within the EC in which Defence Ministers meet. However, my right hon. Friend has met a number of his western European counterparts in the recent past and the situation in the Gulf has been among the subjects discussed.

32. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are now stationed in the Persian Gulf as part of the multinational defence presence in the region.

86. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current level of United Kingdom forces engaged in operations in the Gulf area.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom has committed a total of some 16,000 service personnel to the multinational effort in the Gulf, of whom some 12,000 are already in the region.

35. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what insurance cover has been arranged for British service men and women in the Gulf in the event of accidents.

80. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what insurance cover has been arranged for British service men and women in the Gulf in the event of accidents.

82. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what insurance cover has been arranged for British service men and women in the Gulf in the event of accidents.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All service personnel are eligible for benefits under the armed forces pension scheme in the event of attributable injury. Decisions to take out personal accident or life insurance cover are the responsibility of individual service men and women. A number of policies tailored to their needs is available and these are given publicity in the services. Where additional premiums are charged because of defined service risks a large part of the extra cost may be reclaimed from the Ministry of Defence.

39. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated cost of British forces in the Gulf to the end of the financial year.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave today to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes).

54. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further assessment he has made of the implications for the defence budget of current events in the Gulf; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The full operating costs of the deployment in the Gulf area arising out of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, if this were to continue to the end of the financial year, without hostilities, would be expected to exceed £600 million.

A class I winter supplementary estimate to be presented shortly will seek an increase in provision partly to take account of expenditure in the Gulf.

67. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated daily expenditure on British forces in the Gulf.

81. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the estimated daily expenditure on British forces in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 17 October 1990 at column *855*.

78. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution is being made towards the costs incurred by western forces currently in the Gulf by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Both countries are contributing financially to the multinational effort in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In addition, the Saudi Government are providing various forms of support for forces deployed in Saudi Arabia.

Defence Export Sales Organisation

16. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future role of the Defence Exports Sales Organisation in relation to his Department.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Defence Export Services Organisation will continue its very successful work of assisting United Kingdom companies, both large and small, to market and sell their defence products and services overseas.

US Forces

17. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in the United Kingdom.

29. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in the United Kingdom.

36. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in the United Kingdom.

53. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My Department is in close contact with the United States authorities over the future

level of United States forces in the United Kingdom. At present six main operating bases and 61 other facilities have been made available to the United States forces in the United Kingdom. However, arrangements are currently in hand for RAF Kemble to be returned to MOD control in 1992 and RAF Sculthorpe and the Martlesham Heath communications site in 1995. Further changes in the level of United States forces in the United Kingdom have yet to be decided.

27. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in Europe.

33. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in Europe.

69. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has about the future level of United States forces in Europe.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: President Bush has reaffirmed that the United States remains committed to maintaining a significant military presence in Europe for as long as European allies wish it to do so. However, the United States Government are reviewing their force levels in Europe in the light of changing circumstances. Following consultation with allies, Secretary of Defence Cheney has announced a rationalisation of United States bases overseas and a reduction of 40,000 United States military personnel in Europe over the next 12 months. Further proposals for reducing United States force levels in Europe are under consideration, consistent with President Bush's proposal for a 25 per cent. overall reduction in United States active forces by 1995. The United States Government have made it clear that any further reductions will be preceded by consultations with allies.

Contractorisation, Aldermaston

18. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements have been made for contractorisation at Aldermaston; and with what implications for safety and security.

49. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements have been made for contractorisation at Aldermaston; and with what implications for safety and security.

60. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements have been made for contractorisation at Aldermaston; and with what implications for safety and security.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: An interim management contract has been awarded to Hunting-BRAE Ltd. The contract began on 1 October. Our intention is to proceed towards full contractorisation; safety and security will continue to be of the highest priority.

56. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a further statement on the introduction of contractorised management at atomic weapons establishment Aldermaston.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced in this House on 5 December 1989 that full contractor operation would be introduced at the atomic weapons establishment. As an interim step, before the introduction of the necessary legislation, a management contract has been awarded to Hunting-BRAE Ltd., a consortium led by Hunting Engineering Ltd. and including Brown and Root (UK) and AEA Technology, formerly the UK Atomic Energy Authority. The contract began on 1 October. Safety and security will continue to be of the highest priority.

Contract and Job Losses

19. **Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about contract and job losses associated with his Department's future programme; and what action he has taken upon these representations.

20. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about contract and job losses associated with his Department's future programme; and what action he has taken upon these representations.

Mr. Alan Clark: A number of representations has been received. These and any more formal discussions will be taken into account as further work on the future defence equipment programme continues.

74. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about contract and job losses associated with his Department's future programme; and what action he has taken upon these representations.

Mr. Alan Clark: A number of representations has been received. These and any more formal discussions will be taken into account as further work on the future defence equipment programme continues.

Strategic Arms Reductions

2. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, when he last met the Secretary General of NATO, he discussed with him the question of strategic arms reduction.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A wide range of topics was discussed at my right hon. Friend's last meeting with Dr. Woerner in May at the NATO defence planning committee.

55. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the implications for his Department's forward planning of the forthcoming completion of the strategic arms reduction talks.

68. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the implications for his Department's forward planning of the forthcoming completion of the START talks.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Grant).

Trident

23. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what date he now expects the Trident production programme to be completed; and what was his Department's original date for expecting completion.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what date he now expects the Trident production programme to be completed; and what was his Department's original date for expecting completion.

Mr. Alan Clark: Trident remains on programme to enter service as planned in the mid-1990s. There has been no slippage in the in-service date since the decision to proceed with Trident II was announced in March 1982.

Conventional Forces

24. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many officials in his Department are engaged on work relating to the CFE talks.

37. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many officials in his Department are engaged on work relating to the CFE talks.

42. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many officials in his Department are engaged on work relating to the CFE talks.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to my answer of 26 July to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill), *Official Report*, columns *538-39*, which gives details of the establishment of the Ministry of Defence's central policy branch for all arms control issues, the defence arms control unit. Staff from other areas are involved in the work as necessary.

83. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the defence implications for the United Kingdom of the forthcoming completion of the CFE talks.

84. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the defence implications for the United Kingdom of the forthcoming completion of the CFE talks.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock).

"Options for Change"

25. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his timetable for the implementation of his "Options for Change" proposals.

38. **Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further consideration has been given to "Options for Change".

43. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his timetable for the implementation of his "Options for Change" proposals.

58. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what further consideration has been given to "Options for Change".

66. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his timetable for the implementation of his "Options for Change" proposals.

76. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his timetable for the implementation of his "Options for Change" proposals.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State indicated during his statement to the House in July, the "Options" study identified ways in which our armed forces might be restructured by the mid-1990s. There is a great deal of work still to be done in refining these proposals and the pace at which they will be implemented will be influenced by our consultations with NATO and allies, and by CFE.

Aircraft (Saudi Arabia)

30. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will review the number of military aircraft being deployed in Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: All United Kingdom force levels in the Gulf are kept under review.

Greenham Common

31. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been removed from Greenham Common since the byelaws were declared invalid.

77. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been removed from Greenham Common since the byelaws were declared invalid.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short).

NATO

34. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he is planning to hold with his NATO colleagues regarding the alliance's area of operations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Following the London declaration, a wide-ranging review of NATO strategy is in hand, and I expect to discuss the process with my colleagues in the defence planning committee meeting in December. Under article 4 of the North Atlantic treaty, alliance members consult together on threats to their territorial integrity, political independence or security, and this has been brought into play recently in respect of the Gulf situation.

Nuclear Radiation

40. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reassessment he has made of the effect of nuclear radiation upon service men and women, ex-service men and women, and others employed by or fulfilling a contract with his Department.

72. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reassessment he has made of the effect of nuclear radiation upon service men and women, ex-service men and women, and others employed by or fulfilling a contract with his Department.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The MoD, along with the rest of the United Kingdom nuclear industry, relies on the estimates of radiation risk derived by the International Commission for Radiological Protection. This body is in process of completing a re-evaluation of levels of risk.

Beryllium Oxide Gas

41. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to safety and security arrangements in plants in the United Kingdom which produce beryllium oxide gas in connection with his Department's weapons production programme.

79. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to safety and security arrangements in plants in the United Kingdom which produce beryllium oxide gas in connection with his Department's weapons production programme.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: None. Beryllium oxide is an extremely stable material which is used commercially as a protective coating for metals exposed to very high temperatures. It is not used, however, in the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons programme.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

44. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with NATO colleagues about the fourth five-yearly review conference on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty held in Geneva from 20 August to 15 September.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The United Kingdom attaches great importance to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and non-proliferation issues are discussed regularly with our colleagues in NATO.

Local Government Finance

63. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the involvement of armed forces officers in enforcing collection of the poll tax from armed service personnel refusing to pay.

45. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the involvement of armed forces officers in enforcing collection of the poll tax from armed services personnel refusing to pay.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

46. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has or will set up a register of all sales of arms and defence equipment by private firms to foreign governments.

Mr. Alan Clark: No.

Israel

47. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his counterpart in Israel to discuss matters of mutual interest to Israel and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend has not met his Israeli counterpart.

Low Flying

48. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department is planning to take measures to reduce noise pollution from low-flying aircraft.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Ministry of Defence is well aware of the disturbance caused by low-flying aircraft and the regulations governing the United Kingdom low-flying system are already designed to minimise the impact of noise by spreading low flying as widely as possible and by strict controls on the heights and speeds used. A series of studies related to aircraft noise is also currently in train as set out by my predecessor in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) earlier this year, *Official Report*, column *517-18*.

65. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the consequences for the volume of low-level flying in the United Kingdom of the recent decisions by Belgium and West Germany to ban low-level training.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom regrets the new restrictions placed on low flying in Germany and on low flying by non-Belgian aircraft in Belgium, but each country must make its own judgment of training needs based on its own particular circumstances. These restrictions will not lead to any increase in the total volume of low flying in the United Kingdom.

Atomic Weapons Establishment, Llanishen

50. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he has had with *(a)* South Glamorgan county council public protection committee, *(b)* South Glamorgan health authority and *(c)* South Wales police regarding emergency planning and public health and safety at the atomic weapons establishment, Llanishen, Cardiff since the fire and explosion at Ust-Kamensgorsk, Kazakhstan, USSR.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: None. The recent reported incident in Kazakhstan is understood to have involved production processes in which beryllium metal is obtained from ores. Such processes are not carried out at AWE (Cardiff).

Devonport Dockyards

51. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the existing arrangements governing the allocation of the core programme and commercial tendering work for Devonport dockyards; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The arrangements governing the commercial management of Devonport royal dockyard are kept under review both in regard to work which is allocated, known as the core programme, and that which is offered to the ship building and repair industry at large on a competitive basis for which DML is free to quote. The Government's declared aim when establishing the two contractorised dockyards was to place, by the end of the first term contract, a significant proportion of the annual workload with the unallocated programme. Subsequently the Government have had to take into account the much faster than anticipated reduction in the Royal Navy repair and refit programme and the need to make economic use of the resources available in the two dockyards. This year there have been significant changes in the planned programme at Devonport, both as a result of the announcement by my hon. Friend the Member for Epsom and Ewell, the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, on

31 July and the need to support operations in the Gulf. In consequence, it is intended, subject to the agreement of satisfactory terms, to place an early contract with DML for the refit of RFA Fort Austin, which was not previously in the Devonport core programme. In addition a substantial package of work on RFA Argus in support of Gulf operations should make a worth while contribution towards maintaining the company's workload.

United Kingdom Forces (Europe)

52. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to discuss the role of United Kingdom forces in Europe.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend last met Dr. Woerner at the ministerial meeting of the defence planning committee in May. A range of defence issues was discussed.

Dartmoor National Park

57. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress he is making with regard to the renewal of licences from the Duchy of Cornwall for live firing in the Dartmoor national park; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We are in regular contact with officers of the Duchy of Cornwall over the administration of the licence which governs our use of Duchy-owned land on Dartmoor for military training. The current licence does not expire until 29 September 1991, and discussions over its renewal have therefore only just begun.

Iraq

59. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's personnel held in Iraq.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 26 October at column *339*.

VSEL, Birkenhead

61. **Mr. Barry Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for placing further orders for ships at VSEL Ltd. (Cammell Laird) Birkenhead; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: It is the Government's policy that orders for warships should be placed following competition. VSEL is invited to tender for all such contracts that it is capable of undertaking. Where vessels are built is for the company to decide.

Princess of Wales RAF Hospital

62. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the National Health Service and health authorities regarding the future of the Princess of Wales RAF hospital in Ely.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Ministry of Defence and Department of Health have had discussions on the future of service hospitals including the Princess of Wales RAF hospital, Ely. We hope to make an announcement shortly.

NATO Forces (Central Front)

64. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the reformulation of NATO force dispositions on the central front of the European theatre, following political developments in the Soviet Union, eastern Europe and Germany.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As the declaration issued at the London NATO summit in July made clear, the alliance's integrated force structure and strategy will change as Soviet troops are withdrawn to their home country and as a CFE treaty is implemented. We expect that there will be moves towards a reduced forward presence of forces, with increasing emphasis on mobility, flexibility and multinationality.

Hunting

70. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what permission his Department grants for hunting of animals on his Department's land.

75. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what permission his Department grants for hunting of animals on his Department's land.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In accordance with our policy to permit maximum access to Ministry of Defence land for recreational purposes wherever operational and safety considerations permit, 17 hunts have licences allowing them access to hunt over certain areas of the Ministry of Defence estates.

Horseshoe Barracks

73. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what decisions he has made about the future use of the Horseshoe barracks in Shoeburyness.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No decision has yet been made. However, it remains our objective to release Horseshoe barracks, Shoeburyness, for disposal on the open market; and to that end discussions are continuing with the local planning authority and others to identify a financially viable redevelopment solution.

Mine-clearing Forces, Germany

85. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether United Kingdom forces are to be used for mine-clearing along the former inner German border.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are no plans to use United Kingdom forces for mine-clearing along the former inner German border.

British Aerospace

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his United States counterpart; and what matters were discussed which could have a bearing on the future prospects for British Aerospace.

Mr. Alan Clark: My right hon. Friend last met Secretary Cheney on 15 October. A range of current defence issues was discussed.

Explosive Propellants Agreement

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what financial benefits accrue to the Exchequer from the explosive propellants and related products agreement concluded with Royal Ordnance in 1988.

Mr. Alan Clark: Over the five-year period of the agreement, the price in real terms of ammunition will reduce, depending on the particular nature, by up to 35 per cent.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he undertook, prior to the conclusion of the explosive propellants and related products agreement with Royal Ordnance in 1988.

Mr. Alan Clark: We were in consultation with the company and with others for 15 months prior to signature of the agreement.

United States F111 Aircraft

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will publish whatever data he has available as to the number of flight sorties carried out by United States F111 aircraft in the United Kingdom in each year since 1979.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: No, we do not hold information about the total annual number of flight sorties in the United Kingdom by United States air force F111 aircraft.

RAF Tornados

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the number of flight sorties carried out by RAF Tornado aircraft in each year since 1979.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The number of flight sorties carried out by RAF Tornado aircraft, including RAF aircraft at the tri-national Tornado training establishment, in each year since 1979 is as follows:

	Sorties
1980	94
1981	2,095
1982	6,716
1983	11,818
1984	18,739
1985	25,331
1986	33,939
1987	35,235
1988	43,411
1989	47,644

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many hours were flown by RAF Tornados in each year since 1979.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The number of hours flown by RAF Tornado aircraft, including RAF aircraft at the tri-national training establishment, in each year since 1979 is as follows:

Year	*Hours*
1980	135
1981	2,623
1982	8,377
1983	16,481
1984	27,104
1985	36,095
1986	47,548
1987	49,481
1988	62,498
1989	68,592

Appropriation Accounts

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nature of the claim for stores supplied to a contractor referred to on page 18 of the Appropriation Accounts 1989-90 Volume 1: Class 1 that resulted in a loss of £135,000; and why this claim was abandoned.

Mr. Alan Clark: In August 1988, a contractor made a direct approach to MOD engineering staff to purchase from MOD at a price of £20,000 equipment for onward sale to an overseas customer. Without authorisation of the price or terms and conditions of sale, the transaction was agreed. Subsequently advice was that a claim to recover the difference between the replacement value and sale price, £135,000, should not be pursued.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cause of the slippage in planned land and property sales referred to in note *(e)* of page 17 of the Appropriation Accounts 1989-90 volume 1, class 1.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As explained in the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1990, page 50, the property market in 1989-90 was depressed and this had an adverse effect on sales of houses and land for development.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cause of the slippage of the project management fee referred to in note *(a)* on page 16 of the Appropriation Accounts 1989-90 volume 1, class 1.

Mr. Alan Clark: The fee was linked to the signature of contracts, the negotiation of which has taken longer than expected.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which company received the special extra-contractual payment in final settlement of a mutually terminated information technology contract amounting to £2,243,000 referred to on page 11 of the Appropriation Accounts 1989-90 volume 1, class 1; and what was the cause of this payment.

Mr. Alan Clark: The payment related to work done by Data Logic Ltd. on the design of a system for use by the Army cataloguing authority. The contract was terminated by mutual agreement in January 1990, and the payment made in respect of outstanding issues.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what disciplinary action has been taken against those representatives of his Department who were in communication with members of the civil service appeal board prior to Mr. Colin Wallace's appeal in 1975.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None.

Equipment Delivery Times

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 22 October, *Official Report*, column 94, what are the financial implications of the extension of the delivery programmes for the Challenger replacement armoured repair and recovery vehicle and the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system.

Mr. Alan Clark: The detailed financial implications of the decison to extend the delivery programmes of the demountable rack off-loading and pick-up system are commercially confidential. The details of the changes to the payment schedule for the Challenger replacement armoured repair and recovery vehicle programme are also commercially confidential, but they will not, in fact, affect the delivery programme.

Equipment Procurement

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which equipment procurement programmes, whose total value is expected to be greater than £10 million, have been either delayed, cancelled, or reduced in size since 1 June.

Mr. Alan Clark: In addition to the programmes detailed in my answers of 17 and 23 October, *Official Report*, column *853* and column *94*, I have, since 1 June, decided not to complete the Challenger towed unmanned submersible programme to formal Royal Navy acceptance standards in the light of the decision to dispose of HMS Challenger; to make delays to the high velocity missile, Phoenix, controlled effect anti-tank mine, and mobile surveillance targeting and acquisition radar programmes; and to cancel the Chieftain TLS replacement and follow-on to Lance programmes.

Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library any departmental records concerning the radioactive contamination received by civilian workers during the refit of the reactor room of HMS Renown in the early 1970s.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Radiation doses arising from personal contamination during refitting of nuclear submarines are insignificant. No records are therefore available.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 31 October 1990

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Offences (Court Officials)

Mr. Stern: To ask the Attorney-General if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of road traffic or other offences of which people who were at the time of the offence a recorder, county court or circuit judge or member of a higher court have been found guilty in the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if he will also indicate whether such offenders were guilty of more than one offence and, where applicable, of how many offences.

The Attorney-General: This information is not available in the form requested, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. In the very few cases where a serving member of the judiciary has been convicted of a minor offence, and has remained in office, this information will be recorded on that individual's personal file. No central records are kept, however, and figures for the past 10 years could only be produced by examining the individual personal files of all serving and recently retired members of the judiciary.

TRANSPORT

British Rail

151. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail to discuss the transportation of goods by rail; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and I met the chairman of British Rail on 15 October when we discussed a variety of railway issues. The Department expects to conclude its review of section 8 grants for freight transfer from road to rail shortly and British Rail will also shortly conclude its review of rail freight distribution operations and plans.

Cyclists

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State of Transport if he will meet the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis to discuss action to stop the abuse of road traffic regulations by pedal cyclists who disregard one-way street signs and traffic lights, and ride on pavements.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to the Commissioner, passing on my hon. Friend's concerns.

Toxic Chemicals

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review the safety arrangements for the road carriage of toxic chemicals.

Mr. Chope: They are reviewed regularly by the Health and Safety Executive in consultation with the Department of Transport.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the working of the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority.

Mr. Freeman: The Channel Tunnel Safety Authority is an independent bi-national body established by the channel fixed link treaty. The authority's role, working practices and an account of major safety issues considered, were set out in its annual report for 1988-89, copies of which were placed in the Library of the House. I understand that the authority is preparing its annual report for 1989-90.

Airport Development

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that the concerns and views of corporate aircraft owners and operators are adequately represented in his working group to consider the advice proffered to him by the Civil Aviation Authority in CAP 570 on airport development;

(2) whether he will list the representatives, corporate bodies, interests and individuals who have been selected by him to participate in his working group to consider the Civil Aviation Authority's advice to him in CAP 570 on airport development;

(3) what consideration he has given to inviting the representative body for owners and operators of United Kingdom registered corporate aircraft based in Britain to participate in his working group to consider the advice submitted to him by the Civil Aviation Authority in CAP 570 on airport development.

Mr. McLoughlin: Since my right hon. Friend's announcement on 17 July we have been pursuing in more detail the membership and terms of reference of the working group which will consider the CAA's advice on runway capacity in CAP 570. We have had it in mind that the group should be properly constituted to examine all the relevant wider aspect of airport development, without becoming so large as to inhibit its effectiveness.

Many organisations, including representatives of business aviation interests, have sought a place on the working group and we are considering those requests in the light of the aim that I have described. My right hon. Friend expects to be able to make a further announcement soon.

Select Registrations

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress on the select registrations scheme.

Mr. Chope: The select registrations scheme started on 1 October. This allows motorists to purchase an entitlement to any registration number from the range H1-20 for almost all possible three-letter combinations. About 11,000 registrations were sold producing an income of £5·6 million in the past two weeks. Over 200,000 numbers are still available for purchase.

M1

Mr. Madel: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will publish the report of the Health and Safety Executive after it has completed its inquiry into the accident on the M1 in Bedfordshire on Tuesday 23 October involving heavy goods vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Reports by inspectors of the Health and Safety Executive are internal and generally not written with a view to publication. In this case I shall ask to see the internal report and consider whether the production of a report appropriate for publication will be justified.

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set up an inquiry to establish the cause of the accident which blocked the M1 motorway on Tuesday 23 October; whether the packages containing the acid which spilt were safe for use on a vehicle using the motorway; whether he has powers to claim compensation for the damage caused; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: As with any major road traffic accident the police will investigate and consider whether to bring charges against anyone involved. Health and Safety Executive inspectors are investigating whether there was a breach of the regulations covering the transport of dangerous goods.

The Secretary of State has no express statutory powers to claim compensation for the damage to the motorway but he does have a common law right to sue a responsible party for damages in negligence.

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the cost to public funds of the blockage on the M1 motorway on Tuesday 23 October.

Mr. Chope: I do not yet have full details of the cost of the blockage but I will write to my right hon. Friend as soon as these are available.

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why no steps were taken to divert southbound traffic from the M1 on Tuesday 23 October so that it did not get trapped between the blockage and the last exit which remained open; who is responsible for co-ordinating action by the police, local authorities and his Department so that unnecessary delays and expense are avoided when a motorway is blocked; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: On his question relating to the diversion of southbound traffic, I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd) on Tuesday 30 October at column *466*.

The police are responsible for the operational control of traffic on the road network and for co-ordinating on site the actions of local authorities, the Department and emergency services in the event of a motorway blockage.

Severn Bridge

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what contractors are being used to repair the Severn bridge; and whether their contracts specify completion date, with penalties for late completion.

Mr. Chope: The contractor for the strengthening of the Severn crossing is Laing Industrial Engineering Construction. The main works were substantially completed in April 1990, within the provisions of the contract. Liquidated damages are imposed when applicable for late completion.

Resurfacing of the crossing is being carried out by Balfour Beatty Construction. The completion date for this contract is August 1991. Again liquidated damages may be imposed when applicable for late completion.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the repairs on the Severn bridge are due to be completed.

Mr. Chope: Strengthening work was substantially completed in April 1990. The resurfacing contract is due to be completed by August 1991.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the impact on the rate of accidents on the Severn bridge of the introduction of narrow lanes.

Mr. Chope: Narrowed lanes and associated safety measures such as a 40 mph speed limit were introduced in 1985. In the five years from 1985 the volume of traffic has increased by nearly 40 per cent. while the annual number of accidents has varied between 65 and 31. There is no evidence of a significant change in the rate of accidents since the introduction of narrow lanes.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in the investigation into the cause of the recent fatal accident to workmen involved in painting the Severn bridge.

Mr. Chope: Investigations are continuing.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he intends to investigate the introduction on the Severn bridge of automatic toll-charging facilities.

Mr. Chope: We are continually reviewing the scope for improved tolling facilities at the Severn bridge. When Severn River Crossing Ltd takes on the present bridge and the provision of a new bridge, it will be responsible for methods of tolling.

Motorways (Blockages)

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will reconsider his decision not to install appropriate traffic signals and gates at suitable intervals on the central reservation of motorways so that the gates can be opened by the police and vehicles trapped on a blocked carriageway can escape using the one running in the other direction.

Mr. Chope: No. Safety fences can already be removed in extremis as shown by the incident on the M1 on 23 October.

Vehicles (Pollution Control)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to extend roadside spot-checking of vehicle exhaust emissions to include cars and light vans; which emissions will be measured; what equipment will be used to measure emissions; and by whom measurements will be undertaken.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 24 October 1990]*: We are already consulting on proposals for an emissions standard to be applied as from next year to vehicles in use. Compliance checking will be undertaken both at the time of the MOT test, and also at roadside enforcement spot-checks. The check will involve measuring with gas analysing equipment the volume of carbon monoxide in exhaust emissions. Measurement will be made either by trained MOT testers or by vehicle examiners from the vehicle inspectorate executive agency.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Special Needs Education

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West on 23 October, *Official Report*, column *158*, if he will list the ways in which the local management of schools offers local education authorities the flexibility to take account of the resources needed in schools to support all pupils with special education needs.

Mr. Fallon: Under local management of schools, LEAs have freedom to decide the following. The numbers in parenthesis refer to paragraphs in LMS circular 7/88.

- whether to delegate provision for pupils with statements or to manage it centrally; (75)
- how large specialist central support teams should be, and what range of specialisms they should cover; (81)
- what variations to recognise between schools in the incidence of pupils with special needs but without statements; (115; and S33(3)(b) of the Act)
- by what means additional resources are to be allocated to take account of these variations; (115)
- how much to allocate to individual schools and in total; (115)
- what additional provision to make from contingency funds in-year where there are large unforeseen changes in pupil numbers or characteristics (such as special needs); (87(a)(i))
- by what means school's success in identifying and providing for their pupils will be monitored. (151-154)

Macmillan College

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received from Macmillan college about the teaching of music; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: The Department has received one recent representation from Macmillan city technology college about the teaching of music. It suggests that peripatetic music teachers employed by Cleveland LEA may find that they lose their work for the LEA if they also do work at Macmillan CTC. We would be very disturbed if this was the case and the Department is investigating the matter urgently. We would expect Cleveland LEA to be able to provide an assurance that no such discrimination is practised.

Librarians

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the number of qualified chartered librarians working *(a)* in primary schools, *(b)* in secondary schools, *(c)* in further education colleges and *(d)* in higher education colleges, polytechnics and universities.

Mr. Fallon: The information requested is not available centrally.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list every sponsor of a city technology college with the amount promised and the city technology college concerned, in each case.

Mr. MacGregor: The principal sponsors of the city technology colleges announced to date are as follows:

Kingshurst
Hanson Industries—£1 million

Djanogly, Nottingham
Mr. Harry Djanogly—£1·1 million

Macmillan College, Teesside
BAT Industries—£1 million

Bradford
The Dixons Group plc—£1·1 million

Emmanuel College, Gateshead
The Reg Vardy Foundation—£1 million

Harris, Croydon
The Philip and Pauline Harris Charitable Trust —£1·25 million

Leigh, Dartford
Mr. G. N. Leigh—£1 million

Britschool, Croydon
The British Record Industry Trust—£1·1 million

Bacons, Southwark
Southwark Diocesan Board of Education —£1·5 million

Haberdashers' Aske's, New Cross
The Robert Aske Charity—£3·45 million

Corby
Mr. H. de Capell Brooke—£1·1 million

Derby
The Landau Foundation—£1·15 million

Telford
The Mercers' Company and Tarmac plc —£1 million each

Wandsworth
ADT—£1 million

Bristol
Cable and Wireless and The Wolfson Foundation —£1 million each

Total of principal sponsors' contributions—£20·75 million.

In addition, more than 100 companies/individuals have pledged an additional £11 million to the programme as a whole. This brings the total sponsorship to over £31 million. Discussions are continuing with other prospective sponsors, and I am confident that these talks will lead to further sponsorship.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether parents whose children are refused admission to a city technology college have the right of appeal to be heard by *(a)* an appeal body drawn up by the governors of a city technology college, *(b)* the Secretary of State, *(c)* the local commissioner and *(d)* any other independent body;

(2) if he will publish the admissions procedures that have been agreed for Bacon's city technology college;

(3) if he will make it his policy to ensure that parents whose children are refused admission to a city technology college are entitled to an appeal hearing.

Mr. Fallon: Details of the admissions policy and procedures for the Bacon's city technology college are available, free of charge, from the Bacon's project office, units 42/43, City Business Centre, Lower road, London SE16 2XB. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House. It is for the principal of each CTC to take full responsibility for the careful selection of the most suitable pupils for that school, using criteria agreed with my right hon. Friend. My right hon. Friend does not require CTCs to establish appeals procedures. The admissions procedures of CTCs are not subject to scrutiny by any independent body. However, if a CTC failed to apply the criteria agreed with him, this matter would be pursued by my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what grants he intends to make to Bacon's city technology college in *(a)* 1990-91, *(b)* 1991-92 and *(c)* 1992-93.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend has made provision for grants amounting to circa £7·1 million to be available to the Bacon's city technology college in this financial year. These relate to the management of the project and initial capital costs. The level of expenditure for the following financial years has not yet been agreed.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish the conditions that govern the payment of grants to Bacon's city technology college.

Mr. Fallon: The conditions which apply to the payment of grants to city technology colleges are set out in individual funding agreements between sponsors and my right hon. Friend. The model for these agreements, which has evolved in discussions over the past year, contains all the material terms and conditions of grant. Copies of the model have today been placed in the Library. These replace the model agreement placed in the Library in July 1989.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science at what rates, for pupils *(a)* under and *(b)* over school leaving age, he has agreed to pay annual per capita grant to city technology colleges; and what are the total amounts of annual per capita grant and earmarked annual grant respectively that he has agreed to pay each city technology college during 1990-91.

Mr. Fallon: The rate of annual per capita grant—APG—in respect of each pupil for the academic year 1990-91 is £2,075 for pupils under school leaving age, and £2,365 weighted in respect of pupils over school leaving age. The total amounts of APG and earmarked annual grant—EAG—which have been agreed for payment to city technology colleges during this period are as follows:

	Total APG £	*Total EAG* £
Kingshurst	1,820,602	189,918
Nottingham	1,397,707	145,699
Teesside	1,234,019	134,238
Gateshead	862,550	179,048
Bradford	934,689	194,682
Dartford	—	321,605
Croydon	—	294,478

In the case of Dartford and Croydon, the colleges are being paid APG on the basis of indicative figures only, as agreement has not yet been reached on the uplift appropriate to reflect the higher costs of operating in the London area.

In addition to the per capita figure for APG, provision is made within this grant for administration costs and diseconomies of scale during each college's start-up period, reflecting good practice in respect of new schools within the LEA maintained sector.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the pupil-teacher ratio, for pupils *(a)* under and *(b)* over school leaving age, in each city technology college during the current academic year.

Mr. Fallon: Overall pupil-teacher ratios in city technology colleges for the academic year 1990-91 are as follows:

	Pupil teacher ratio (1990-91)
Kingshurst	14·082
Nottingham	12·706
Teesside	13·286
Gateshead	9·375
Bradford	10·588
Dartford	13·544
Croydon	14·516

The data necessary to calculate pupil teacher ratios in respect of pupils above and below school leaving age are not held centrally.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many *(a)* boy and *(b)* girl pupils (i) under and (ii) over school leaving age are registered to attend each city technology college being funded by his Department during the academic year 1990-91; and what was the total number of pupils planned for each city technology college when it became fully operational.

Mr. Fallon: Numbers of pupils under and over school leaving age registered at each city technology college for the academic year 1990-91 are as follows. Planned total pupil numbers in each category are shown in brackets:

College and opening date	*USLA pupils 1990-91*	*(full)*	*OSLA pupils 1990-91*	*(full)*
Kingshurst (1988)	540	(900)	150	(200)
Nottingham (1989)	336	(825)	96	(165)
Teesside (1989)	372	(900)	—	(150)
Gateshead (1990)	150	(750)	—	(150)
Bradford (1990)	180	(750)	—	(230)
Dartford (1990)	811	(1,050)	110	(200)
Croydon (1990)	830	(900)	70	(200)

Pupil numbers disaggregated by sex are not held centrally.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will take steps to ensure

that parent governors at Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham city technology college are elected, in line with parent governors at maintained schools, and subject to disqualification or removal from office solely on grounds similar to those set out for parent governors at maintained schools under regulations 5 to 8 of the Education (School Government) Regulations 1989;

(2) if he will take steps to ensure that the parent governors at the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham city technology college have the same rights to participate in the financial management of the college as will be accorded to parent governors in voluntary schools under local management of schools;

(3) if he was consulted about the provisions of the articles of association of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham college trust.

Mr. Fallon: My right hon. Friend was consulted about the provisions of the articles of association of the Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham city technology college trust. In considering these my right hon. Friend took into account the wishes of the CTC trust and the provisions which he considered appropriate for the sound management of the CTC. The same considerations will apply to the scheme of government of the college which will determine the functions of the governing body, including parent governors. As circumstances differ, provisions will not necessarily be identical with those which apply to LEA maintained schools.

Teacher Vacancies

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make available details of the summary of teacher vacancies, a summary of which he published in September.

Mr. MacGregor: A copy of the Department's survey of teacher vacancies at the beginning of September has now been deposited in the Library.

Official Visits

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* all visits he has made to schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions, with the date of each visit and its purpose.

Mr. MacGregor: This information can only be provided at disproportionate cost. I continue to make several visits to all types of educational bodies and institutions every week.

UN International Week of Science and Peace

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if his Department has any plans to promote the second United Nations International Week of Science and Peace, 5 to 11 November.

Mr. Alan Howarth: We have no plans to commit expenditure in support of this project.

PRIME MINISTER

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Prime Minister what response she has made to her French counterpart following his announcement made on 22 October seeking increased nuclear weapons co-operation with the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister: President Mitterrand and I discussed several subjects of mutual interest while we were in Rome, among them Anglo-French defence co-operation. We welcomed the progress which was being made.

Iraq

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the case for continued sanctions against Iraq, even if it withdraws from Kuwait, to ensure that it is incapable of ever using its nuclear weapons; and if she will make a statement on her policy towards ensuring that other countries which have nuclear weapons do not use them.

The Prime Minister: We have always enforced rigorously export controls pursuant to our obligations under the non-proliferation treaty—NPT—and shall continue to do so. In addition, for the last 10 years we have not sold any lethal weapons to Iraq. We shall need to consider what sanctions may need to be maintained once the present crisis is resolved, in the light of the circumstances then prevailing. As a depositary power of the NPT, the United Kingdom is a keen supporter of the principle of non-proliferation, and we take every suitable opportunity to encourage states not yet parties to the treaty to adhere to it and abide by its provisions.

ENERGY

Nuclear Reactors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list by location the number of nuclear reactors that are awaiting pressure vessel temperature gauge replacements to date; what was the position on *(a)* 1 January and *(b)* 30 June of this year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The question of maintenance requirements for reactor pressure vessel temperature gauges is a matter for the operators of nuclear reactors. Every nuclear reactor pressure vessel in the United Kingdom has a large number of temperature monitoring gauges—thermocouples—many more than are necessary for safe operation. The Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate is satisfied that adequate monitoring of temperature in the pressure vessel does not depend upon all gauges being operative. However, if the NII were not satisfied as to the adequacy of monitoring it would prohibit continued operation of the reactor until the matter had been rectified to its satisfaction.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the amount paid to MCA/Universal Films for the use of the Frankenstein character in Government advertising campaigns.

Mr. Baldry: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) on 29 October, at column *366*.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what guidance he issued to electricity companies on the appointment of advisers on electricity privatisation.

Mr. Wakeham: This was a commercial matter for the companies concerned.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many people have registered to buy shares in the electricity distribution companies.

Mr. Wakeham: I shall be announcing the number shortly.

Energy Efficiency Office

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the current effectiveness of his Department's Energy Efficiency Office; and whether he has any plans to change or extend its role.

Mr. Baldry: The Energy Efficiency Office continues to offer a range of effective programmes designed to encourage the adoption of cost-effective energy efficiency measures. Since 1983, the EEO's programmes have led to continuing energy savings now worth over £500 million per year, and greatly increased public awareness of the value of energy efficiency.

The White Paper on the Environment "This Common Inheritance"—Cm. 1200—announced a number of new EEO initiatives under which it would be developing proposals for a new scheme of project management assistance for implementation of energy efficiency projects; considering with the lighting industry a promotional drive on high efficiency lighting; pursuing appliance labelling and minimum standards with our own appliance industry and in the EC.

The EEO will also be introducing the home energy efficiency scheme in the new year. This will offer grants towards the cost of basic energy efficiency measures in low-income households.

The new ministerial committee on energy efficiency, chaired by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy, will maintain the momentum for energy efficiency improvements, monitor the Government's energy efficiency programmes and assess the need for further action.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the outcome of the first meeting of the ministerial group on energy efficiency held on 17 October.

Mr. Baldry: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) on 25 October 1990, at columns *273-74*.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what assessment was made of the impact on the potential generation of electricity from renewable sources by independent generator prior to the decision to decouple the nuclear and renewable elements of the non-fossil fuel obligations.

Mr. Baldry: As my right hon. Friend announced to the House on 12 February, *Official Report*, column 29, he decided to decouple renewables from the initial order setting a non-fossil fuel obligation so as to enable the large response from renewables operators to be assessed fairly and a full contribution obtained.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of electricity generated in each Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country comes from *(a)* renewable energy sources, *(b)* nuclear power and *(c)* fossil fuel burn.

Mr. Baldry: The information requested is as follows:

Percentage[1] of Total Electricity Generated by:

	Renewable energy sources	*Nuclear power*	*Fossil fuels*
Australia	11	—	89
Austria	74	—	26
Belgium	2	61	37
Canada	59	16	25
Denmark	1	—	98
Finland	36	35	29
France	13	75	12
Germany[2]	5	34	61
Greece	6	—	94
Iceland	100	—	—
Ireland	22	—	78
Italy	20	—	80
Japan	14	24	62
Luxembourg	67	—	33
Netherlands	1	5	93
New Zealand	80	—	20
Norway	100	—	—
Portugal	28	—	71
Spain	14	38	48
Sweden	51	46	3
Switzerland	57	42	1
Turkey	35	—	65
United Kingdom	2	23	75
United States	9	19	72

[1] This information is based on estimated data for 1989 contained in the International Energy Agency publication "Coal Information 1990", Table 13—"Electricity Production by Fuel".
[2] Information relates to the former Federal Republic of Germany.

Energy Technology

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the consultancies commissioned by his Department to evaluate the feasibility of developing a methodology for assessing the environmental costs of different energy technologies; in each case, when the contract was issued and when he expects to receive the reports; and what is the total cost of commissioning this research.

Mr. Moynihan: The Department has commissioned work at the Energy Technology Support Unit to evaluate the feasibility of developing a methodology for assessing the environmental costs of different energy technologies.

This draws on work within ETSU itself, work by other Government Departments, and sub-contracts managed by ETSU, and has yet to reach a conclusion.

1 Palace Street

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the purpose of the lights inset into the floor in the reception area of his Department's main building at 1 Palace street.

Mr. Wakeham: The lighting in the reception area of my Department's main building was designed and installed on behalf of the building developer. It would be inappropriate for me to speculate on the purpose of particular aspects of the developer's design philosophy.

Electricity Bills

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consideration he has given to requiring the electricity distribution companies to give discounts to families and pensioners who have difficulty paying electricity bills.

Mr. Wakeham: It would not be fair to expect the general body of consumers to subsidise those who cannot or will not pay their bills. However, in recognition that some consumers may experience genuine difficulties, the licences issued to the public electricity suppliers have strengthened the protections against disconnection offered to such consumers. These include easy payment arrangements and, where safe and practical, the installation of prepayment meters.

Petrol Prices

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his answer of 22 October, *Official Report*, column *13*, to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, if he will list the instances in which oil companies delayed petrol price increases.

Mr. Wakeham: Between the end of July and the end of September gasoline prices on the Rotterdam spot market rose by over 90 per cent., while oil prices rose by over 140 per cent. Over the same period, United Kingdom pump prices rose on average by around 20 per cent., including tax, and 45 per cent., excluding tax.

Electricity Generation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy further to his answer of 22 October to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, *Official Report*, column *15*, what proportion of electricity generated in England and Wales in 1989 was generated from coal, oil, gas, nuclear and renewables.

Mr. Wakeham: The proportions of fuel used to generate electricity in 1989 in England and Wales were as follows:

Fuel used in electricity generation[1]

	Per cent. share
Coal	76
Nuclear	18
Oil[2]	7

[1] Coverage relates to those generating companies formerly comprising the public electricity supply system in England and Wales: National Power, PowerGen, Nuclear Electric, National Grid Company, Midlands Electricity and South Western Electricity.

[2] Including oil used in gas turbines and for lighting up coal fired boilers, and orimulsion.

The amount of other fuel sources—natural flow hydro, and natural gas—accounted for less than 0·1 per cent. of the total.

Overseas Visits

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list all overseas visits made by himself and other Ministers in his Department, giving the date, duration, purpose and cost, and number of officials involved in each case.

Mr. Wakeham: I and my Ministers have made 22 overseas visits since my appointment as Secretary of State for Energy in July 1989. I shall write to the hon. Member with more detailed information about these visits as soon as possible.

Piper Alpha

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his answer of 9 July, *Official Report*, column *37*, to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), if he will make a statement on the further work under the Piper Alpha abandonment programme.

Mr. Moynihan: A direction was given to Occidental Petroleum (Caledonia) Ltd. and its co-venturers on 15 August requiring them to carry out as soon as reasonably practicable further works pursuant to the conditions attached to the Piper Alpha abandonment programme as approved by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Under the terms of the direction the companies are required:

(1) Within the safety zone to re-survey an annulus of internal radius 250 metres and external radius 500 metres to determine the position and dimensions of any remains of the installation and to report the results to the Secretary of State. This survey is to be repeated biennially until the Secretary of State is satisfied that any movement of debris —from within to outside the safety zone—will not cause unjustifiable interference with fishing.

(2) To trawl the area immediately outside the 500-metre safety zone out to a radius of 1,500 metres, to recover debris located by surveys conducted in 1989 and to recover by other means debris too large or heavy to be lifted in a trawl.

(3) To continue to sample sediment, seawater and biota and to examine the samples for PCBs on a biennial basis until the Secretary of State is satisfied that there is no significant risk to the environment from PCBs associated with the transformers formerly located on the installation.

The survey and analysis of sediment, seawater and biota for radioactivity in 1989 showed no contamination as a result of the accident. However, as a safeguard against the future release of any radioactive material held in the debris pile samples will be examined for radioactivity in 1994—five years after the previous survey—and at such times as the Secretary of State may subsequently specify.

HEALTH

Children at Risk

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the extent to which his Department independently verifies the need to place a

particular child on an at-risk register, and the extent to which it verifies compliance with departmental guidelines on such placement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department does not seek verification of this kind. Local agencies, are responsible for the decisions in individual cases and are expected to follow departmental guidance within the established legal framework. The social services inspectorate looks at local child protection services procedures and practices as part of its inspection work and produces reports of its findings.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the numbers of children registered as being at risk in each relevant local authority in England, showing the figures both as numbers of cases and as a percentage of the population of the local authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The number of children on child protection registers is published in "Children and Young Persons on Child Protection Registers: Year ending 31 March". The publication also shows the numbers on the register as a rate per 1,000 population under 18. The most recent publication is for 1989 and a copy is available in the Library. Figures for 1990 will be available shortly.

Children in Care

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish a table showing what proportion of children taken into care in each relevant local authority are subsequently fostered or adopted.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information is not available centrally in the form requested.

A table on children fostered is published in "Children in Care of Local Authorities at 31 March, England". The most recent publication is for 1988—provisional—and a copy is available in the Library.

Work is nearing completion on a table showing numbers of children leaving care on adoption and will be placed in the Library, when completed.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish a table showing, for each relevant local authority in England, the average time spent by a child in care before being returned to its family.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information available centrally shows the numbers of children leaving care, but does not separately identify numbers returning home. A table setting out time in care since the child's last change in legal status will soon be available, and a copy will be placed in the Library.

Psychotherapy

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration he has given to the establishment of a statutory register of psychotherapists.

Mrs. Virgina Bottomley: The question of a statutory register of psychotherapists is currently being considered. A preliminary meeting was held in September with representatives of some of the various bodies of psychotherapists in order to ascertain their views.

Severely Physically Handicapped People

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current waiting list for receiving special seating for the severely physically handicapped in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* England and *(d)* Northern Ireland on a comparable statistical basis.

Mr. Dorrell: There are no waiting lists for provision of special seating to severely disabled people in England. The provision of special seating in Scotland is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. The provision of special seating in Wales and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on measures to improve the quality of care for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Mr. Dorrell: We have recently published details of two initiatives to improve services for people with a mental illness, including Alzheimer's disease. First, from next April health authorities, in collaboration with social services authorities, will be required to introduce more systematic arrangements for assessing the needs of individuals for health and social care. Second, we have announced a new specific grant to local authorities, which should increase expenditure on such care by £30 million in 1991-92.

Hospital Beds, West Midlands

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of the number of hospital beds in the West Midlands regional health authority *(a)* in 1979, *(b)* in 1985 and *(c)* in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is given in the table.

Average number of beds available daily

Year	*All Beds*	*Acute Beds*	*Acute Inpatients treated*	*Acute Inpatients per Bed*
1979	36,263	14,669	434,673	29
1985	33,108	14,114	520,806	36
1988-89	28,784	12,528	529,934	42

Source: SH3: 1979.
KHO3: 1988-89.

Health Authority Meetings

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by regional health authority, the arrangements that have been made for community health council representatives to attend their meetings in an observer status; what arrangements have been made for community health council observers to attend the private sessions of these meetings, and any executive meetings held; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Arrangements for access to health authority meetings beyond that provided by the

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 is a matter for local discretion by health authorities. This is reflected in current guidance. Details of how health authorities set up and run their meetings are not held centrally.

Doncaster AHA

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans within the next 12 months to visit national health service establishments in the Doncaster area health authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has no plans to visit Doncaster health authority.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the current members of the Doncaster health authority giving *(a)* any appropriate qualifications held and *(b)* any political affiliation.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Trent regional health authority is responsible for appointing the non-executive members of Doncaster health authority. The chief officer and chief finance officer are ex-officio executive members of the authority. Up to three other executive members may be appointed by the chairman and non-executive members acting with the chief officer. Members are appointed for the individual skills and experience they can bring to the National Health Service. The hon. Member may wish to contact Sir Michael Carlisle, chairman of Trent regional health authority, for details.

Consultants (Distinction Awards)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the amount of distinction awards paid to consultants in each of the health authorities in the Trent regional health authority for the last five years; and if he will make a statement on what the qualifications are for this award.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information is shown in the table:

Trent region—Medical and dental consultants distinction awards
National Health Service staff

	1985-86 £ *(cash)*	*1986-87* £ *(cash)*	*1987-88* £ *(cash)*	*1988-89* £ *(cash)*	[1] *1989-90* £ *(cash)*
Trent RHA	40,066	14,033	54,021	49,265	25,294
North Derbyshire	93,798	108,894	104,856	122,455	122,455
Southern Derbyshire	—	272,586	288,060	313,276	314,581
Leicestershire	463,755	495,481	577,631	558,810	592,329
North Lincolnshire	69,623	84,235	97,263	81,129	92,898
South Lincolnshire	51,356	59,501	73,388	81,129	103,499
Bassetlaw	14,895	13,480	19,245	20,808	25,320
Central Nottinghamshire	84,009	103,491	132,335	115,741	122,195
Nottingham	537,072	573,020	689,005	739,501	883,559
Barnsley	74,300	68,133	78,372	86,523	86,269
Doncaster	97,958	98,064	128,185	142,765	145,936
Rotherham	63,924	70,201	84,192	79,640	99,144
Sheffield	807,820	905,421	995,291	1,032,283	1,072,521

[1] 1989-90 figures are "provisional" in that the annual accounts for that year are as yet subject to audit.

Information on the qualifications for these awards is contained in the Department's booklet "Consultants' Distinction Awards", a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Hammersmith Hospital (Fire)

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information his Department has on the cause of the fire in the research laboratories of Hammersmith hospital on 21 October; and whether it involved *(a)* the release of any toxic materials to the environment injurious of human or animal health or *(b)* damage to any medical machinery containing radioactive isotopes.

Mr. Dorrell: Officials have received a full report about the fire, which occurred in a building owned by the Royal Postgraduate Medical school. Although the police have not completed their investigation, there is forensic evidence to suggest that the fire may have been started deliberately. There was no release of toxic materials, and no damage to equipment containing radioactive isotopes.

The Gulf

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what preparations are being made within the national health service for dealing with the wounded in the event of the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authority contingency plans already provide for NHS treatment of military casualties in the event of war. Regional general managers in England have been asked to consider what preparatory measures might be needed under their plans.

Royal Liverpool Hospital

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the names of the proposed trustees for the opting out of the Royal Liverpool hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will announce the names of the chairmen and non-executive directors of NHS trusts after a decision has been made which trusts are to be established.

ENVIRONMENT

Sunday Markets

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth dated 15 October referring to Sunday markets, *Official Report*, column *621*, if he will set out the variety of statutory powers that local authorities have to control Sunday markets; and what assessment he has made as to how effective these powers have so far proved to be;

(2) pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth dated 15 October referring to Sunday markets, *Official Report*, column *621*, if he will give the geographical location of each Sunday market;

(3) pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth dated 15 October referring to Sunday markets, *Official Report*, column *621*, how many representations his Department has received for each of the last three years.

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning set out local authorities' statutory powers to control markets in his reply on 22 October, *Official Report*, column *39* to an earlier question from my hon. Friend. We are not aware of any widespread local authority concern about these powers. The Department has no information about the geographical location of each Sunday market.

Information about the number of representations the Department has received about Sunday markets in the last three years is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

London Docklands Development Corporation

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will itemise the contracts the Lilley Group plc has undertaken for the London Docklands development corporation; whether Mr. Robert Rankin, board member of the London Docklands development corporation, declared an interest when these matters came before the London Docklands development corporation board; and whether he was present during discussions of these contracts;

(2) if he will list the contracts that Mr. David Davies, board member of the London Docklands development corporation has been involved with *(a)* within the London Docklands development corporation area through the subsidiary companies of D. Y. Davies plc and *(b)* with the London Docklands development corporation; and whether Mr. David Davies declared an interest in these contracts when they were before the London Docklands development corporation board;

(3) if he will list the projects and schemes envisaged under the agreement with Newham, the Tower Hamlets accord, and the Southwark tunnel estates housing programme that are not now going ahead as planned; and if he will itemise each scheme and its costs;

(4) if he will itemise the involvement of Sheraton Securities with the development of Harbour Exchange; and if he will list other projects in the London docklands development corporation area or London docklands development corporation contracts in which Mr. Richard Cox-Johnson's companies have been involved.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what amount has been budgeted by the London docklands development corporation for meeting the terms of the Tower Hamlets accord for 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The LDDC has currently budgeted the following amounts for projects meeting the terms of the Tower Hamlets accord:

	£ million
1990-91	33·8
1991-92	13·4
1992-93	8·5

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the current cost estimate for the Limehouse link road in London's docklands; and what the estimate was in 1988.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The cost of the Limehouse link road construction contract was estimated at £142 million in 1988 by the London docklands development corporation. The corporation's current cost estimate for the scheme is commercially confidential.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the projected London Docklands development corporation capital expenditure on housing projects in 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The London Docklands development corporation has currently budgeted the following amounts for social housing projects:

	£ million
1990-91	8·0
1991-92	8·9
1992-93	4·9

These provisional figures exclude the extensive social housing expenditure associated with the London Docklands development corporation's transport programme.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what review of costs of the London Docklands development corporation transport programme is taking place; who is undertaking that review; what are its terms of reference; how much it is costing; and if it will be published.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The London Docklands development corporation continually monitors and reviews its programmes and budgets. Internal management documents are confidential to the corporation.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much the London Docklands development corporation received in land sales receipts in 1988-89 and in 1989-90; and what are the estimates for 1991-92.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The London Docklands development corporation received £133 million in 1988-89 and £32 million in 1989-90 from land sales. It expects to receive about £28 million land sales receipts in 1991-92.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what amounts the London Docklands

development corporation has budgeted for meeting the costs of refurbishment of the Tunnel estates in Southwark for 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The LDDC's budget currently includes no provision for this scheme in the years in question.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the costs of the Limehouse link road are within budget projections.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Yes.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total cost of London Docklands development corporation contractual commitments for 1990-91.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The London Docklands development corporation is contractually committed to approximately £350 million expenditure in 1990-91.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the London Docklands development corporation community services division budget for 1990-91; and what is the projected budget for 1991-92 and for 1992-93.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The LDDC's community services division budget for 1990-91 and projected budgets for 1991-92 and 1992-93 are currently as follows:

	£ million
1990-91	27·6
1991-92	24·5
1992-93	19·0

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total number of permanent staff and staff on fixed-term contracts that have left the employment of the London Docklands development corporation in 1989-90 and in 1990-91 so far.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Staffing matters are for the LDDC board.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the cost estimate for the London Docklands development corporation roads programme for each year from 1989-90 to 1993-94.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This information is given in the table.

Estimated cost of LDDC's roads programme

	£ million
1989-90	113
1990-91	189
1991-92	149
1992-93	75
1993-94	66

The provisional amounts include the costs of rehousing associated with the corporation's road schemes, environmental works and project management.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what items budgeted by the London Docklands development corporation for 1990-91 are now being cut from actual expenditure in 1990-91.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The LDDC's budget includes a wide range of programmes. The precise mix of projects is constantly under review and revision, in the light of changing circumstances and priorities.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimate for grant in aid for the London Docklands development corporation in 1990-91 and in 1991-92.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The provision in the 1990-91 supply estimate for grant in aid for the London Docklands development corporation is £332,975,000 for 1991-92, the corporation has been asked to plan on a basis of £225 million grant in aid.

Opencast Mines

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date for England and Wales, the number of opencast coal site applications that have been refused by his Department;

(2) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date in England and Wales the number of opencast coal sites that received his Department's approval.

Mr. Atkins: The information requested is available only from 1 April 1987, in respect of England:

Year	*Decided*	*Dismissed*	*Allowed*
1987-88	15	8	7
1988-89	16	8	8
1989-90	9	2	7
[1]1990-91	10	4	6

[1] (to 30 September 1990).

River Pollution

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of pollution incidents on United Kingdom rivers caused by industrial processes in 1990 and the number of prosecutions that were made as a result of these incidents.

Mr. Trippier: This information is not available in the form requested. However, details of pollution incidents and prosecutions during 1989-90 are contained in the annual report of the National Rivers Authority for that period, a copy of which is in the Library.

Water pollution control in Scotland and Northern Ireland are matters for my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Departmental Reorganisation

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what organisations and sections within his Department presently being housed in London are being considered for dispersal to provincial areas.

Mr. Chris Patten: Some 40 per cent. of the Department's staff already work outside London and around 25 per cent. outside the south-east.

Decisions have been taken to relocate from London 94½ posts in the Department's information systems division, rentcharges unit and housing data and statistics division, as well as in Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution.

Additionally, a preliminary study has recently been undertaken of the possibility of relocating the 550 posts in the building research establishment from their present site at Garston in Watford. The results of the study are currently being considered.

Climate Change

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what *(a)* preparations he is making for and *(b)* representations he will be making at the next world conference on climate change.

Mr. Trippier: We have been playing an active role in the preparations for the second world climate conference, which takes place in Geneva 29 October—7 November 1990. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will be speaking at the opening of the ministerial part of the conference, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will make a national statement.

Urban Development Corporations

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) why the event planned for June 1989 similar to the event organised by urban development corporations to be held at Lancaster house on 30 October was shelved;

(2) which urban development corporations expressed reservations at board level to him about participating in, and making a financial contribution to, the event organised by urban development corporations to be held at Lancaster house on 30 October;

(3) whether the platform at the event organised by urban development corporations to be held at Lancaster house on 30 October will represent a cross-section of viewpoints on urban development corporations including those critical of their record;

(4) what are the aims and objectives of the event organised by urban development corporations to be held at Lancaster house on 30 October; what is the estimated total cost of the event; and what contribution is being made towards the total cost *(a)* by his Department and *(b)* by each individual urban development corporation;

(5) whether local authorities and local authority associations will be invited to the event organised by urban development corporations to be held at Lancaster house on 30 October; and whether they will be represented on the platform.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The presentation at Lancaster house on 30 October was organised by the 11 urban development corporations of England and Wales. A number of dates had previously been considered. The guest list was set by the corporations to include leading members of the business and financial institutions in the United Kingdom and abroad and representatives of several foreign governments. This reflected the objective which was to promote further investment opportunities in the UDC areas. All 11 UDCs gave their full support. The estimated total cost is around £270,000. This will be met from the promotion and publicity budgets of the UDCs. My Department has directly contributed £4,150 for the hire of Lancaster house.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list those urban development corporations currently preparing or revising a code of practice required under section 140 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980;

(2) if he will list all the relevant local authorities, as defined in section 140(2) of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, that have formally agreed and support a code of practice prepared by an urban development corporation as required under section 140(1) of that Act;

(3) if he will list those urban development corporations that have prepared a code of practice as required under section 140 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980;

(4) if he will list those urban development corporations that have prepared a code of practice within a period of 12 months after establishment as required under section 140(3) of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: All UDCs prepared a code of practice within 12 months of designation, in consultation with local authorities. There is no statutory requirement for formal agreement to be reached with local authorities once the code has been prepared. Black Country UDC is currently reviewing its code and London Docklands is revising its code on development control, having recently issued a separate code covering non-planning consultations. No other UDCs are currently preparing or revising codes.

Poplar Construction Training Centre

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many people who have received training at the Poplar construction training centre have obtained jobs in the Canary Wharf development;

(2) how many people have successfully completed a training scheme at the Poplar construction training centre since it opened.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I understand that 103 trainees have successfully completed courses, of whom 54 went into employment on the Canary Wharf site. Others went on to employment with Canary Wharf constructors on other sites or on other local developments and construction projects.

Housing Corporation

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the criteria used by the Housing Corporation in deciding its allocations for 1990-91.

Mr. Key: The allocation of resources for the support of individual housing association schemes in any year is a matter for the Housing Corporation, within a framework of broad principles which has been agreed with my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish the allocations for each of the last five years by the Housing Corporation for projects in Suffolk, listing the totals for each district and borough council;

(2) if he will publish the bids submitted by each district and borough council in Suffolk for allocations in each of the last five years by the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Key: These are a matter for the Housing Corporation. I have, therefore, asked the corporation to respond to my hon. Friend direct.

Property Services Agency

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the future of the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Portillo: In May, Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte were commissioned to advise on the privatisation of PSA Services. In the light of their analysis of the markets in which PSA Services operates and the implications of this for the sale I have decided that PSA Services will be restructured into two main businesses, one dealing with project management and design, and the other with maintenance. The security group will transfer to DOE (Property Holdings). The restructuring will make it possible for PSA Services to be offered for sale in more than one part, not necessarily at the same time, but I do not rule out purchase by a single buyer.

Bird Protection

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds or other interested parties responding to his consultation paper on the killing of opportunist bird species, that the protection of specified song birds should be an additional reason for authorising the control of magpies, jays and crows.

Mr. Trippier: A number of respondents to the consultation paper have suggested that the proposed general licences should authorise the control of magpies and crows to protect song birds. We have asked the Nature Conservancy Council for advice on this.

House Repairs

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the number of tenants who have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* received payment for repairs carried out under the right to repairs scheme introduced under the Housing and Building Control Act 1984 in (i) 1986-87, (ii) 1987-88, (iii) 1988-89 and (iv) 1989-90; what is the total cost of payments made under this scheme in each of these years; and what has been the cost to the Government and local authorities in introducing and administering this scheme.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The number of claims received and agreed in each of the years 1986-87 to 1988-89 is shown in the table, together with the total value agreed each year. The collection of data on the scheme has now been discontinued in view of the low level of activity. To date, the Department has incurred total costs of some £40,000 in informing tenants of the scheme and on training them; administrative costs of the scheme are not identified separately. The Department does not collect information on local authorities' costs other than in meeting claims.

England	*Total number of claims received for payment*	*Total number of claims agreed[1] for payment*	*Total amount agreed[1] £*
1986[2]	6	5	500
1986-87	48	44	4,500
1987-88	18	17	1,700
1988-89	9	9	600
Total	81	75	7,300

[1] Accepted by landlords as payable.
[2] 1st quarter.

Water Meters

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the probable cost of installing water meters in all households in England and Wales.

Mr. Trippier: It would not be meaningful to make such an estimate, because within the framework of the Water Act 1989 decisions on methods of charging are a matter for individual water companies.

The cost of installing a meter in a house depends on a variety of factors. Information on the costs of different methods of installing meters in selected areas is contained in the second interim report on the national metering trials which the water industry published earlier this year. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Water Supply

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what increase in water consumption there has been in each of the regions of England and Wales during the past 10 years.

Mr. Trippier: Figures for consumption are not collected for England and Wales, but estimates of the amounts of water abstracted from surface water and ground water in each of the water authority areas are shown for 1980 and 1988. Figures for 1989 will not be available until early in 1991. Data are given for each water authority area.

Estimated total abstractions from surface and ground water sources in each of the water authority areas in 1980 and 1988 and percentage change ('000 megalitres per annum)

	1980	*1988*	*Per cent. Change*
Anglian	700	768	9·7
Thames	1,599	1,618	1·2
Southern	498	594	19·3
Wessex	355	381	7·3
South West	[1]828	851	2·8
Welsh[2]	2,750	3,786	37·7
Severn Trent	3,205	2,530	−21·1
North West	1,854	1,173	−36·7
Yorkshire	1,549	1,148	−25·8
Northumbrian	415	354	−14·7
England and Wales	13,753	13,203	−4·0

Source: Department of the Environment.
[1] 1985.
[2] The very large increase in abstractions in the Welsh Water area is attributable to increases in demand for water by the CEGB for hydro-electric power generation.
Note: Statistics on water supply are also published in the Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics, published by HMSO.

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the current level of water extraction from bore holes in each of the regions of England and Wales for public water supply purposes.

Mr. Trippier: Figures for abstractions from surface water and groundwater boreholes by purpose and for all regions of England and Wales, are published on an annual basis in the "Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics", which is available in the Library.

Planning Orders

Sir Gerard Vaughan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will indicate those occasions in the last five years on which he has used his powers in section 276 (part XV) (applying to section 45(1) part III or section 51) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971; if he will specify on each occasion whether he directed the local planning authority to submit an order for his confirmation, or whether he made the order himself; and where compensation was payable, and where relevant, the amount of compensation and the proportion borne by the Department.

Mr. Michael Spicer: These powers have not been used in the last five years.

Bradford West End

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the total value of the scheme currently being discussed between his officials and 3Ds Ltd., for the west end of Bradford; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what information has been supplied to officials of Bradford local authority regarding the negotiations between his Department and 3Ds Ltd. concerning the west end development; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It is not our practice, for reasons of commercial confidentiality, to reveal details of developers' proposals.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many in and out schemes have been approved for Bradford metropolitan district council; what is the value of each scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Under the in and out scheme which ran from March 1988 to March 1990 the Department approved one application from Bradford metropolitan district council. The approval given on 28 September 1988 for Greengates house involved an additional capital allocation of £10,000.

On 1 April this year, Capital Finance Regulations introduced new in and out arrangements whereby authorities are no longer required to seek the Secretary of State's consent. It is now a matter for them to determine, with the assistance of their legal advisers and their auditor, whether or not particular transactions come within the terms of the regulations. Authorities are not required to inform the Department of the transactions which do so.

Historic Parks and Gardens

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice he received from the inspector of historic parks and gardens when he declined to call in Devon county council application No. 90.0539.R4D.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Planning Applications

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what criteria are used to determine that a planning application referred to his Department is of no more than local concern.

Mr. Atkins: In general, planning applications are called in for decision by my right hon. Friend only if planning issues of more than local significance are involved. Such cases may include, for example, those which, in my right hon. Friend's opinion, could have wide effects beyond their immediate locality, give rise to substantial regional or national controversy, may conflict with national policy on important matters, and those where the interests of national security or of foreign Governments may be involved.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those planning applications which he has called in during the past 12 months which have been determined as being of more than local concern.

Mr. Atkins: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the use of deemed planning consent.

Mr. Atkins: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning to my hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter) on 25 July, *Official Report*, column *372*.

Keir Hardie

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects the bust of Keir Hardie to be transferred from under a desk to the plinth it normally occupies in the Lower Waiting Hall adjacent to Central Lobby; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Keir Hardie's bust was put in store for safe keeping while the repairs were carried out to the ceiling of the Lower Waiting Hall where it is normally displayed.

Following completion of the ceiling repairs during the summer recess the bust was brought back last week but it was found that adjustments would have to be made to the plinth—a new one had been made while the bust was away—before it could be redisplayed. It was decided to leave the bust by the security point in the Waiting Hall while the adjustments were made rather than return it to store.

The bust was restored to its usual position on 29 October 1990.

Parish Boundaries

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department will review the need to establish parish boundaries covering the whole of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Key: Outside Greater London, it is already the statutory duty of every district council to keep under review the whole of their areas for the purpose of considering whether to propose the constitution or

abolition of parishes or changes in parish boundaries. If the Local Government Boundary Commission for England endorses, or itself makes, such proposals, my right hon. Friend has power to implement them. I see no need for a change in these arrangements.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to incorporate within existing legislation amendments to give parish councils powers to respond to local need while enhancing the ability of principle authorities to respond to the demands of larger areas.

Mr. Key: Parish councils, like other local authorities, already have powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 to undertake expenditure in the interests of their area for which they have no specific powers.

Seaside and Country Dwellings

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much the North British housing association receives to act as his agent in administering nominations to Seaside and Country Dwellings.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The fee payable to the North British housing association for its services as the Secretary of State's agent for nominations into Seaside and Country Dwellings is £35,000 in the present financial year.

Yorkshire Residuary Bodies

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish for the *(a)* South Yorkshire residuary body and *(b)* West Yorkshire residuary body the full inventory of items of historic importance they made prior to the abolition of the South and West Yorkshire county councils.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Residuary Bodies

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to lay before Parliament the 1989-90 annual reports and accounts of the remaining residuary bodies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: The 1989-90 annual reports and statements of accounts of the London, West Midlands and West Yorkshire residuary bodies were laid before Parliament today. A copy of the Secretary of State's direction under section 78(2) of the Local Government Act 1985 as to the content and structure of the accounts has been placed in the library of the House.

The RBs' reports provide continuing evidence of the impressive progress which they have made in discharging the responsibilities they inherited from the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils. Among other achievements in 1989-90, over £108 million in capital receipts were realised from sales of surplus property, which have been distributed for the benefit of local chargepayers.

EC Groundwater Directive

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice has he given to local authorities on the classification of certain substances as required by the European Community groundwater directive 80/68/EEC; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Government have today published a consultation paper setting out proposals for a centralised national classification scheme of listed substances for the purpose of the EC groundwater directive (80/68/EEC).

The groundwater directive was adopted in late 1979 and came into effect two years later. Its objective is to protect groundwater against pollution from dangerous substances. An annex to the directive lists those substances list I which must be prevented from entering groundwater; and those substances list II where it is necessary to limit their input into groundwater to avoid pollution. Advice on the classification of substances into list I and list II was issued in March 1982 in a joint circular DoE 4/82 WO7/82.

Recent discussions with the European Commission have led to a re-examination of the procedures for classifying substances into list I or List II. New arrangements are set out in a Circular DoE 20/90, WO 34/90—which is published today.

The circular describes the steps to be taken by controlling authorities in assessing whether substances belong to list I or list II. It does not, however, contain precise rules for the classifying process. Proposals on this are contained in a separate consultation paper issued by the Department today.

The consultation paper puts forward numerical threshold values to be used to assess whether substances are list I or list II. In some cases these are shown as ranges to accommodate differing views. Before taking final decisions the Government wish to have the views of industry and other interested parties. The paper also proposes that the scheme should be run by the National Rivers Authority to ensure consistency of application.

The consultation paper is being sent to the Confederation of British Industry, Chemical Industries Association, the National Rivers Authority, Water Services Association, Water Companies Association, representatives of various trade associations, local authority associations and other interested parties. Copies are available in the Library and the Vote Office.

European Community Environment Council

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the European Community Environment Council on 29 October.

Mr. Chris Patten: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and I represented the United Kingdom at a joint session of the Environment and Energy councils, at which a concerted position on the Community's approach to global warming was agreed. This will enable the Community to play a leading role at the second world climate conference. The agreed position endorses the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and recognises the need for a global response to the problem through the negotiation of a framework convention on climate change and related protocols, under

the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organisation, by the time of the 1992 United Nations conference on environment and development. A concerted position on targets for the stabilisation of carbon dioxide emissions was also agreed which acknowledged the United Kingdom's published programmes.

In the Environment Council, a proposed directive to tighten up emission standards for all classes of cars was discussed. The United Kingdom pressed for early agreement of this directive, and substantial progress was made on resolving many of the outstanding points.

The Council adopted conclusions on the use of economic and fiscal mechanisms as instruments of environmental policy. The Council agreed on the potential importance of such instruments and the need to examine the possible scope for action at Community level. It took note of the European Commission's intention to produce proposals in this area.

Proposed directives on the treatment of sewage discharges and on the management of hazardous waste were both discussed in detail. In each case some progress was made and several outstanding issues were resolved, giving the prospect of agreement in the near future.

The Council discussed a proposed regulation establishing a programme of action for the protection of the Mediterranean—MEDSPA. Agreement was reached in principle on the main elements of the proposal pending receipt of the European Parliament's opinion.

There was also a brief discussion of the proposed new Community regulation on substances which deplete the ozone layer.

Roads, London

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is (i) the original cost estimate, (ii) the current 1990 cost estimate, (iii) the original estimated completion date and (iv) the current estimated completion date for *(a)* eastern gateway access road, *(b)* north Woolwich road widening, *(c)* Prestons road improvement, *(d)* Connaught crossing, *(e)* Westferry road improvement, *(f)* Canary wharf eastern access, *(g)* Poplar link including Prestons road flyover, *(h)* Lower Lea crossing, *(i)* Limehouse link, *(j)* West India dock road improvement, *(k)* East India dock link and *(l)* the A200 lower road improvement.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer, 19 October 1990]:* The information available for London Docklands development corporation highway schemes is given in the table:

	Scheme	*Original cost estimate £ million*	*Original estimated completion date*	*Current estimated actual date*
(a)	Eastern Gateway Access Road	11·6	June 1989	October 1989
(b)	North Woolwich Road widening	2·7	May 1989	April 1990
(c)	Prestons Road improvement	0·9	July 1992	July 1992
(d)	Connaught Crossing	22·5	July 1990	August 1990
(f)	Canary Wharf Eastern Access	9	November 1990	November 1990
(h)	Lower Lea Crossing	36	June 1992	February 1992
(i)	Limehouse Link	220		
	Stage 1 (Westferry Road Junction)		May 1993	May 1993
	Stage 2 (full scheme)		August 1993	August 1993
(j)	West India Dock Road improvement	8·4	February 1992	February 1992

The original cost estimates and completion dates given above were those estimated by LDDC at the time of DOE scheme approval. The current LDDC estimates of costs are commercially confidential since final payments have not been agreed for the contracts. The contracts for (g) Poplar link and (k) East India Dock link have not yet been let, so the estimated cost of these is commercially confidential.

Lower road improvement is primarily a London borough of Southwark scheme, although the LDDC will make financial contributions. The timetable and scheme cost are matters for agreement between Southwark and the Department of Transport.

The LDDC has no scheme known as Westferry road improvement.

European Investment Bank

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent loans have been agreed with the European investment bank for the development of environmental improvement or protection projects.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* The table lists loans granted by the European investment bank during the last 12 months to finance projects in the United Kingdom concerned with environmental protection.

Date	*Name of borrower*	*Million GBP*
21 December 1989	Severn Trent Water	100·00
21 December 1989	Anglian Water	15·00
21 December 1989	Thames Water	75·00
21 December 1989	Wessex Water	63·00
21 December 1989	Yorkshire Water	41·00
05 March 1990	Yorkshire Water	51·50
29 March 1990	North-West Water	50·00
05 April 1990	South-West Water	15·00
03 May 1990	North-West Water	80·00
21 June 1990	Northumbrian Water	20·00
26 June 1990	Anglian Water	50·00

Date	Name of borrower	Million GBP
02 August 1990	Lyonnaise Water[1]	33·00
11 September 1990	Southern Water	40·00

[1] For on-lending to the following statutory water companies: East Anglia Water Company, Essex Water Company, Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company and Sunderland and South Shields Water Company.

The loans have gone towards numerous schemes to ensure the quality and security of drinking water supplies and to upgrade the capacity of sewerage services and waste-water treatment facilities, helping to protect water quality and reduce river and coastal pollution. Supporting capital investment projects which protect the environment or improve the quality of life is one of the bank's main objectives.

Small Businesses

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to extend the phasing in of business rate increases under the transitional payment schemes for small businesses.

Mr. Key *[holding answer, 30 October 1990]:* We have proposed that the limit on rate increases for the non-domestic part of small composite properties, such as small shops with living accommodation attached, should be reduced to 10 per cent. in real terms from 1991-92. This will benefit around 95,000 properties. Otherwise the existing transitional arrangements will remain unchanged.

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides powers for a further transitional scheme once the present arrangements end in 1995 and my right hon. Friend will certainly be prepared to use those powers if, after the next revaluation, he considers it necessary to do so. However, it is too soon to tell at this stage what sort of further scheme, if any, would be needed because it is impossible to predict what will happen to rent levels, from which rateable values are derived, over the next five years.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list, with dates of issue, all local authorities which have been issued section 13 notices under the Local Government Act 1988; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list, with dates of issue, all local authorities which have been issued section 14 notices under the Local Government Act 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

—4 September 1989; Bristol City: Section 13 notice;

—7 August 1990: Bristol City advised of Secretary of State's decision to take no further action in the matter;

—4 September 1989: London Borough of Hillingdon: Section 13 notice;

—13 March 1990: London Borough of Hillingdon: Section 14 direction;

—1 August 1990: London Borough of Hillingdon: revised Section 14 direction, replacing direction of 13 March 1990;

—7 December 1989: Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley: Section 13 notice;

—6 July 1990: Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley: Section 14 direction;

—3 August 1990: Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley: revised Section 14 direction, replacing direction of 6 July 1990;

—21 December 1989: Borough of Charnwood: Section 13 notice;

—31 July 1990: Borough of Charnwood advised of Secretary of State's decision to take no further action in the matter;

—3 January 1990: Metropolitan Borough of Wolverhampton: Section 13 notice;

—6 July 1990: Metropolitan Borough of Wolverhampton advised of Secretary of State's decision to take no further action in the matter;

—29 March 1990: Braintree District: Section 13 notice;

—6 July 1990: Braintree District advised of Secretary of State's decision to take no further action in the matter;

—29 March 1990: Eden District: Section 13 notice;

—6 July 1990: Eden District advised of Secretary of State's decision to take no further action in the matter;

—9 April 1990: East Lindsey District: Section 13 notice;

—6 July 1990: East Lindsey District: Section 14 direction;

—31 July 1990: East Lindsey District: revised Section 14 direction, replacing direction of 6 July 1990;

—10 May 1990: Birmingham City: Section 13 notice;

—31 July 1990: Birmingham City advised of Secretary of State's decision to take no further action in the matter;

—10 May 1990: York City: Section 13 notice;

—9 August 1990: York City: Section 14 direction;

—13 September 1990: York City: revised Section 14 direction, replacing direction of 9 August 1990;

—31 May 1990: Liverpool City: Section 13 notice;

—6 August 1990: Liverpool City: Section 14 direction;

—1 June 1990: Metropolitan Borough of Bury: Section 13 notice;

—8 June 1990: Humberside County: Section 13 notice;

—30 July 1990: Humberside County: Section 14 direction;

—3 July 1990: London Borough of Camden: Section 13 notices;

—6 September 1990: Borough of Woodspring: Section 13 notice;

—11 September 1990: Leicester City: Section 13 notice;

—21 September 1990: Metropolitan Borough of Doncaster: Section 13 notice;

—3 October 1990: Borough of Thurrock: Section 13 notice.

My right hon. Friend will continue to make use of the sanction powers available to him under sections 13 and 14 of the Local Government Act 1988 where it appears to him that a local authority has failed to comply with the relevant provisions of the Act in carrying out work covered by the Act.

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he proposes to take in regard to the London borough of Camden under part I of the Local Government Act 1988.

Mr. Key *[pursuant to his answer, 22 October 1990, c. 40-41]:* My right hon. Friend has today issued a direction under section 14 of the Local Government Act 1988 on the London borough of Camden in relation to refuse collection and street cleaning work. The direction requires the authority to expose this work to competitive tendering again by 1 August 1991, and to obtain the Secretary of State's consent to any decision that the authority's direct service organisation should take part in the new tendering exercise, and also to any decision again to assign the work to the DSO.

Seals

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has regarding the seal population in the North sea at present and prior to the epidemic of 1988.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 17 October 1990]:* The Natural Environment Research Council's sea mammal

research unit prepares an annual update of the status of the British seal population. Its current minimum estimate of the British population is 108,000 for all United Kingdom waters set against 103,000 before the 1988 epidemic. About half of these are resident in North sea waters.

The epidemic principally affected the common seal population with the mortality rate in British waters up to 50 per cent. in the worst affected area. The British grey seal population has generally continued to increase.

In continental waters of the North sea the mortality rate for common seals was apparently much higher at around 60 per cent. and the population is now estimated to be in the region of 7,000 to 10,000. In addition, there are around 3,000 grey seals resident in Norwegian waters.

Drinking Water, Yorkshire

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list each centre of population covered by the Yorkshire water company which receives drinking water which is in breach of European Community nitrate limits.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Out of 191 supply zones, Yorkshire Water Services Ltd. has only five zones in which action to control nitrate levels is necessary. Even in these cases the breaches of the EC nitrates limit have been intermittent. These were Ackworth, Goole, Isle of Axholme, Pontefract and Selby. All supplies will comply with the EC limit by 1995 at the latest and those which do not meet the standard in the interim are not considered to endanger health.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from local authorities regarding the impact of community charge capping on the level of services provided by citizens advice bureaux; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: My right hon. Friend has received no such representations from local authorities about the impact of the caps he has set.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans for amendment of the regulations governing the standard community charge.

Mr. Portillo: We have now completed consultation on a number of proposed changes to the standard charge and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has today announced our conclusions. These are that regulations should be brought forward broadly in line with the consultation paper "The Standard Community Charge and other Matters". We intend to make the following changes:

	Maximum multiplier
New classes	
Unoccupied property where person subject has sole or main residence in job-related accommodation	[1] ½
Unoccupied property which forms a part of a composite hereditament and which is difficult to let	1
Unoccupied property (eg "Granny" annexes) which forms a self-contained part of a domestic property in respect of which the person is subject to the personal charge and which is difficult to let separately	0
Unoccupied property where person subject is in detention	0
Unoccupied property where person subject is entitled to student relief on the personal charge	0
Unoccupied property which is vacated by a borrower and repossessed by a mortgage lender	0
Unoccupied and empty agricultural property subject to a planning restriction limiting occupation to agricultural workers	½
Amendments to existing classes	
Extension to six months of period before which standard charge becomes payable on empty and unoccupied property (Class C)	0
Extension to six months after probate or letters of administration of the period before which standard charge can become payable by personal representative (Class E)	0
Removal of the limit (currently 12 months) on the period for which an unoccupied property is subject to a zero multiplier where the chargepayer is cared for in a home, hospital or any other place (Classes D, FB)	0
Removal of limit (currently 12 months) on the period for which an unoccupied property is subject to a zero multiplier where the chargepayer has gone to care for another person (Class FC)	0

[1] (was 1 in consultation paper)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to amend existing legislation on local government finance to ensure that parish councils receive a share of *(a)* community charge, *(b)* national non-domestic rate and *(c)* any other central Government funding as of right.

Mr. Key: My right hon. Friend has no plans to amend the existing legislation relating to these matters.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people receiving family credit pay a full community charge.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

The information on family credit and community charge benefit will not become available until the results of those benefits' respective statistical surveys are ready.

Housing Action Trusts

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much has been spent by his Department *(a)* on consultants' fees and expenses and *(b)* otherwise on the proposed housing action trusts in (i) Tower Hamlets, (ii) Lambeth, (iii) Southwark, (iv) Sandwell, (v) Leeds, (vi) Sunderland and (vii) Waltham Forest.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Expenditure on those seven housing action trust proposals is shown in the table:

	[1](a) £000	[2](b) £000
Tower Hamlets	182	3
Lambeth	182	12
Southwark	1,411	25
Sandwell	191	17
Leeds	161	13
Sunderland	667	23
Waltham Forest	129	—

[1] Expenditure related to consultancies.
[2] Expenditure related to the Department's information material and to ballots.

Expenditure related to consultancies has covered extensive studies of the physical and social conditions in the areas, the formulation of costed options for improvements and detailed design proposals, and consultation with tenants. The information obtained will inform policies in these and other areas. Expenditure related to information and ballots is in pursuance of the statutory duty under the Housing Act 1988 to hold a ballot of tenants and the need to ensure that the tenants are fully informed of the proposals.

Family Credit

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people receiving family credit pay a full community charge.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

The information on family credit and community charge benefit will not become available until the results of those benefits' respective statistical surveys are ready.

WALES

Housing Associations

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out the programme he intends to follow in providing additional finances to housing associations in Wales *(a)* in the present financial year, *(b)* in the 1991-92 financial year and *(c)* in subsequent financial years in order to ensure adequate availability of appropriate housing to match the requirements of his programme for the implementation of care in the community.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave him on Monday 29 October, c. *360*.

Rehabilitation Engineering

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) is he has any proposals to transfer funding responsibility for the rehabilitation engineering section at Rookwood hospital, Llandaf, Cardiff to the Welsh Health Common Services Authority;

(2) when he next plans to visit the rehabilitation engineering section at Rookwood hospital, Llandaf, Cardiff;

(3) what proposals he has to increase direct funding for the rehabilitation engineering section at Rookwood hospital, Llandaf, Cardiff;

(4) what response he expects to make to the report to him dated March 1990 by the principal scientist and head of the rehabilitation engineering section at Rookwood hospital on the funding and staffing needs for the work of the three rehabilitation engineering units in Wales;

(5) what representations he has had regarding *(a)* the funding, *(b)* the staffing and *(c)* the length of waiting lists for special seating for the severely physically handicapped in Wales;

(6) what proposals he has to increase the capacity of the three rehabilitation engineering units in Wales;

(7) what proposals he has to reduce the waiting list for special seating for the severely physically handicapped in Wales;

(8) what consultations he has had with organisations representing the physically handicapped in Wales regarding the capacity, staffing and funding of the rehabilitation engineering section at Rookwood hospital, Llandaf, Cardiff;

(9) what is his most up-to-date estimate of *(a)* the funding and *(b)* the staffing required to increase the patient cases serviced by the rehabilitation engineering sections in Wales to 1,000 per year;

(10) if he has any proposals to place responsibility for the rehabilitation engineering section under the wing of the artificial limb and appliance service;

(11) what proposals he has to increase the capacity for the rehabilitation engineering units in Wales to meet the needs of patients requiring special seating for the severely physically handicapped.

Mr. Grist: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

A470

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list in the *Official Report* all those road improvement schemes whose cost is estimated to be in excess of £1 million, on the A470 north-south trunk road in Wales, which are currently either committed, at planning stage or in the preparation pool, indicating for each scheme *(a)* the approximate length of roadway involved, *(b)* the standard of road after improvement, and *(c)* the approximate date or latest information when it is hoped the work will commence.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The following schemes are under construction, all to single carriageway standard:

	Length (Miles)
Llanidloes bypass	2·5
Brecon bypass—Felinfach	1·4
Junction Improvements South of Llangurig	0·8

Details of schemes in the forward programme are shown in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s".

A487

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all those road improvement schemes whose cost is estimated to be in excess of £1 million, on the 487 north-south trunk road in Wales, which are currently either committed, at planning stage or in the preparation pool, indicating for each scheme *(a)* the approximate length of roadway involved, *(b)* the standard of road after improvements and *(c)* the approximate date or latest information, when it is hoped the work will commence.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Cardigan bypass, a 1·5 mile single carriageway scheme, is under construction. Details of schemes in the forward programme are shown in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s".

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on what date a public participation exercise took place at Caernarfon for improvements to Port Seiont on the A487 trunk road; on what date a preferred route was announced; when work will commence on this scheme; and when it is expected to be completed.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The public participation exercise was held in 1977 and the preferred route announced in 1979. Details of the scheme are contained in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s". The concept of the scheme is currently under review. Construction is expected to take around two years.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when the Felinheli (Port Dinorwic) bypass on the A487 was first placed in the Welsh Office trunk road preparation poll, and at what estimated cost; and what is his latest estimate of commencement date, completion date and cost for this scheme.

Sir Wyn Roberts: A scheme for bypassing Port Dinorwic was first announced in 1974, and costed in 1975 at some £4·4 milion. The scheme has subsequently been substantially modified; details are set out in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s".

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when his Department first drew up plans for the widening and provision of a pavement between Caernarfon and on the Bontnewlydd A487 trunk road; when this work is expected to be undertaken; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Following investigatory work the county surveyor was invited to prepare a scheme in October 1982. There is an outstanding objection to the draft compulsory purchase order. A start of works is unlikely before 1993.

M4

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what, in the context of his Department's plans for improving road links between the M4 and Aberystwyth, is the official route designated for such improvement; whether this entails the designation of any new stretches of trunk road; and what is the target date for completing such improvements.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The main trunk road link is the A470 and A44 via Llangurig. Selective improvements to the A470 route are planned, as indicated in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s". There are no plans to add to the trunk road network.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the Baglan-M4 link to be completed.

Sir Wyn Roberts: I expect the M4 Baglan-Lonlas to be completed by 1995.

Roads (Fishguard)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made with regard to improving road conditions in Fishguard.

Sir Wyn Roberts: We have consulted the public on proposals for road improvements in West street, Fishguard, and a possible future bypass. We have separately consulted councils and representatives of residents' associations regarding proposals for a relief road at Lower Town. The responses to both consultations are being carefully considered and I hope to be in a position to make a decision in the near future.

Roads and Bridges

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to increase funding available for local authority roads and bridges in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend hopes to announce details of central Government support in the revenue support grant and local authority capital settlements shortly.

Llanidloes Bypass

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on what date the Llanidloes bypass was first placed in the Welsh Office trunk road preparation pool, and at what estimated cost; and what is the latest estimate of the completion date of this scheme, and at what cost.

Sir Wyn Roberts: A scheme for bypassing Llanidloes was first announced in 1969, at a cost of £0·3 million (1969 prices). The scheme was subsequently modified, and is due to be completed in early 1991 at a cost of some £7·5 million.

Community Care

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 26 October, *Official Report*, column 321, on community care implementation, when he expects to send the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth the material referred to in that reply; and when he intends to place a copy in the Library.

Mr. Grist: This material was sent to the House of Commons Library in September and is available there to Members on request.

Secure Accommodation

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answers of 18 October, *Official Report*, column 870, and 22 October, *Official Report*, column 25, about secure accommodation in Wales, when he intends to provide the hon. Member with the appendices referred to in his letters dated October 1990; and when he intends to place a copy of those appendices in the Library.

Mr. Grist: A copy of the appendices was sent to the hon. Gentleman on Tuesday 30 October 1990 and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Local Management of Schools

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received about the impact of local management of schools on smaller secondary schools in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend continues to receive representations from individual school governors and school governing bodies. Many of these welcome the opportunities which delegated budgeting brings to them.

School and College Governors (Resignation)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many school and college governors in Wales have resigned since the introduction of the Education Reform Act.

Sir Wyn Roberts: This information is not available.

National Library of Wales

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he intends to take as a result of the recent Welsh Office inspection of and report on the national library of Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: In accordance with the normal procedures for dealing with staff inspection reports, the report has been sent to the national library for comment. No decisions will be taken until consultation with staff at the Library is completed and the Library's management have discussed the report's recommendation with officials of the Department.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales at what level he proposes to set the totals of revenue support grant and the distributable amount of non-domestic rates for Welsh local authorities in 1991-92.

Mr. David Hunt: I announced on 23 July that I proposed to set the total of aggregate external finance—the level of central Government support for local authority revenue spending—at £1,939 million, an increase of 11·2 per cent. over the comparable level for 1990-91. This support comprises three component elements: the NNDR distributable amount, the total of relevant specific grants, and revenue support grant.

My officials are today sending to Welsh local authorities for purposes of consultation my proposals for these component amounts. I am placing a copy of that letter in the Library. I intend to specify as the distributable amount from the non-domestic rating pool £525 million. In arriving at that amount I have estimated that the Welsh national non-domestic rate multiplier for 1991-92 will be 40·8p; but my final decision on this must await parliamentary approval of the Welsh revenue support grant report.

I am proposing that relevant specific grants towards local authority revenue expenditure will total £174·6 million. Details of the proposed distribution of that total among the various specific grants are set out in the consultation letter.

I further propose that the total of revenue support grant should be £1,239·4 million, of which I propose that £1,238·2 million should be paid to Welsh county and district councils and £1·2 million should be paid to certain specified bodies, in the amounts shown in the consultation letter.

I will shortly be notifying the Welsh local authority associations of my proposals for the distribution and population reports.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has proposals for community charge capping of Welsh authorities in 1991-92.

Mr. David Hunt: I have today written to the Welsh local authority associations about their budgets for 1991-92. I am placing a copy of that letter in the Library.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will announce the results of consultation on "The Standard Community Charge and Other Matters: A Consultation Paper for Wales"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: I indicated to the House on 23 July that I was consulting on a number of changes which I proposed to make in Wales as a result of our review of the operation of the community charge. A copy of the consultation paper was placed in the Library of the House.

In Wales, 22 responses were received from local authorities and other interested organisations and individuals. The proposals contained in the consultation paper were generally welcomed, and, in the light of those responses, I will be introducing regulations shortly to bring the changes into effect.

There is only one substantive change to the proposals concerning the standard community charge. I have decided that, in the case of the proposals relating to people who are subject to the standard community charge but who have their sole or main residence in job-related accommodation, the maximum multiplier should be a half, rather than one. All other maximum multipliers for the standard charge will be set as proposed. The regulations will take effect from 1 April 1991.

Further regulations will be brought forward to implement the proposals on billing following a change of address, costs of summonses, notifications of entry on the community charge register and attachment of earnings orders. Regulations to implement the proposals on foreign language assistants are already in force.

I also intend to implement the proposal, which was widely welcomed, whereby additional protection will be given to occupiers of small composite properties—such as the shop with living accommodation over—in respect of their business rate liabilities. From 1991-92 the maximum year-on-year increase in real terms in the business rate for these properties will be 10 per cent. rather than 15 per cent. at present.

A further announcement will be made about the treatment of bed-and-breakfast accommodation in the rating system, following consideration of the responses to the recent separate consultation exercise.

Homelessness

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are homeless in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The number of persons within households accepted as homeless during 1989 was 19,168.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Overseas Visitors

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of visitors to the United Kingdom admitted in each quarter of 1990 showing the numbers by country of embarkation.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The available information is by nationality and is given in the following table. Information for the third quarter of 1990 is not yet available.

Ordinary and business visitors admitted to the United Kingdom by nationality, first half of 1990

Geographical region/Nationality	*Total visitor admissions*[1] *1st quarter*	*2nd quarter*
Western Europe (excluding EC)		
Austria	20,000	36,900
Cyprus	6,130	7,200
Finland	25,300	38,100
Malta	7,030	7,390
Norway	51,900	68,600
Sweden	90,000	129,000
Switzerland	41,000	76,500
Turkey	9,570	11,200
Yugoslavia	9,160	12,100
Western Europe (excluding EC)	260,000	387,000
Eastern Europe		
Bulgaria	1,750	1,580
Czechoslovakia	3,320	6,470
German Democratic Republic	2,010	6,910
Hungary	3,540	6,000
Poland	6,600	10,200
Romania	930	1,460
USSR	5,510	8,240
Eastern Europe	23,600	40,900
Europe (excluding EC)	284,000	428,000
Americas		
Argentina	3,370	5,280
Barbados	470	1,500
Brazil	12,200	14,000
Canada	67,900	157,000
Chile	1,470	2,420
Colombia	1,630	4,120
Cuba	200	130
Guyana	520	880
Jamaica	2,450	4,940
Mexico	3,740	9,420
Peru	1,090	1,660
Trinidad and Tobago	1,150	2,710
USA	362,000	686,000
Uruguay	700	1,280
Venezuela	1,150	2,000
Americas	460,000	894,000
Africa		
Algeria	3,760	2,860
Egypt	4,680	6,870
Ethiopia	900	1,350
Ghana	3,950	5,210
Kenya	3,530	6,360
Libya	410	500
Mauritius	1,990	4,160
Morocco	3,060	2,160
Nigeria	15,000	17,800
Sierra Leone	990	1,310
Somalia	220	350
South Africa	15,300	32,200
Sudan	1,410	3,980
Tanzania	1,580	2,700
Tunisia	1,540	1,020
Uganda	1,250	1,690
Zambia	2,230	2,400
Zimbabwe	3,270	5,870
Africa	65,100	98,000
Asia		
Indian sub-continent		
Bangladesh	1,860	3,200
India	22,700	58,700
Pakistan	10,900	20,600
Indian sub-continent	35,400	82,500
Middle East		
Iran	5,190	6,390
Iraq	4,190	6,300
Israel	16,400	21,000
Jordan	4,240	3,550
Kuwait	4,160	6,040
Lebanon	3,090	4,140
Saudi Arabia	4,920	7,320
Syria	450	610
Middle East	42,600	55,400
Remainder of Asia		
China	2,000	2,740
Indonesia	1,520	4,950
Japan	155,000	120,000
Malaysia	6,220	14,600
Philippines	2,090	7,170
Singapore	4,280	15,400
Sri Lanka	2,080	3,870
Thailand	2,870	9,320
BDTC Hong Kong	7,430	12,000
Remainder of Asia	183,000	190,000
Asia	261,000	328,000
Australasia		
Australia	45,400	106,000
New Zealand	8,580	27,800
Australasia	54,000	134,000
British Overseas Citizens	1,440	2,160
Other countries not elsewhere specified	25,800	40,600
Stateless	9,770	20,000
All Nationalities (excluding EC)	1,160,000	1,950,000

[1] Provisional.

Ford Open Prison

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what limitations are placed upon the use of telephones in Ford open prison.

Mrs. Rumbold: Ford prison is an open establishment where all inmates are able to make telephone calls to family and friends.

There are eight telephone card booths available for use by inmates between 0745 to 2100 daily. Prisoners are allowed up to a maximum of seven £2 telephone cards at any time.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions since being imprisoned Mr. Gerald Ronson has been given permission to travel beyond the prison limits, and for what reasons.

Mrs. Rumbold: Since Mr. Gerald Ronson was convicted he has been temporarily released from Ford open prison on one occasion, on 18 October to see his own doctor for an ongoing medical problem.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what circumstances business interests can be pursued by prisoners detained in Her Majesty's prisons.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 15 October at column *725*.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers knew that Mr. Gerald Ronson was to see his doctor in London on 18 October; and how many knew the name of the doctor and the location of his practice.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information that Gerald Ronson was to be temporarily released on 18 October was recorded on the prison "daily movements" list and would therefore have been available to all members of staff at Ford.

The information about his destination was known to those members of staff involved in his temporary release.

Prisons

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of inmates in prisons in England and Wales who have internal sanitation within their cells as of 1 October; what was the number on 1 October 1985; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: As at 8 July 1990, the latest date for which information is available, 24,175 prison places, or about 55 per cent. had access to night sanitation. Of these, 11,608 places had lavatories in cells; the remainder had access through electronic locking systems or unrestricted access.

Similar information is not available for October 1985, but in February 1986, 19,200 places, or 47 per cent., had access to night sanitation.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is the present number of applicants from inmates in prisons in England and Wales seeking transfers to an open prison; what has been the average waiting time for transfer once it has been approved; and if he will make a statement;

(2) for the Home Department what is the policy of his Department as to the transfer of inmates from one prison to another in England and Wales who are not regarded as either a security or disciplinary risk; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The prison service seeks to transfer prisoners to appropriate conditions and locations as soon as possible after they have been sentenced. Some low-risk prisoners may be retained to help with the day-to-day operation of a higher-security establishment.

Details of the number of prisoners who are awaiting transfer to open conditions, and waiting times, are not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the number of new prisons opened in England and Wales; what is the approved staffing levels of such prisons in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The eight new prisons opened in the last five years, together with their current target staffing levels for officer grades, including principal and senior officers and specialists, and the complements for other staff are listed in the table:

Establishment	*Opening date*	*Officer target staffing level*	*Other staff complement*
Wayland	1985	152	98
Stocken	1985	130	94·5
Thorn Cross	1985	81	56·5
Full Sutton	1987	389	128·5
Littlehey	1988	155	108
The Mount	1988	171	89·5
Swaleside	1988	204	101·5
Garth	1988	210	116

The historical data requested are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's policy on deciding the location for visits between prison inmates; what steps are taken to minimise the amount of travelling involved and escort costs; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Each case is considered individually. Governors are encouraged to minimise travelling distances and costs, and wherever possible to use established escorting links between prisons. Prisoners may be temporarily transferred to the establishment in which their relative is being held, or to one nearby, so that the distance for individual escorts is kept to a minimum. It is sometimes possible to use an established interchange centre as the location for a visit, the prisoners concerned being returned to their establishments the same day.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what surveys have been undertaken at prisons in England and Wales built over 80 years ago and for which plans for the installation of internal sanitation are being considered to ensure that the existing sewer system within the prison is capable of taking the proposed new internal system; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Surveys have been carried out on the extent and condition of sewers and drains at all prisons over 80 years old, for which there are plans to install integral sanitation. As detailed plans are drawn up for each scheme further surveys are being undertaken as necessary, to ensure the additional sanitary facilities are able to function properly.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by whom the allocation of long-term inmates is decided; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Until recently, this was a matter for prison service regional directors, with the exception of life sentence and security category A prisoners who were allocated centrally. Since 25 September, following reorganisation in which prison service regions have now been abolished, the allocation of prisoners sentenced to 10 years or more is determined centrally within the directorate of custody. Shorter sentence prisoners are allocated at establishment level by staff in local prisons.

Prison Hospitals

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of agency nurses employed in prison hospitals on 1 October; what rates of pay they were being paid; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Agency nurses are employed by the prison service as a means of filling posts temporarily during periods of acute staffing difficulty when redeployment is not an available option. About 55 posts were wholly or partially covered by agency staff on 1 October. Agency charges vary and information about the charges met by individual establishments is not held centrally. Establishments are encouraged to seek value for money in the purchase of such services.

Age of Consent

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to bring in legislation to ensure that the age of consent for sex between *(a)* homosexuals, *(b)* lesbians and *(c)* heterosexuals is the same; what is the present minimum age of consent; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: A homosexual act between two consenting men in private is not an offence if both parties have attained the age of 21 years. Sexual intercourse with a girl below the age of 16 years is an offence. Below that age a girl cannot in law give any consent which would prevent a lesbian act from being charged as an indecent assault.

We have no plans at all to amend the law in this area.

Community Charge Liability Orders

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many poll tax liability orders have been granted by magistrates courts in England and Wales at the latest available date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Information on the number of liability orders made by magistrates courts is not yet available centrally. An analysis of initial returns from justices' clerks covering the period April to September inclusive is likely to be available before the end of the year.

British Broadcasting Corporation

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish a table showing the income earned by the BBC from subscription in each of the last three years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand that the BBC has not yet earned any money from subscription.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his intention to publish in full the completed report of the consultancy into the future level of the BBC licence fee.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: A decision on possible publication of the report will be made when it becomes available.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will vary the terms of reference of the consultancy into the BBC licence fee to assess whether, as well as how, future increases in the television licence fee can be set below the level of inflation measured by the retail prices index.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. Work has already begun under the published terms of reference.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to make an ex-gratia payment to the BBC towards the costs incurred by reporting events from the Gulf.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No.

Marriage Guidance

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current level of grant provided annually by his Department to the marriage guidance counselling services; and what plans he has to review the level of assistance.

Mr. John Patten: The grants in aid to marriage guidance organisations for the present financial year are:

	£
Relate	[1]1,306,840
Tavistock Institute of Marital Studies	329,440
Catholic Marriage Advisory Council	131,100
Family Welfare Association	20,140
One Plus One [Formerly the Marriage Research Centre]	14,650

[1] including a special grant of £300,000

Their review is under consideration.

Somalia

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the current situation of Somali citizens awaiting entry into the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Under the immigration rules, applications for visas by foreign nationals must be lodged with the entry clearance officer of a British diplomatic post. The application will then normally be resolved by the entry clearance officer without reference to the Home Office. However, because of the current situation in the Horn of Africa this requirement has been waived in respect of Somali refugees—mainly those in camps in Ethiopia and Djibouti—who are unable to go to a British diplomatic post to lodge a visa application. In such cases we have agreed that sponsors in the United Kingdom may present the facts of cases here so that as far as possible applications can be determined before their families need embark on the difficult and sometimes hazardous journey to collect their visas. This has generated a substantial amount of new work for the refugee unit of the immigration and nationality department and in the interests of fairness the applications are dealt with in the order in which they are received.

Citizenship Applications

Mr. Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make available the income and expenditure account for the administration of citizenship applications for 1989-90.

Mr. Waddington: I have today placed in the Library a copy of the nationality fees income and expenditure account for the 12 months ended 31 March 1990.

Non-custodial Sentences

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number and proportion of offences triable only on indictment which attracted non-custodial sentences in each of the last three years in which the offender was aged over 21 and had previously served a prison sentence.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Information for 1986 to 1988 for persons aged 21 and over given non-custodial sentences for offences triable only on indictment is given in the table.

It is not possible from the data held centrally to identify those offenders who had previously served a prison sentence.

Data for 1989 are not yet available.

Persons aged 21 and over given non-custodial sentences for offences triable only on indictment 1986 to 1988
England and Wales

Year	*Total sentenced*	*Number given non-custodial sentences*	*per cent.*
1986	5,602	1,182	21
1987	6,100	1,165	19
1988	6,411	1,354	21

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland (Shopping Restrictions)

150. **Mr. John D. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has on restrictions on shopping in Northern Ireland presently applied by the Republic of Ireland on its citizens; what consideration has been given to the restrictions by the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The European Court of Justice ruled on 12 June 1990 that the restriction debarring citizens of the Republic of Ireland from benefitting from travellers' allowances if they are out of the country for under 48 hours is against European Community law. The United Kingdom Government gave their support to the action of the European Commission in bringing this matter before the European Court. We have persistently urged the Republic of Ireland Government to act on the judgment and remove these restrictions and we will continue to do so.

Concessionary Bus Fares

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received about the introduction of concessionary bus fares for women on reaching retirement age at 60 years.

Mr. Needham: Ten such representations have been received since 1986.

The qualifying age for concessionary half-fare travel by bus and rail in Northern Ireland is 65 years for men and women. The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland is precluded by the provision of the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 from making a distinction on age grounds between men and women.

Opencast Mines

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date the number of opencast coal site applications that have been refused by his Department;

(2) if he will list by location the opencast coal sites currently being worked;

(3) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date the number of opencast coal sites that received his Department's approval.

Mr. Needham: None.

PONI Logo

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland firms have so far applied successfully for permission to carry the logo PONI, made in Northern Ireland; and if he will list them in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Needham: While I welcome any initiative to assist Northern Ireland companies with their marketing activities, the PONI scheme is the responsiblity of the Northern Ireland chamber of commerce and industry. The Government do not, therefore, posses the information sought.

Food Labelling

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will take steps to ensure that the correct country of origin is borne on a cheese product marketed by Golden Cow Dairies Ltd., Portadown, called Easi Singles;

(2) whether he will consider taking an appropriate case to the Northern Ireland courts in order to have a legal interpretation of the term "material degree" as used in article 3(7) of EC Food Labelling directive 79/112/EEC;

(3) whether he will make representations to the European Community about the effect of article 3(7) EC Food Labelling directive 79/112/EEC on products which, while manufactured in Southern Ireland, bear labelling with a Northern Ireland address.

Mr. Needham: No. Enforcement of European Community food labelling requirements is the responsibility of district councils in Northern Ireland.

European Community

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will consider the setting up of a Northern Ireland centre in Brussels to represent Ulster interests to the European Commission and Community.

Mr. Cope: The Northern Ireland interest in EC issues, like the overall national interest, is upheld by the office of the United Kingdom permanent representation in Brussels which includes personnel seconded from the Northern Ireland civil service. I am, therefore, satisfied that, on matters of public policy, the appropriate arrangements are in place. There are many issues—increasingly so, with the approach of the single European market—where there may be a role for independent, non-governmental representation in the EC.

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will obtain a copy of the feasibility report produced by the University of Ulster on a Northern Ireland centre in Europe for his departmental library.

Mr. Cope: A copy of this report has recently been received.

Dyslexia

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils attending *(a)* primary and *(b)* post-primary schools suffer from dyslexia.

Mr. Needham: The term dyslexia can describe a variety of specific learning difficulties experienced by children and the information is not readily available in the form requested.

It is estimated that some 600 children currently receive assistance for literacy and numeracy problems.

Agriculture

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what new financial assistance Her Majesty's Government will give to the agricultural industry in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Brooke: I have no plans for assistance beyond the substantial EC and other support already available.

Mr. Aidan Carroll

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received regarding the cases of the Armagh Four; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: Representations have been received from a number of politicians, churchmen and others. These have generally sought to question matters considered at the trial, including the admissibility of the men's statements of confession and the weight given by the trial judge to the evidence presented. None of the representations so far received has contained any new evidence on which the Secretary of State could justify referring the case to the Court of Appeal.

Whiterock Road Incident

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the pathologist's reports on the Whiterock road shootings to be completed and a dossier to be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: As I told the hon. Member in a letter on 14 July, the state pathologist's report on the Whiterock road shootings was submitted to the independent Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland, who is currently considering the case, in July this year.

Teacher Training

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made towards the integration of teacher training in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The Government are committed to the principle of integrated education in Northern Ireland and our policy is to support the provision of such education where it clearly reflects the wishes of those directly involved. No such consensus has emerged in support of the integration of Northern Ireland's two teacher training colleges. There has, however, developed between the colleges an enhanced level of co-operation, including a joint programme for education for mutual understanding and arrangements within which every student will spend part of his or her time in joint study with contemporaries from the other college and undertake teaching practice in schools of both major traditions. The Government have sought to give every possible encouragement to those developments.

In the two university departments of education, teacher training provision has always been fully integrated.

IRA Car Bombs

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to whether any of the persons who were forced by the IRA to drive the car bombs to their destinations on the night of 23-24 October had any connection with the security forces by past or present membership or by the nature of their work.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* It would not be appropriate for me to comment.

Local Government Finance

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total cost of collecting *(a)* the regional rate and *(b)* the local rate in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what percentage of total rates this represented in each year.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* The cost of collection cannot be disaggregated between the regional rate element and the district rate element. The following table indicates the percentage cost of collection of the total rates due.

	Total cost of collection for Northern Ireland £	*Total cost of collection as percentage of total rates*
1985-86	3,859,177	1·58
1986-87	4,757,933	1·67
1987-88	4,921,024	1·67
1988-89	5,628,997	1·76
1989-90	5,775,164	1·62

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show for each of the last five years and the current year the *(a)* number of local government electors in each council area in Northern Ireland, *(b)* sum raised in each council area in those years in respect of (i) regional rates and (ii) local rates, *(c)* sum per elector for each of those years in respect of *(j)* regional rates and *(k)* local rates, *(d)* number of domestic rateable properties in each year and the number of other rateable properties in each and *(e)* average sum due for each *(y)* domestic rateable property and *(z)* other rateable property.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* As the information requested is lengthy, I will write to the hon. Gentleman and place copies of my letter in the Library.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Albania

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's current relations with Albania.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Our outstanding offer to establish diplomatic relations without preconditions remains on the table.

Cambodia

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he will be taking to pursue the peace plan in Cambodia and encourage all sides to agree to a ceasefire, now that the SNC has been formed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, we continue to play a full part in efforts to reach a comprehensive political settlement based on the framework unanimously endorsed by the UN General Assembly on 15 October. We have repeatedly called on all parties to the conflict to stop fighting and co-operate to the full in working out the details of such a settlement.

EC Majority Voting

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the basis of the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the principle of majority voting in the European Community Council of Ministers on environmental and energy legislation.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The voting procedure for EC environmental legislation depends on the legal base. Where the main purpose of a measure is environmental protection, it should be based on articles 130R-T of the treaty of Rome (unanimity). Where the predominant objective of a proposal containing a provision relating to the environment is to ensure the free circulation in the internal market of the goods to which it relates, it should be based on article 100A (qualified majority voting). There are no specific treaty articles on energy but, as with the environment, EC energy legislation is also adopted by unanimity or qualified majority voting according to the articles on which individual proposals are based.

Spies

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards permitting families of defectors or admitted spies for foreign states to join them in those states, or in a third country, if the family members express a wish to rejoin the individual defector or spy.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: All residents of the United Kingdom have the right to travel to any destination of their choice.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has had any recent discussions with his Soviet and United States counterparts, or their ministerial or departmental colleagues, in regard to the jointly issued statement of 19 October on international strategies to combat nuclear proliferation.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what were the United Kingdom objections to the proposals set out in the document NPT/CONF.IV/L.3, dated 3 September, to the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty by a group of 16 states; and whether the United Kingdom tabled any suggested alternative proposals in regard to timetabling of the preparations for the next full gathering of states parties to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The United Kingdom and many other countries took the view that it would be inappropriate for the preparatory meetings for the 1995 nuclear non-proliferation treaty conference to begin as early as September 1991 and to be mandated to discuss all substantive matters. We also thought it inappropriate for the conference to adopt resolutions on individual questions. The three depository powers of the NPT (United Kingdom, United States and USSR) tabled an alternative proposal.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* the text of the single-sentence amendment proposed by the United Kingdom on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, to the suggested text submitted by the chairman drafting committee on paragraph 7 of the draft final declaration of the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in Geneva on 14 September.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No; the discussions of the committee were not public.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government have made any communication with the Mexican Government or the permanent representative of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva, in response to the statements made by Ambassador Marin Bosch to the final session of the fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty on 15 September.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have made clear to the Mexican authorities our disappointment that the Mexican delegation to the non-proliferation treaty review conference could not agree to the proposal by the president of the conference for a final document.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which diplomatic meetings the United Kingdom delegation attended outside the Palais des Nations on 14 September, as part of the process of reviewing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The United Kingdom delegation to the non-proliferation treaty review conference attended several informal meetings outside the conference itself.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those non-governmental organisations invited to attend the

ministerial briefing and discussion on non-proliferation, verification and disarmament issues at his Department on 23 October; and if he will make a statement on the proportion of time devoted in the meeting to each issue raised, and on the outcome of the meeting.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Thirty-seven non-governmental organisations were invited to this background briefing. The discussions were off the record and wide ranging: it would not be possible to specify how much time was devoted to each of the many issues raised.

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters he raised at the European Foreign Affairs Council in Luxembourg on 22-23 October.

Mr. Garel-Jones: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs gave to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on 24 October, c. *220*.

Israel

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters he raised with Israeli Government ministers or officials during his recent visit to Israel.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs covered a wide range of bilateral and regional issues in his useful discussions with Israeli ministers and officials including the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israel dispute. He specifically raised the United Nations Secretary General's mission to Israel and urged the Israeli Government to reconsider their refusal to receive this mission.

Iraq

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth affairs if he will make it his policy at the next European Foreign Affairs council meeting to raise with his German counterpart the involvement of German companies in exporting technologies and materials directly or indirectly to Iraq that could assist in the production of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We are in regular contact with the German authorities over this issue.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he possesses in regard to the current activities undertaken at the military nuclear research facility at Karochooq in Iraq.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Iraq has declared to the International Atomic Energy Agency only one nuclear research establishment, at Tuwaitha. We are unaware of the alleged nuclear research facility specified in the question.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has in regard to current status of the tripartite agreement between Iraq, Egypt and Pakistan completed in December 1985, for the construction of a collectively sponsored experimental nuclear reactor at Al-Wadi Al-Jadid.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We are aware of media reports in December 1985 that talks had taken place with a view to establishing co-operation in the nuclear field between Egypt, Iraq and Pakistan. We do not know of any subsequent developments.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he possesses concerning the current status of the agreement made between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, in March 1989, for the Saudis to finance the rebuilding of the Osiraq nuclear plant in Iraq.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: As far as we are aware, no such agreement was ever put into effect.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any information in regard to the renewal of the 10-year agreement in October 1989 between Brazil and Iraq, for the provision of low enriched uranium and nuclear technology services to Iraq.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We understand that the Brazilian authorities have denied that there is now any nuclear co-operation between Brazil and Iraq.

Disarmament

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department has played any role, or offered to assist, in the distribution of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research report (UNIDIR 90/7).

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No.

European Political Union

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the tripartite talks between the ministers of the European Foreign Affairs Council, the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 23 October concerning developments towards European political union.

Mr. Garel-Jones: I represented the United Kingdom at the meeting on the preparation of the intergovernmental conference on political union which was held on 23 October in Strasbourg. The European Parliament, Commission and member states set out their respective views on possible institutional reforms. No conclusions were drawn, but it was agreed to hold a further exchange of views at a later date.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response was made by the United Kingdom ambassador to the United Nations, or by another United Kingdom representative or Minister, to the proposal advanced by the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, on 16 October, that the prohibition of nuclear testing was essential to stop the proliferation of strategic nuclear weapons.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: No response has been given by the United Kingdom permanent representative or other officials to the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister's proposal on nuclear testing. Our position on nuclear testing is already well known.

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if any nuclear tests conducted by the United Kingdom in Nevada since 1979 have been undertaken for the purposes of enhancing techniques of verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to make public the details of nuclear test programmes.

UN International Week of Science and Peace

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department has any plans to support the second United Nations International Week of Science and Peace, 5 to 11 November.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We are not convinced about the potential value of the UN International Week of Science and Peace. We do not intend to allocate to it resources better employed elsewhere.

Antarctica

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to seek to negotiate a new environmental convention for the regulation of Antarctic minerals which would command all-round support.

Mr. Garel-Jones: We are committed to achieving the best possible environmental protection for Antarctica, not just from mineral exploration, but from any other source of pollution. To that end we are ready to discuss all proposals, not only new environmental convention, for improving environmental protection with a view to achieving an agreement that commands consensus by all the Antarctic treaty states.

Sea Bed Sovereignty

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reply has been sent to the Falkland Islands Government in response to the request of the legislative assembly to extend British sovereignty over large areas of seabed.

Mr. Garel-Jones: We have taken note of the Falklands Islands Legislative Council's recent resolution calling on us to extend the Falklands continental shelf and to extend the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone.

Legislative councillors are kept fully informed as to our views on this issue both directly and through the governor.

Afghanistan

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Afghanistan at the most recent date.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: British diplomats were withdrawn from Kabul in February 1989. It is too early to say when they will return. The Afghan embassy in London remains open under a chargé d'affaires.

Somalia

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on current relations between Britain and Somalia.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We seek to use our relations with Somalia to encourage national reconciliation, democracy and respect for human rights in that country.

Kuwait

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government intend to publish a paper giving the details of the terror in Kuwait since its illegal annexation.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: A copy is being placed in the Library of the House of a Foreign and Commonwealth Office briefing note entitled "The Rape of Kuwait".

Hong Kong

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of items from endangered species seized by the Hong Kong authorities in the first half of 1990 and the prosecutions arising from such seizures.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 17 October]:* In the first half of 1990, the Hong Kong authorities made 218 seizures, from which 96 prosecutions arose. Details of the seizures are as follows:

Species	*Quantity*
Mammals	
worked ivory	126·45 kg
Monkey—live	3 hds
Pangolin—live	2 hds
Pangolin—stuffed/carcasses meat/scale	2 hds + 30·2 kg
Wild cats—stuffed/skin/rug	138 pcs
Bear paw	1 pc
Peccaries skin	102 pc
Seal skin	2 pcs
Birds	
Parrots	44 hds
Birds of prey—live	12 hds
Birds of prey—stuffed/carcass	11 hds
Reptiles	
Sea turtle—stuffed	99 hds
Tortoise—live	7 hds
Python—skin/meat	37 pcs + 37·5 kg
Lizard skin	12,166 pcs + 27·5 kg
Crocodile—stuffed /skin	90 hds + 6·6 kg
Amphibians	
Giant Salamander—live	1 hd
Fish	
Asiatic Bony Tongue fish—live/dead	163 tails
Insects	
Butterfly—mounted specimens	15 pcs
Molluscs	
Giant clam—live	11 hds
Corals	
Black coral	5,000 kg
Plants	
Orchid	3,264 pcs
Ginseng Root	15·4 kg

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of ivory exported from Hong Kong since midnight on 17 July.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 17 October]:* No commercial exports of ivory have been authorised since midnight on 17 July.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current total of all ivory known to be held in Hong Kong; and on what date it was assessed.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 17 October]:* The total stock of commercial ivory held in Hong Kong on 17 July 1990 was 463 tonnes, to the nearest tonne. No commercial exports of ivory have been authorised since then.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of licences issued by the Hong Kong authorities for the export of ivory between 7 July and midnight on 17 July.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 17 October]:* Between 7 July 1990 and midnight on 17 July 1990, two export licences were issued by the Hong Kong authorities for the export of 18 kg and 41 kg of worked ivory to South Korea.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply of 23 July, *Official Report*, column *105*, if the information on the countries of origin of tusks held in Hong Kong has been forwarded to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (Hong Kong).

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 18 October]:* The compilation of information on the countries of origin of tusks held in Hong Kong is nearing completion and will be forwarded to the World Wide Fund for Nature (Hong Kong) shortly.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many spot checks have been made by the Hong Kong authorities on ivory-holding premises since June 1990; and if any irregularities were discovered.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 19 October]:* The Hong Kong authorities have made 215 spot checks on ivory-holding premises since June 1990. No irregularities have been discovered.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current number of possession licences issued to holders of ivory stocks in Hong Kong.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 19 October]:* As at 17 October 1990, the number of possession licences issued to commercial ivory stock holders in Hong Kong was 985. This figure includes both licences issued for ivory with CITES documentation and the separate licences issued for ivory without such documentation.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if any ivory has been confiscated by the Hong Kong authorities since 17 July; and if any prosecutions for illegal export have been entered since the same date.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 19 October]:* A total of 19·7 kg of worked ivory was seized by the Hong Kong authorities between 17 July 1990 and 17 October 1990. This ivory will be confiscated if the prosecutions arising from these seizures result in convictions. Two prosecutions for illegal export involving 59 kg of worked ivory have been entered since 17 July 1990, but these prosecutions relate to seizures made before that date.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made by the Hong Kong authorities in identifying the source of the 960 kg of ivory name seals seized by Japanese customs officers; and if any prosecutions have been pursued.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd *[holding answer 19 October]:* The source of the 960 kg of ivory name seals seized by Japanese customs officers has been confirmed as being Hong Kong. Four persons suspected of being involved in the illegal export of this ivory have been investigated, but no prosecution has been entered for lack of evidence.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

World Bank Loans

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the United Kingdom representative on the board of the World Bank supported the decisions to give development aid loans for the Sardar Sarovar dam in India and the Carajas iron ore mine in the Brazilian Amazon rain forest.

Mrs. Chalker: It is not the policy of the British Government to disclose instructions to our executive directors in the World Bank or other international financial institutions.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Manufacturing Industry

152. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the profitability of manufacturing industry in 1989 and at the beginning of the decade.

154. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the profitability of non-North sea industrial and commercial companies in 1989 and at the beginning of the decade.

158. **Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the relative profitability of manufacturing industry in 1989 and at the beginning of the decade.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The net real rate of return on capital employed by non-North sea industrial and commercial companies is estimated to have been 8·3 per cent. in 1989, compared with 3·9 per cent. in 1980. For manufacturing companies the net real rate of return on capital employed is estimated to have been 7·4 per cent. in 1989, compared with 3·1 per cent. in 1980. Full details may be found in Business Bulletin issue 79/90, published on Thursday 25 October 1990, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Balance of Trade

155. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current United Kingdom balance of trade.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the third quarter of this year the United Kingdom's visible trade deficit was £3·8 billion. This compares with £5·2 billion in the previous quarter and £6·6 billion a year earlier.

153. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reduce the size of Britain's trade deficit.

156. **Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reduce the size of Britain's trade deficit.

157. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reduce the size of Britain's trade deficit.

Mr. Norman Lamont: There are clear signs that the visible trade deficit is falling as domestic demand pressures ease. In the third quarter of 1990, the UK's visible trade deficit was £3·8 billion. This compares with £5·2 billion in the previous quarter and £6·6 billion a year earlier. Export volumes, less oil and erratics, have risen 8 per cent. over the past year while imports were unchanged.

Incomes

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is the income gap difference between average pre-tax income per family per week in the south-east and all other United Kingdom regions in current prices for 1979 and 1989;

(2) what is the income gap difference between average income after tax per family per week in the south-east and other United Kingdom regions in current prices for 1979 and 1989.

Mr. Maude: Available information based on the annual survey of personal incomes is given in the tables. Information relates to tax units (single people and married couples) with income above the pay-as-you-earn threshold regardless of whether they are liable to income tax. I regret that it is not possible to provide a regional breakdown for years subsequent to 1987-88.

Average pre-tax income and post-tax income per tax unit by region, 1978-79

£ per annum

Region	*Average pre-tax income per tax unit*	*Difference in pre-tax income compared with South East*	*Average post-tax income per tax unit*	*Difference in post-tax income compared with South East*
North	4,500	460	3,660	270
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,610	350	3,760	170
North West	4,430	530	3,620	310
East Midlands	4,410	550	3,590	340
West Midlands	4,670	290	3,800	130
East Anglia	4,510	450	3,670	260
South East (including Greater London)	4,960	—	3,930	—
South West	4,420	540	3,610	320
Wales	4,320	640	3,540	390
Scotland	4,480	480	3,630	300
Northern Ireland	4,230	730	3,440	490
United Kingdom	4,650	(310)	3,750	(180)

Average pre-tax income and post-tax income per unit by region, 1987-88

£ per annum

Region	*Average pre-tax income per tax unit*	*Difference in pre-tax income compared with South East*	*Average post-tax income per tax unit*	*Difference in post-tax income compared with South East*
North	10,700	2,300	9,030	1,470
Yorkshire and Humberside	11,000	2,000	9,170	1,330
North West	10,700	2,300	9,000	1,500
East Midlands	11,200	1,800	9,440	1,060
West Midlands	11,100	1,900	9,330	1,170
East Anglia	11,800	1,200	9,830	670
South East (including Greater London)	13,000	—	10,500	—
South West	10,800	2,200	9,030	1,470
Wales	10,700	2,300	8,990	1,510
Scotland	10,600	2,400	8,940	1,560
Northern Ireland	10,900	2,100	9,100	1,400
United Kingdom	11,600	(1,400)	9,600	(900)

Foreign-owned Businesses

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the United Kingdom work force is employed by foreign-owned businesses.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I have been asked to reply. Information is available only for manufacturing industry where it is estimated that, in 1988, 13 per cent. of the work force was employed by businesses controlled or owned by companies incorporated overseas.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish a table showing the number of civil servants employed in the gathering and publishing of statistics in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Maples: The table gives the total number of staff in the Government Statistical Service (GSS) from 1978 to 1988-89, the last year for which such information is available.

Much of the decrease shown in the table results from widespread computerisation of statistical services, which has reduced the need for clerical support. The number of staff in the statistician group (the professionally qualified part of the GSS) increased from 566 on 1 April 1978 to 599 on 1 April 1988, reflecting a continuing level of professional input to the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistical information.

Much data-gathering for the GSS is carried out by staff who are not members of the GSS and some statistics are published by non-GSS staff. The work of the GSS covers more than simply gathering and publishing statistics.

The number of staff in the Government Statistical Service[1] 1978 to 1988-89

Year	Number of staff[2]
1978	6,157
1979	6,131
1980	5,909
1981	5,587
1982	5,211
1983	4,707
1984	4,469
1985-86	[3]4,592
1986-87	[4]4,767
1987-88	4,254
1988-89	4,228

[1]The Government Statistical Service is decentalised and its boundaries are liable to change over time. This table collects together figures from many departments.

[2]At 1 April.

[3]From 1985-86 onwards the number of staff figure represent the number of man-years in the GSS during the financial year.

[4]Man-years forecast.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish a table showing the expenditure in real terms, corrected for inflation, on the gathering and publishing of statistics by Government in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Maples: The Government's statistical service is decentralised and the information requested is therefore not available.

Regional Spending

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will show for each region in table 11.4 of "Regional Trends"—1988—or the subsequent year, the breakdown of the item "Public Administration and Defence" into the sub-categories *(a)* agriculture, *(b)* trade and industry, *(c)* employment, *(d)* transport, *(e)* environment and *(f)* law enforcement showing separately the spending on health and education services.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information requested is not available.

The latest estimates of gross domestic product by industry group are published in the 1990 edition of "Regional Trends" at table 12.2. Provisional estimates for 1989 will be published in the November edition of "Economic Trends". The sample surveys on which the figures are based do not disaggregate public administration and defence.

Official Report

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the price of the *Official Report*.

Mr. Maples: Following a review by HMSO, I have authorised increases of £1 in the prices of the daily part and Standing Committee debates and of £3 in the price of the weekly part. Rather lower percentage increases have been authorised for other *Hansard* items. Subscription rates will be adjusted accordingly and the scale of charges for reprints of Members' speeches appearing in the *Official Report* will also be raised. These increases, coupled with continued careful control of production costs, are further steps towards eliminating the central subsidy required, which has been progressively reduced from £6 million in 1983-84 to a forecast £1·2 million for 1991-92. The rises will come into effect from the beginning of the new Session.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the growth of manufacturing productivity in the United Kingdom and other G7 countries during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Mr. Lilley: I have been asked to reply.

In the 1960s Britain had the slowest rate of growth in manufacturing productivity of any of the major seven industrial countries. In the 1970s we again had the slowest rate of growth of manufacturing productivity of any of those countries. In the 1980s we have had the fastest rate of growth of manufacturing productivity of any of those countries.

Growth in manufacturing productivity

	Annual average percentage change		
	1960-70	1970-80	1980-89
United Kingdom	3·1	1·6	5·1
United States of America	3·5	3·0	4·1
Japan	8·8	5·3	3·3
Germany	4·1	2·9	2·3
France	4·5	3·2	3·2
Italy	6·2	2·5	3·1
Canada	3·4	3·0	3·2
Group of 7	4·4	3·2	3·6

Source: Her Majesty's Treasury.

THE ARTS

Public Libraries

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has on reductions in *(a)* book fund expenditure, *(b)* opening hours and *(c)* the number of public libraries in the current financial year, by public library authority.

Mr. Mellor: I will not have a full picture of public library expenditure in England for 1990-91 until the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy has published its statistics early in 1992. I am aware of reductions by some library authorities in book fund expenditure, opening hours and temporary closure of branches. I particularly deplore the decision of Derbyshire county council to close 11 libraries about which I am making inquiries.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish a table showing the rate per loan of the public lending scheme for the years in which the scheme has operated *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* adjusted for retail prices index inflation.

Mr. Mellor: The table shows the public lending right scheme rate per loan in cash terms, and in real terms using the Government's gross domestic product deflator.

Year	*Rate per loan*	
	Cash pence	*At 1989-90 prices pence*
1983-84	1·02	1·40
1984-85	0·92	1·20
1985-86	1·27	1·58
1986-87	1·20	1·44
1987-88	1·12	1·28
1988-89	1·45	1·54
1989-90	1·39	1·39

Lieu of Tax

Sir Hal Miller: To ask the Minister for the Arts, if there have been any items accepted in lieu of tax or allocated since he last made an announcement on the subject to the House.

Mr. Mellor *[pursuant to the reply, 20 April 1990, c. 1042]:* I am pleased to announce the acceptance of a collection of works by and relating to John Piper in lieu of £137,918 tax. A decision on the allocation of this collection has yet to be taken but I have decided to allocate a number of offers accepted in the last financial year as follows: the painting "Richmond près Londres" by Corot shall go to the London borough of Richmond upon Thames for display in Orleans house; the Constable painting "Farm Cart with Horse in Harness" will go to the Ipswich museum and the Kirckman harpsichord will be allocated to the Manchester city art gallery for display and to use in recitals at Heaton hall. Finally I would like to inform the House that a further payment of £360 has been made to the Inland Revenue in relation to the acceptance in lieu of the Beechey painting announced on 20 April. The total tax satisfied by the acceptance of this painting is therefore £151,849.

CIVIL SERVICE

Agencies

Mr. Beith: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he will make a statement about progress and future plans on the creation of agencies.

Mr. Mellor *[pursuant to his reply, 29 October 1990, c. 724]:* The Government are today publishing their reply (Cm. 1263) to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee's helpful report of progress in the "next steps" initiative.

In addition, following my predecessor's announcement to the House on 2 April at columns *386-89*, the Government are today publishing the first review of the "next steps" agencies (Cm. 1261) showing summaries of developments and results in individual agencies.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Fund

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will provide for Paisley social security office the information on social fund budget and crisis loans provided in his reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) of 25 January, *Official Report*, columns *809-12;*

(2) if he will provide for each of the local social security offices in Renfrew district comparable information to that provided in his answer of 6 July to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn), *Official Report*, column *721*, for the years *(a)* 1985-86, *(b)* 1986-87, *(c)* 1987-88, *(d)* 1988-89 and *(e)* 1989-90;

(3) if he will list for each social security office in Renfrew district the number of social fund applications *(a)* submitted and *(b)* rejected on grounds of insufficient priorities since 1 July in each of these categories: (i) grants, (ii) budget loans and (iii) crisis loans.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many social fund loan applications were refused in the London borough of Newham in the financial year 1989-90 and 1990 to date due to perceived inability to repay; and what general advice was offered to those refused.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The table shows the number of applications recorded as refused on grounds of inability to repay.

	April 1989 to March 1990	*April 1990 to September 1990*
Canning Town	36	21
Plaistow	38	15
Woodgrange Park	45	30

All decision letters advise applicants of their right to ask for a review and refer to the citizens advice bureau or a local law centre as a source of general advice. Money advice is normally offered to applicants discovered to be in financial difficulties, including such cases where an applicant is refused because of a perceived inability to repay.

Social Fund

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many applications for review were received during the period *(a)* April 1988 to March 1989 and *(b)* April 1989 to March 1990 in respect of (i) community care grants, (ii) budgeting loans, and (iii) crisis loans by each of the local offices covering the Doncaster area; and if he will show in his answer how many of these applications for review resulted in revised decisions;

(2) if he will list for each social security office covering the Doncaster area, the number of social fund applications *(a)* submitted and *(b)* rejected on grounds of insufficient priority, for the 12-month period ended 30 September, in each of the categories (i) grants, (ii) budget loan, and (iii) crisis loans.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Income Support

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applicants for unemployment benefit are being referred to claim income support as a result of the actively seeking work test in *(a)* Leeds, West and *(b)* England and Wales.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is not kept and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what were the numbers of (i) claimants, (ii) dependants and (iii) total numbers dependent on income support in Scotland in each year since 1979.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information for 1985 and 1990 is unavailable. The information for the years 1979-84 and 1986-89 is in the table.

Year	*Number of claimants*	*Number of dependants*	*Total number dependent on supplementary benefit/income support*
1979	286,000	164,000	450,000
1980	304,000	177,000	481,000
1981	371,000	236,000	607,000
1982	423,000	281,000	704,000
1983	440,000	272,000	712,000
1984	468,000	302,000	770,000
1986	506,000	323,000	829,000
1987	535,000	323,000	858,000
1988	499,000	324,000	823,000
1989	486,000	309,000	795,000

Source: Annual Statistical Inquiry.

Disability Benefits

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what representation he has received from the Disability Benefits Consortium in support of a comprehensive disability income scheme; what has been his response; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The constituent groups within the Disability Benefits Consortium have long advocated such a scheme and we discussed the proposal in "The Way Ahead: Benefits for Disabled People" (Cmd. 917). We concluded that an elaborate disability income striving to cover a whole range of specific needs would be much more complicated than existing benefits and produce an unacceptable number of losers. The prime objective must be to provide a system which can get help quickly and effectively to those most in need.

Children

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the number of Scottish children *(a)* in total and *(b)* as a percentage dependent on supplementary benefit and income support in each year since 1978.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information for 1985 and 1990 is unavailable. The information for the years 1978-84 and 1986-89 is in the table.

Year	*Number of children under 16 in Scotland*[1]	*Percentage of children under 16 dependent on supplementary benefit/income support*[2] *per cent.*
1978	1,377,000	9
1979	1,347,000	8
1980	1,316,000	9
1981	1,284,000	12
1982	1,251,000	15
1983	1,195,000	15
1984	1,168,000	17
1986	1,145,000	19
1987	1,125,000	20
1988	1,105,000	21
1989	1,021,000	22

Sources:
[1] Office of Population, Census and Surveys census returns.
[2] Annual Statistical Inquiry.

Child Benefit

Dr. Hampson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people are in reciept of child benefit; how many are top rate taxpayers; and what is his most recent estimate of the cost of paying child benefit to top rate taxpayers.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Child benefit is paid to about 7 million people—mostly mothers—in the United Kingdom. It is estimated that around 0·1 million of these recipients pay tax at the higher rate in 1990-91 and receive child benefit amounting to about £57 million.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many *(a)* pensioner households, *(b)* families with children and *(c)* other households who are tenants of (i) local authorities and new towns, (ii) housing associations and (iii) other landlords, are estimated to be receiving *(x)* maximum housing benefit with no deductions for non-dependants, *(y)* maximum housing benefit but with deductions for non-dependants and *(z)* a lesser amount of housing benefit, towards their rent payments currently, and over the previous five years, in Great Britain as a whole, and in each region for which figures are available; and what proportion of the total number of tenants in each category they represent.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The available information is given in the table. Comparable information is not readily available for years prior to the introduction of the

reformed scheme in 1988-89, and is not separately available for families with children or for tenants of housing associations. "Pensioners" include those entitled to the pensioner premium, and therefore includes all persons aged 60 and over. Table 3 will contain a small number of cases who, though not receiving income support, are nevertheless entitled to maximum housing benefit; it is not possible to isolate these.

Table 1
Householders in receipt of rent rebate/allowance, also in receipt of income support

	May 1988						May 1989					
	Pensioners		Others		Total		Pensioners		Others		Total	
	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants
Local Authority tenants												
England	678	16	837	19	1,515	35	594	14	791	19	1,385	33
Wales	41	17	56	23	97	40	36	16	53	23	89	38
Scotland	122	13	158	17	280	31	92	11	142	16	235	27
Great Britain	841	15	1,050	19	1,891	35	722	14	987	19	1,709	32
Other tenants												
England	196	10	296	15	492	24	181	9	295	15	476	24
Wales	9	8	19	18	28	26	9	8	23	22	32	30
Scotland	11	6	32	16	43	22	12	6	31	16	43	22
Great Britain	215	9	348	15	563	24	202	9	350	15	552	24

Table 2
Householders in receipt of rent rebate/allowance and income support, also with non-dependants in household

	May 1988						May 1989					
	Pensioners		Others		Total		Pensioners		Others		Total	
	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants
Local Authority tenants												
England	78	2	74	2	152	4	72	2	74	2	146	4
Wales	6	3	5	2	12	5	4	2	5	2	9	4
Scotland	20	2	13	1	32	4	13	1	14	2	27	3
Great Britain	104	2	91	2	196	4	90	2	92	2	182	3
Other tenants												
England	14	1	14	1	28	1	12	1	11	1	23	1
Wales	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Scotland	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
Great Britain	15	1	16	1	30	1	13	1	12	1	25	1

Table 3
Householders in receipt of rent rebate/allowance, but not in receipt of income support

	May 1988						May 1989					
	Pensioners		Others		Total		Pensioners		Others		Total	
	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants	Number '000s	per cent. of tenants
Local Authority tenants												
England	748	17	212	5	960	22	750	18	205	5	955	23
Wales	47	19	18	7	65	27	44	19	20	9	64	28
Scotland	151	17	65	7	216	24	139	16	52	6	191	22
Great Britain	946	17	295	5	1,241	23	933	18	277	5	1,210	23
Other tenants												
England	180	9	177	9	356	18	193	10	154	8	347	17
Wales	7	7	8	8	16	15	8	8	13	12	21	20
Scotland	14	7	20	10	34	17	12	6	22	11	34	18
Great Britain	201	9	205	9	406	17	214	9	189	8	402	18

Students' Benefits

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what proportion of the total number of students is exempt from disentitlement to social security benefits; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information about the proportion of students who will retain entitlement to income support and housing benefit is not available. No full-time students will be eligible for unemployment benefit, but all students will retain entitlement to all other social security benefits in the normal way.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what provisions were made for those students claiming income support, unemployment benefit and housing benefit for the period from 1 September until the start of their academic year, for *(a)* those students making a claim before 1 September and *(b)* those students making a claim after 1 September; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Those students who were in receipt of income support, unemployment benefit or housing benefit immediately prior to 1 September were able to continue receiving those benefits until resumption of their studies. Students claiming after 1 September were not eligible for income support, unemployment benefit or housing benefit unless they fell into one of the categories of vulnerable groups (including lone parents and disabled students) who retained entitlement to those benefits. In addition, partners of students would have been able to claim these benefits in the normal way.

Students who faced financial difficulty in the vacation would have been able to apply to their local education authorities, which have the discretion to make awards to students who may suffer undue hardship.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many full-time students are still able to claim housing benefit during their period of study in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Estimates of the number of students who may be entitled to housing benefit are not available.

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide a breakdown of the numbers of students still able to claim social security benefits into *(a)* single parents, *(b)* students with disabilities, *(c)* student couples, *(d)* pensioner students and *(e)* students under 19 years in further education.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: It is not possible to provide a breakdown of students still able to claim income support and housing benefit. No full-time students will be eligible for unemployment benefit, but all students will retain entitlement to all other social security benefits in the normal way.

Deaf Students

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether regulation 5(3) of the Income-Related Benefits Amendment Regulations 1990 applies to deaf students coming from Northern Ireland who are studying in England, Wales or Scotland.

Mr. Scott: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's guidelines for the use of the Welsh language by his Department in Wales.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Members for Welsh constituencies have already been provided with copies of the recently revised DSS policy statement on use of the Welsh language, and guidelines for departmental staff in Wales. I will now arrange for copies to be placed in the Library.

HELIOS Programme

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what evaluation he is undertaking of the HELIOS programme local model projects promoting social and independent living; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The Department of Health in consultation with the Department of Employment and other interested Departments has now commissioned the centre for evaluative and developmental research at the university of Southampton to carry out an evaluation in respect of the 15 local model activities within the United Kingdom that are participating in the European Community's second action programme in favour of disabled people, called HELIOS. These activities cover vocational rehabilitation, economic integration, and integration in schools as well as social integration and independent living. The evaluation will not cover all aspects of the local model activities but will be limited to an assessment of the impact of the HELIOS programme on their work.

Grants and Loans, Doncaster

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications for review were received during the period *(a)* April 1988 to March 1989 and *(b)* April 1989 to March 1990 in respect of (i) community care grants, (ii) budgeting loans, and (iii) crisis loans by each of the local offices covering the Doncaster area; and if he will show in his answer how many of these applications for review resulted in revised decisions.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

HANDYNET

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his estimate of the United Kingdom's financial contribution to HANDYNET in 1990-91 and 1991-92; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The European Community's second action programme in favour of disabled people, called HELIOS, includes the development of a system, called HANDYNET, to link national databases on disability, initially for equipment. We have nominated the Disabled Living Foundation as the first United Kingdom centre to participate in HANDYNET, which has yet to come into operation. Most of the costs of taking part in the system will be incurred within the member states and will not be met from Community funds. We have already given the

Disabled Living Foundation a grant of £228,000 to enhance its information service facilities and enable it to participate in HANDYNET in due course. We are considering a request from the foundation for further support once the system comes into operation.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliamentary Salaries

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list in sterling the annual salaries of the members of the parliamentary assemblies of the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information requested is as follows:

Federal German Republic
Member of the Bundestag—DM 115,968 (£39,178). All taxable.

France
Deputy in the National Assembly—FFr 436,824 (£44,096) of which 45 per cent. (FFr 196,571 (£19,843)) is tax free.

Netherlands
Member of the Second Chamber of the States-General —Hfl 103,355 (£30,985). All taxable.

Italy
Member of the Council of Deputies—Lira 118,200,000 (£53,310) of which 30 per cent. (Lira 35,460,000 (£15,993)) is tax free.

Sweden
Riksdagsman—Swedish Krona 259,500 (£23,624). All taxable.

Note: The sterling figures calculated using rates of exchange at the close of business on Monday 29 October 1990.

No information is available regarding parliamentary salaries of Deputies in the Spanish Congress.

Executive Agencies

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Lord President of the Council if, pursuant to his statement of 5 July, *Official Report*, column 1139, he has considered further the arrangements for answering parliamentary questions on matters delegated to executive agencies.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I refer the hon. Member to the White Paper (Cm. 1263) which the Government have published today in response to the eighth report of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee, "Progress in the Next Steps Initiative". In its supportive report, the Committee made some observations about the procedure for dealing with Members' questions on matters delegated to executive agencies. The Government's reply makes clear that it is for the Minister responsible for an executive agency to decide the most helpful and appropriate way to respond to such a question: normally, he or she will ask the chief executive to respond by letter. In future, a copy of all such letters (save only for personal or confidential cases) will automatically be placed in the Library and in its Public Information Office. Where a case appears to be of immediate wide interest or it is desirable that it should be covered by parliamentary privilege, the Minister may decide to reply fully in *Hansard*.

We shall keep these arrangements under review. As the White Paper says, the Government's intention is that the establishment of "next steps" Agencies should improve the flow and quality of information to Parliament and the public and help to ensure that replies about management and delivery of Government services are full, prompt and as helpful as possible.

European Parliamentary Conference

Mr. Page: To ask the Lord President of the Council which hon. Members will attend the European parliamentary conference to be held in Rome on 27 to 30 November.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The following hon. Members will attend:

Nicholas Bonsor
John Butterfill
Willam Cash
Quentin Davies
Hugh Dykes
Sir Geoffrey Finsberg
Norman Godman
Robert Hicks
Kate Hoey
David Howell (Leader of Delegation)
Sir Russell Johnston
Michael Lord
George Robertson
Ernie Ross
Chris Smith
Nigel Spearing
Sir James Spicer
Bowen Wells

The delegation will also include:

The Noble Lord Aldington
The Noble Lord Bonham-Carter
The Noble Lord Bridges
The Noble Lord Butterworth
The Noble Lord Kearton
The Noble Baroness Lockwood
The Noble Lord Selsdon
The Noble Baroness Serota

SCOTLAND

Labour Statistics

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the percentage unemployment in the Paisley, North constituency for each quarter since January 1979.

Mr. Lang: Unemployment rates are not available for parliamentary constituencies and figures for the number unemployed by parliamentary constituency are available only from June 1983. The table shows the number of claimants unemployed in Paisley, North from the third quarter of 1983 to the third quarter of 1990 inclusive.

Number of claimant unemployed in Paisley North constituency

Year	*Quarter 1*	*Quarter 2*	*Quarter 3*	*Quarter 4*
1983	n/a	n/a	5,646	5,546
1984	5,737	5,517	5,462	5,418
1985	5,622	5,703	5,700	5,613
1986	5,733	5,577	5,472	5,372
1987	5,488	5,440	5,276	5,059
1988	4,996	4,701	4,512	4,094
1989	4,136	3,702	3,544	3,318
1990	3,305	3,161	3,105	—

Notes:
Figures are averages for the quarter.
Comparisons over time are affected by the changes in the coverage of the count that have occurred over the period, as well as by seasonal influences.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the most recent figure for the ratio of vacancies in Scotland to those seeking work.

Mr. Lang: In September 1990 there were 24,500 unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in Scotland, and 195,100 claimants unemployed. This gives a ratio of unfilled vacancies to claimants unemployed of 1:8. It is estimated that only about one third of vacancies in the economy are notified to jobcentres.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many jobs have been created and how many lost in Paisley, North constituency in *(a)* each year and *(b)* the cumulative total in (i) the clothing and textile industry, (ii) engineering, (iii) electronics and computer assembly, (iv) construction, (v) manufacturing, (vi) distribution and (vii) service industries.

Mr. Lang: Up-to-date information on jobs created and lost is not available.

Manufacturing

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland by what percentage the Scottish contribution to United Kingdom manufacturing declined from 1979 to 1989, or to the most recently available figure.

Mr. Lang: Estimates of gross domestic product at factor cost published by the Central Statistical Office show that in 1979 Scotland contributed 8·5 per cent. of the United Kingdom gross domestic product (excluding continental shelf) in manufacturing. Provisional estimates for 1988 give a Scottish share of 8·1 per cent. of United Kingdom manufacturing gross domestic product (excluding continental shelf). Provisional estimates for 1989 will be published in December.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the change *(a)* in the number of employees in employment and *(b)* the number of employees in employment in manufacturing in Scotland between 1979 and 1989; and what this represents in percentage terms.

Mr. Lang: The number of employees in employment in Scotland decreased by 143,000, from 2,102,000 in June 1979 to 1,959,000 in June 1989. This represents a decrease of 7 per cent. The number of manufacturing employees in employment in Scotland decreased by 188,000, from 604,000 in June 1979 to 416,000 in June 1989. This represents a decrease of 31 per cent.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the value of Scottish manufacturing exports in real terms in each year since 1974.

Mr. Lang: The Scottish Council (Development and Industry) carry out an annual survey of Scottish exporters. This is the most comprehensive source of information on Scottish manufacturing exports. Up until 1984, the survey was carried out only on a triennial basis and coverage was less complete than in later years. These points should be borne in mind when interpreting the series in the table, which is expressed in 1988 constant prices using the council's own suggested deflator; the United Kingdom producer price index for home sales of manufactured goods.

Scottish manufacturing exports 1974-1988

Year	£ billion (1988 prices)
1974	6·1
1975	5·3
1976	5·8
1977	6·1
1978	6·4
1979	6·1
1980	5·8
1981	5·6
1982	5·2
1983	5·4
1984	5·9
1985	6·3
1986	5·8
1987	6·7
1988	7·2

School Qualifications

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the Scottish work force has no qualifications; and what percentage of Scottish school leavers leave school with no qualifications on the most recently available figures.

Mr. Lang: The latest information from the labour force survey shows that in spring 1989, 29 per cent. of the Scottish work force had no qualifications. In 1987-88, the lastest period for which figures are available, 15 per cent. of Scottish school leavers had no SCE qualifications.

Industrial Assistance

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing expenditure on regional preferential assistance to industry in Scotland for each year from 1974 to the most recently available date in cash and constant prices.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is given in the table:

Gross expenditure on regional preferential assistance

	Cash prices £ million	Constant 1988-89 prices £ million
1974-75	143·5	556·4
1975-76	226·0	709·4
1976-77	212·8	589·3
1977-78	142·7	347·2
1978-79	156·5	344·0
1979-80	140·8	265·0
1980-81	198·1	315·0
1981-82	234·5	339·6
1982-83	369·4	499·0
1983-84	228·6	295·0
1984-85	187·2	230·2
1985-86	197·0	229·9
1986-87	242·4	273·6
1987-88	153·2	164·1
1988-89	151·2	151·2
1989-90	144·6	135·8

Note: Includes gross expenditure in Scotland on regional selective assistance, regional development grants, regional enterprise grants, Scottish Development Agency and Highlands and Islands Development Board expenditure on grants and land and factory building. The figures also include a number of forms of assistance in the years up to 1982 which have been discontinued.

Manufacturing and Electronics

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of *(a)* Scottish and *(b)* United Kingdom gross domestic product was derived from (i) manufacturing and (ii) electronics in *(y)* 1979 and *(z)* 1989.

Mr. Lang: The table gives the information requested for 1979, and equivalent information for 1987 and 1988 where this is available. Provisional estimates for 1989 will be published in December.

Percentage of gross domestic product (at factor cost) derived from:-

		1979	*1987*	*[3]1988*
Manufacturing	Scotland	28·5	22·9	23·3
	United Kingdom[1]	29·4	24·0	24·1
Classes 33, 34 and 37 of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)[2]	Scotland	3·1	3·6	na
	United Kingdom[1]	3·4	3·3	na

Notes

[1] Share of United Kingdom gross domestic product excluding the continental shelf. Estimates are consistent with the 1989 Blue Book.

[2] Classes 33, 34 and 37 of the SIC include all the electronics industries, but also include office machinery, electrical equipment, electric lamps and non-electronic optical equipment.

[3] Provisional.

na = Not available.

Source: Central Statistical Office.

Opencast Mines

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date the number of opencast coal sites that received his Department's approval;

(2) if he will list by location the opencast coal sites currently being worked;

(3) if he will list by year for the last 10 years to date the number of opencast coal site applications that have been refused by his Department.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Under current legislation my right hon. and learned Friend would deal only with applications for opencast coal operations which came before him on appeal. Up to 29 February 1984 opencast coal site applications were the concern of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. Thereafter, under transitional arrangements, they transferred to my right hon. and learned Friend until the local planning authorities assumed responsibility on 11 December 1987. Since 1984, eight cases have been the subject of appeal, four of which were sustained and four dismissed. I understand from British Coal (Scotland), which holds central records, that the full detail of sites approved, applications refused and current workings is as follows:

Year	*Number of sites approved*		*Number of applications refused*	
	British Coal	*Private*	*British Coal*	*Private*
1981	2	11	—	—
1982	—	10	—	—
1983	4	8	—	—
1984	2	8	—	—
1985	2	6	—	1
1986	2	20	—	1
1987	3	20	—	—
1988	3	19	—	1
1989	1	17	—	1
1990	1	15	—	—

Opencast coal sites currently being worked

Site	*Location*
British Coal	
Darnconner	Cumnock and Doon Valley
Roughhill	Cumnock and Doon Valley
Chalmerston	Cumnock and Doon Valley
Horsecleugh	Cumnock and Doon Valley
Airdsgreen	Cumnock and Doon Valley
Libry Moor	Nithsdale District
Dalquhandy	Clydesdale District
Damside	Motherwell District
Blindwells	East Lothian District
Keirsbeath	Dunfermline District
Lambhill	Perth and Kinross
Private	
Auchengean	Falkirk
Chesters Wood	Gorebridge, Midlothian
Colinshiel	Armadale, West Lothian
Craigmad	California, Falkirk
Crawick	Crawick, Cumnock and Doon Valley
Croftangreen	East Kilbride
Drum of Kinnaird	Stenhousemuir, Falkirk
Easter Baton	Harthill, Motherwell
Kitleyknowe	Carlops, Borders
Legbrannock Farm	Newhouse, Motherwell
Middlerig	Slamannan, Falkirk
Nether Longford	Stoneyburn, West Lothian
North Calder Water	Chapelhall, Monklands
North Rhodens	Armadale, West Lothian
Sherriff Faulds	Hamilton
South Landridge	Salsburgh, Monklands
South Roughcastle	Falkirk
Tippetcraig North	Slamannan, Falkirk
Venture	Newmains, Motherwell
Waterloo	Wishaw, Motherwell

Migration

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the net out-migration from Scotland in each year since 1979; and what percentage decline in population this represents.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information on annual out-migration is given in the table. The total net out-migration of 156,000 over the period 1979-89 represents some 3 per cent. of the population of Scotland in 1979.

Estimated net civilian out-migration; 12 months ending June of year shown

	(000's)
1980	16·3
1981	23·1
1982	14·9
1983	17·8
1984	9·1
1985	12·6
1986	16·1
1987	15·0
1988	24·7
1989	6·2

Scottish Development Agency

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the Government's contribution to the Scottish Development Agency, *(b)* the Scottish Development Agency's income from other sources and *(c)* the Scottish Development Agency's total

expenditure for every year from its establishment to the most recent available figures in cash terms and at constant prices.

Mr. Lang: The information is set out in the table:

£ million

	Total Government contribution		Other Income		Total expenditure	
	Cash	1989-90 prices	Cash	1989-90 prices	Cash	1989-90 prices
1976-77	11·6	34·2	6·9	20·4	18·5	54·6
1977-78	40·9	106·0	7·8	20·2	48·7	126·2
1978-79	52·9	123·8	11·3	26·5	64·2	150·3
1979-80	64·9	130·1	15·8	31·7	80·7	161·7
1980-81	79·9	135·3	17·8	30·1	97·7	165·5
1981-82	76·2	117·5	21·4	33·0	97·6	150·5
1982-83	100·9	145·2	21·8	31·4	122·7	176·5
1983-84	88·5	121·6	27·4	37·7	115·9	159·3
1984-85	79·0	103·4	38·7	50·7	117·8	154·3
1985-86	94·6	117·6	36·5	45·4	131·1	162·9
1986-87	89·2	107·2	41·7	50·1	130·9	157·3
1987-88	93·9	107·1	41·5	47·3	135·4	154·5
1988-89	91·1	97·0	51·6	55·0	142·7	152·0
1989-90	97·8	97·8	60·6	60·6	158·3	158·3
1990-91[1]	98·0	92·0	82·0	77·0	180·0	169·0

[1] Estimated.

Dampness

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the most accurate recent estimate for *(a)* the number of Scottish houses affected by damp and *(b)* the number of people living in conditions of (i) damp, (ii) severe dampness and *(c)* the number of children in each category.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On the basis of returns made annually by local authorities to the Scottish Development Department it is estimated that at 31 March 1989 there were 48,597 Scottish local authority houses affected by rising and penetrating dampness and 82,827 affected by rising and penetrating dampness and condensation. Information is not available on the number of houses affected by dampness in other tenures, and the number of people or children living in houses affected by dampness.

Fixed Capital Formation

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of total United Kingdom gross domestic fixed capital formation in *(a)* all industries and *(b)* manufacturing originated in Scotland in (i) 1979 and (ii) 1989 or the most recently available year.

Mr. Lang: The table provides the information requested for 1979 and 1987: estimates for 1988 will be published in December. There are no estimates of gross domestic fixed capital formation (GDFCF) for Scotland for all industries, because there are no regional data on GDFCF in most service industries. The figures given cover those industries for which estimates are available.

Scottish gross domestic fixed capital formation as a percentage of United Kingdom (excluding Continental Shelf) fixed capital formation

	1979[1]	1987
All industries for which an estimate is available[2]:	11·0	8·4
Manufacturing:	8·6	7·4

Source: Central Statistical Office.

[1] Figures for 1979 are not entirely consistent with those for later years. However the differences are thought to be small.

[2] The industries covered are agriculture forestry and fishing, energy and water supply, manufacturing, transport and communication (excluding shipping and air transport) and dwellings.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is *(a)* the total grant awarded to Scottish local authorities, *(b)* the relevant expenditure of Scottish local authorities in cash and real terms and *(c)* the grant as a percentage of relevant expenditure in each year since 1978-79.

Mr. Lang: The information is set out in the table.

	(1) RSG	(2) Specific grants	(3) Aggregate grants (1) + (2)	(4) Expenditure	(5) Expenditure in real terms	(6) Grant as per cent. of expenditure
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	
1978-79	960·0	79·2	1,039·2	1,671·781	3,674·486	62·16
1979-80	1,090·1	93·0	1,183·1	2,111·890	3,974·425	56·02
1980-81	1,247·9	114·9	1,362·8	2,518·082	4,004·265	54·12
1981-82	1,503·1	136·7	1,639·8	2,799·020	4,053·966	58·58
1982-83	1,677·7	167·6	1,845·3	3,009·632	4,065·532	61·31
1983-84	1,744·25	180·0	1,924·25	3,173·724	4,096·026	60·63
1984-85	1,713·2	216·8	1,930·0	3,358·277	4,129·097	57·47
1985-86	1,691·8	232·2	1,924·0	3,492·699	4,075·923	55·09
1986-87	1,761·35	247·3	2,008·65	3,730·054	4,209·898	53·85
1987-88	1,896·76	295·2	2,191·96	4,023·424	4,309·949	54·48

	(1) RSG	(2) Specific grants	(3) Aggregate grants (1) + (2)	(4) Expenditure	(5) Expenditure in real terms	(6) Grant as per cent. of expenditure
	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	£ million	
1988-89	2,037·93	322·6	2,370·53	4,363·684	4,363·684	54·32
1989-90	2,243·8	253·2	2,497·0	4,690·260	4,414·362	53·24
1990-91	2,479·3	289·7	2,769·0	5,131·717	4,621·878	53·96

Notes:

(1) The figures in column 1 represent the original amount of rate or revenue support grant awarded for each year. These may have been subject to a later redetermination.

(2) In column 4 the figures are for current expenditure including loan and leasing charges and are at final outturn to 1988-89, provisional outturn for 1989-90 and budget estimate for 1990-91.

(3) Conversion to real term figures in column 5 is by means of the Treasury GDP deflator (March 1990). All years are at 1988-89 prices.

(4) Non-domestic rate income is excluded on the grounds that although since 1989-90 the level of NDRI has been controlled by central government and formed part of aggregate external finance, this was not the case in earlier years when business rate levels were set by local authorities.

Education Expenditure

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list education expenditure in Scotland in *(a)* real terms, *(b)* as a percentage of Scottish Office expenditure and *(c)* as a percentage of Scottish gross domestic product in each year since 1979-80 to planned expenditure 1991-92.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Public expenditure on education includes expenditure both by the Secretary of State directly and by education authorities. Details are as follows:

Year	Expenditure by Secretary of State directly Real terms (£m at 1988-89 prices)	Expenditure by Secretary of State and education authorities Real terms (£m at 1988-89 prices)	Column (2) as a percentage of Scottish GDP
1979-80	401	2,057	7·81
1980-81	398	2,204	8·35
1981-82	406	2,254	8·54
1982-83	367	2,214	8·21
1983-84	350	2,213	7·87
1984-85	336	2,158	7·73
1985-86	352	2,131	7·37
1986-87	367	2,214	7·23
1987-88	357	2,280	7·24
1988-89	358	2,276	7·00
1989-90	371	2,351	n.a.
1990-91	391	2,440	n.a.
1991-92	412	n.a.	n.a.

Sources: A Commentary on the Scottish Programme
Scottish Economic Bulletin
Note: 1989-90 = estimated outturn; 1990-91 = planned expenditure.

Salmon Fishing

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the reasons for the reduction in the numbers of wild salmon returning to west coast rivers this season; whether he plans to take any action; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Statistical returns for the catches of salmon in Scotland in 1990 will not be available until well into 1991. There have, however, been informal indications that 1990 catches are likely to be low throughout Scotland. The reasons for this are not yet understood, but might include late runs after the end of the fishing season, and increased mortality of fish at sea. The matter will be kept under review.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by location the establishments that produce radioactive *(a)* high-level waste, *(b)* intermediate-level waste and *(c)* low-level waste.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Details of high, intermediate and low-level wastes at nuclear sites in Scotland are included in a report prepared for United Kingdom Nirex Ltd and the Department of the Environment entitled, "The 1988 United Kingdom Radioactive Waste Inventory" (DOE/RW/89-088). Other users of radioactive materials produce low-level waste and the names and addresses of those authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 to accumulate or dispose of such waste are included in the register of registration and authorisations maintained by HM industrial pollution inspectorate for Scotland. Copies of both documents are available in the Library.

Police Establishments

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the authorised police establishments in Scotland for each of the last five years.

Mr. Rifkind: The information requested as at 30 September in each year is as follows:

Force	Authorised Police Establishment (as at 30 September) 1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Central	556	568	589	638	638
Dumfries and Galloway	333	344	344	344	361
Fife	732	754	754	754	780
Grampian	997	1,008	1,069	1,116	1,158
Lothian and Borders	2,393	2,393	2,435	2,439	2,487
Northern	608	620	620	631	631
Strathclyde	6,954	6,954	6,954	6,954	6,954
Tayside	1,001	1,001	1,001	1,001	1,036
All Scotland	13,574	13,642	13,766	13,877	14,045

Mental Illness

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest figures on annual expenditure on mental illness by each health board in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not held centrally.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the amount of moneys to be allocated per Scottish health board area for the care of the mentally ill in the financial year 1990-91.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* Allocations to health boards are not earmarked for specific purposes. It is for boards themselves to decide their priorities for expenditure within the amount available to them. We are, however, introducing from 1 April 1991 a new grant to encourage community care projects which will benefit people suffering from mental illness. The grant will fund local authority expenditure of £3 million on these projects in the first year.

Coastal Areas

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he proposes to take regarding policy towards the management of coastal areas, in the light of the report of the Marine Conservation Society entitled "A Future for the Coast", a copy of which has been sent to him.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Government's intentions in respect of the marine environment in Scotland were outlined in paragraphs 7.69, 20.12 and 20.13 of the White Paper on the environment (Cm. 1200). In considering the matter further we will take account of the Marine Conservation Society's views.

Loch Sween

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on progress with the decision whether to designate Loch Sween as a marine nature reserve.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Nature Conservancy Council issued a discussion document on 4 October on the proposal to designate Loch Sween as a marine nature reserve. This is the first stage in a process of public consultation which will ensure that the views of local people and organisations are fully considered before an application is made by the council to my right hon. and learned Friend for statutory designation of the area under section 36 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A copy of the consultation document has been placed in the Library.

Purse Seine Net Fishermen

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps his Department has taken, over the past five years, to monitor the activity of purse seine-net fishermen in Scottish waters.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: There are about 50 vessels in the Scottish fleet which regularly fish using the purse seine method. Because of their high catching capacity all such vessels are carefully monitored while at sea and in port. In 1989, the only year for which data are readily available, there were 109 sightings of purse seine vessels by fisheries protection aircraft and ships and 42 boardings at sea.

Cardiac Bypass Patients

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for each health board area the total number of intensive care beds specifically allocated per hospital for the after-care of cardiac bypass patients.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: It is not possible to provide the information in the form requested since intensive care beds attached to cardiac surgery units are not specifically allocated for the after-care of cardiac bypass patients only.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to increase the total number of intensive care beds and staff in each health board area for the purpose of the after-care of cardiac bypass patients; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Government are currently expanding the capacity for cardiac operations in Scotland. Over the past two years Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow royal infirmaries and the Western infirmary in Glasgow have been allocated additional funds to enable them to increase the number of cardiac operations. It is for each health board to determine within these funds how many intensive care beds and staff are required for the increased number of cardiac operations.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list per health board area the total number of cardiac bypass operations carried out in each of the past five years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The number of cardiac bypass operations performed by health board of residence for the past five years are as follows:

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Argyll and Clyde	93	114	105	110	121
Ayrshire and Arran	85	110	108	118	117
Borders	25	41	31	33	53
Dumfries and Galloway	21	22	30	29	25
Fife	71	71	73	84	82
Forth Valley	75	62	63	72	73
Greater Glasgow	334	291	342	324	366
Grampian	63	129	146	172	201
Highland	91	66	47	64	66
Lanarkshire	119	160	136	142	124
Lothian	270	291	226	270	244
Orkney	0	2	4	5	6
Shetland	4	3	1	3	5
Tayside	100	79	77	104	118
Western Isles	14	7	14	15	12
Outside Scotland/not known/other	12	9	6	3	8
TOTAL	1,377	1,457	1,409	1,548	1,621

Source: Scottish Cardiac Surgery Register.

Locate in Scotland

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list, by region, the number of projects, investment, and new jobs which Locate in Scotland has attracted to Scotland in each of the last three years.

Mr. Lang: An analysis of projects disaggregated by region would, in the form requested, breach the commercial confidence of the companies involved.

The table gives information on total inward investment in Scotland for the years 1987-88 to 1989-90. The planned job and investment figures are based on company forecasts.

	1987-88	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Number of projects	84	55	64
New jobs	6,363	4,846	9,649
Safeguarded jobs	4,856	2,243	2,640
Total jobs	11,219	7,089	12,289
Investment (£ million)	324	437	853

These figures relate only to projects where there was direct involvement by Locate in Scotland or the Industry Department for Scotland. Locate in Scotland is aware of a further four projects which came to Scotland in 1987-88 without such involvement and of a further five in 1988-89.

Southern General Hospital (Spinal Injuries Unit)

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has given written confirmation to Greater Glasgow health board in respect of the additional revenue funding required for the national spinal injuries unit at Southern general hospital.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Greater Glasgow health board is aware that the additional revenue costs for the national spinal injuries unit will be centrally funded. The details of the funding arrangements have still to be decided.

Local Enterprise Companies

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give a list of all the Scottish local enterprise companies which are in the development phase and those which he expects to enter the development phase, indicating when he expects each of them to become fully operational.

Mr. Lang: All local enterprise companies in Scotland are in the development phase. A full list is given in the table:

Enterprise Ayrshire
Scottish Borders Enterprise Ltd.
Dumfries and Galloway Enterprise Company
Dunbartonshire Enterprise
Fife Enterprise
Forth Valley Enterprise
Glasgow Development Agency
Grampian Enterprise Ltd.
Lanarkshire Enterprise
Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd.
Renfrewshire Enterprise Company
Scottish Enterprise Tayside
Moray, Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise Company
Orkney Enterprise Company Ltd.
Shetland Enterprise Company Ltd.
Western Isles Local Enterprise Company
Argyll and the Islands Enterprise Company
Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise
Caithness and Sutherland Local Enterprise Company
Ross and Cromarty Enterprise
Inverness and Nairn Local Enterprise Company
Lochaber Limited

It is for the local enterprise companies to decide with Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise the date on which they become operational. It is likely that most if not all will become operational by the summer of 1991.

Youth Training

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the numbers of males and females currently employed in YTS jobs in *(a)* Shettleston constituency, *(b)* Glasgow district, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Scotland; how many YTS vacancies are currently available for young people; and how many young people are currently unemployed in each of those areas.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 23 October 1990]:* I regret that the information requested about YTS jobs and YTS vacancies is not available. The information about young people under 18 who are claiming benefit and unemployed as at July 1990 (the latest date available) is as follows:

Shettleston Constituency		*Glasgow City*		*Strathclyde Region*		*Scotland*	
Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2	2	34	41	96	102	186	185

Sequestration

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of awards of sequestration during the year ending 31 March 1991 to the latest available date and the total gross payments to trustees from public funds during the current financial year, to the latest available date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* In the current financial year up to 30 September 1990 there have been 2,963 awards of sequestration made in the Scottish courts. Gross payments to trustees to that date amounted to £3,438,752.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate his Department has undertaken of the number of sequestrations and total gross costs to public funds through payments to trustees likely to be registered in the next five years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* These will depend in part on the outcome of the evaluation of the Scottish bankruptcy system referred to by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs in his reply of 5 June to the hon. Member, at column *437*.

Senile Dementia

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total number of people in each health board area who have been diagnosed as suffering from senile dementia in *(a)* 1975, *(b)* 1980, *(c)* 1985 and *(d)* 1990.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* The information is not available in the form requested.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Import Penetration

6. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to reduce import penetration.

89. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to reduce import penetration.

Mr. Lilley: The Department's policies aim to foster the competitiveness of British Industry.

39. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received about import penetration.

103. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received about import penetration.

147. **Mr. Leadbitter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received about import penetration.

Mr. Lilley: I have received a number of representations about the extent of import penetration.

Consumer Affairs

13. **Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet representatives of the local authorities' trading standards officers to discuss consumer affairs.

53. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet representatives of the local authorities trading standards officers to discuss consumer affairs.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend has no immediate plans for such meetings. However, the Minister of State, Lord Hesketh, plans to meet representatives of the Institute of Trading Standards Administration later this year.

My officials also have frequent meetings with trading standards officers.

Tyne and Wear Development Corporation

20. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last discussed the disposal of former British Shipbuilders assets in Sunderland with Tyne and Wear Development corporation.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I met the chairman and chief executive of the Tyne and Wear development corporation during a visit to the north-east on 23 April 1990, when we discussed the corporation's interest in the disposal of the British Shipbuilders sites in Sunderland.

I have since been in regular correspondence with them on these matters and I saw both gentlemen again yesterday.

Engineering Output

21. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the level of engineering output.

Mr. Hogg: My Department regularly receives representations about many areas of industry, including the engineering sector.

Steel Industry

22. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of British Steel to discuss investment policy.

75. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of British Steel to discuss the future of steelmaking in the United Kingdom.

122. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of British Steel to discuss the future of steelmaking in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lilley: I last met the chairman of British Steel on 7 September. The discussion was confidential.

43. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of the steel industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lilley: I am confident that the United Kingdom steel industry will continue to perform well now that all of it is in the private sector.

LINK Projects

23. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in the setting up of LINK projects in the current financial year.

99. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in the setting up of LINK projects in the current financial year.

105. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in the setting up of LINK projects in the current financial year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Between the beginning of the current financial year and the end of August, another 29 LINK projects started, bringing the total under way to 84.

Manufacturing Output

24. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about manufacturing output.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department continues to receive a number of representations concerning the performance of manufacturing industry.

Trade Deficit

25. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about Britain's trade deficit.

90. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about Britain's trade deficit.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department continues to receive a number of representations on matters relating to Britain's trading performance.

68. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet his European counterparts to discuss Britain's trade deficit with the rest of Europe.

130. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet his European counterparts to discuss Britain's trade deficit with the rest of Europe.

Mr. Sainsbury: I hold regular meetings with my counterparts in the European Community over a broad range of issues.

98. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade between Britain and Japan.

Mr. Sainsbury: In the eight months to the end of August 1990, the United Kingdom visible trade deficit with Japan was £2·8 billion, a decrease of 15 per cent. compared with the same period last year.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about Britain's trade deficit.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department continues to receive a number of representations on matters relating to Britain's trading performance.

Shipbuilding

27. **Mr. Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure that shipbuilding yards in the United Kingdom are able to compete on equal terms with yards in other parts of the European Community.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The European Communities sixth directive on aid to shipbuilding already sets a maximum limit on the level of aid which member states of the Community may provide.

Industrial Redevelopments, Devon

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on new developments or extensions to existing industry sited in north Devon.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Good labour relations, a skilled work force and, with the opening of the north Devon link road, more speedy access to the main markets make north Devon an increasingly attractive environment for business to locate and grow. Pall UK and Coutant Electronics are but two good examples of companies which have taken advantage of these conditions. Many more have, taking advantage of the Department's enterprise initiative.

Computer Misuse Act

29. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many prosecutions are pending under the Computer Misuse Act; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: One case is currently being prosecuted under section 3 of the Computer Misuse Act in the United Kingdom. A small number of further cases is being investigated.

Debt Advice

30. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase spending on debt advice work.

140. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase spending on debt advice work.

Mr. Redwood: My Department does not specifically fund debt advice work, and I have no plans to do so. However, much of this work is done by local citizens advice bureaux, as part of their general service. Local bureaux receive most of their funding from local authorities, but my Department funds the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland, which provide support services for local bureaux. Total DTI grant in aid to NACAB and CAS will be more than £11 million in 1990-91.

Timeshare Advertising

31. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to prohibit misleading timeshare advertising.

35. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to prohibit misleading timeshare advertising.

91. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to prohibit misleading timeshare advertising.

Mr. Redwood: Timeshare advertisements are subject to the Control of Misleading Advertisements Regulations 1988 and in some respects to the Trade Descriptions Act 1968, as well as to the self regulatory regime operated by the Advertising Standards Authority.

The Director General of Fair Trading published a report on timesharing in July 1990 which included proposals for extending the Trade Descriptions Act to cover award schemes. These proposals are being considered as part of a current general review of the Act.

Engineering Investment

32. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the level of inward United Kingdom investment in the engineering sector in the last 12 months.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The latest figures readily available to the Invest in Britain Bureau are for the 12 months to June 1990. During this time known inward investments decisions, within manufacturing industry, to locate in the United Kingdom were 279. These include the establishment of new business, expansion or acquisition of an

existing business and involvement in joint venture. The projects were expected to create over 25,000 jobs and to have safeguarded a further 35,000. The figures are based on information provided by the companies themselves at the time of the investment and take no account of subsequent developments.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

33. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations his Department has recently received about the implications of the poll tax on the work load of the citizens advice bureaux and other advice-giving agencies.

96. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations his Department has recently received about the implications of the poll tax on the work load of the citizens advice bureaux and other advice-giving agencies.

106. **Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations his Department has recently received about the implications of the poll tax on the work load of the citizens advice bureaux and other advice-giving agencies.

Mr. Redwood: The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) has told my Department that local citizens advice bureaux have had to deal with a number of inquiries arising from the introduction of the community charge just as they used to on rates, although the total number of inquiries to bureaux on all subjects did not change significantly in 1989-90 compared with 1988-89.

The Department of Environment has agreed to give NACAB £36,000 this year to help with the costs of training bureaux workers to deal with these inquiries. The Scottish Office has also given Citizens Advice Scotland £36,000 over the last two years for the same purpose.

Single Market

34. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress being made in approving the list of legislative instruments to create the European Community single market, in respect of the items within his Department's responsibilities.

Mr. Sainsbury: Progress towards the completion of the single market continues at an excellent rate; 187 measures out of 282 in the Commission's White Paper programme (two thirds) have now been agreed. A more detailed analysis of measures which still require Council adoption and identifying the lead Department can be found in a checklist produced by my Department: "The Single Market—Progress on Commission White Paper". A copy has been deposited in the House Library.

Export Licences

36. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any proposals to eliminate delays and duplication in export licence application procedures.

Mr. Sainsbury: Export licence procedures are kept under constant review.

We are not aware of any avoidable delays and duplication. Individual complaints such as that recently made by the hon. Member are fully investigated.

Manufacturing Industry

37. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of Business Industry to discuss manufacturing industry.

49. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss manufacturing industry.

59. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the Confederation of British Industry to discuss levels of investment in manufacturing industry.

97. **Mr. Radice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss manufacturing industry.

Mr. Lilley: Ministers and officials of my Department keep in touch with the CBI on a wide range of business matters.

50. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

84. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

142. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the competitiveness of British manufacturing industry.

Mr. Redwood: My Department continues to receive a number of representations concerning the performance of manufacturing industry. Important to the competitiveness of our manufacturing industry is control of unit costs and continued emphasis on the attractiveness of products to customers.

60. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to boost manufacturing output.

101. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to boost manufacturing output.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most important spur to the significant output growth by British manufacturing industry since 1989 has come from the competitive pressures of more open markets. Government continue to promote this objective with policies such as privatisation, deregulation, elimination of restrictive practices and international negotiations to reduce trade barriers through the GATT and in the European Community. In addition, my Department continues to operate a range of schemes to improve business performance under the enterprise initiative.

110. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to protect and promote a high level of research and development in British manufacturing industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government continue to promote and protect investment in research and development by creating a favourable climate for innovation through a wide range of policies. Industry's own funding of research and development increased by 50 per cent. in real terms between 1983 and 1988. The Department of Trade and Industry provides direct research and development support to industry through a variety of schemes, including collaborative research and development and technology transfer programmes. In 1989-90 the Department of Trade and Industry's estimated expenditure on research and development was £305 million with a further £96 million on technology transfer and related activities.

112. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about manufacturing output.

121. **Mr. McWilliam:** To ask the Secretary of Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received about manufacturing output.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department continues to receive a number of representations concerning the performance of manufacturing industry.

National Economic Development Council

38. **Mr. Geoffrey Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet the director general of the National Economic Development Council to discuss the future of British industry.

139. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet the director general of the National Economic Development Council to discuss the future of British industry.

144. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet the director general of the National Economic Development Council to discuss the future of British industry.

Mr. Lilley: My Department has frequent contacts with NEDO officials on a wide range of business matters and I plan to chair the council on 3 April next year.

Research and Development

40. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to stimulate research and development investment within the small business sector.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A wide range of Government policies creates a favourable climate for innovation and encourage industry to invest in research and development (R and D). In addition, DTI supports collaborative R and D schemes and technology transfer programmes in which small firms are encouraged to participate. Further support is given through SMART, the small firms merit award for research and technology, which is for firms with fewer than 50 employees. Small firms will be further encouraged by three new schemes which are to be launched early next year with the specific aim of boosting R and D and technology transfer in small and medium-sized firms (SMEs). In addition, the consultancy initiatives, which are designed for SMEs, are to include technology as a specific theme.

Brewing Industry

41. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations he has received concerning his approach to the report on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the brewing industry.

Mr. Redwood: Well over 2,000 written representations have been received by my Department since publication of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the supply of beer in the United Kingdom, from a wide variety of interests.

Exports

42. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the value of exports per capita in respect of *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Japan.

Mr. Sainsbury: In 1989, the latest year for which information is available, the value of the visible exports per capita from the United Kingdom was $2,667 and from Japan was $2,236.

Departmental Reorganisation

44. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what effect the reorganisation of his Department will have on the regions.

71. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what effect the reorganisation of his Department will have on the regions.

127. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what effect the reorganisation of his Department will have on the regions.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Policy towards the regions is not affected by the reorganisation of my Department.

Manufactures

45. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the balance of trade in manufactures with the EC in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

48. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the balance of trade in manufactures with the EC in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Sainsbury: The United Kingdom trade deficit in manufactured goods with the European Community was £3·1 billion in 1979, and £14·4 billion in 1989.

Regional Policy

46. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet his European counterparts to discuss regional policy.

76. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet his European counterparts to discuss regional policy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: An informal meeting of EC Regional Policy Ministers has been called at Turin, 23-24 November 1990. The United Kingdom will be represented at ministerial level.

86. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on regional policy.

100. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on regional policy.

104. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on regional policy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government remain committed to an effective regional policy and will continue to make the necessary resources available.

OECD Countries (Trade Balance)

47. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries which had a better trade balance than Great Britain in the last year for which figures were available.

56. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries which had a better trade balance than Great Britain in the last year for which figures were available.

81. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries which had a better trade balance than Great Britain in the last year for which figures were available.

Mr. Sainsbury: The latest complete data is for 1989 when 17 of the 23 OECD countries had surpluses or smaller deficits than the United Kingdom percentage of their total trade.

Small Firms

51. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to assist small and medium-sized firms in enabling them to obtain technological knowledge from experts.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Small and medium-sized firms can already obtain technological knowledge from expert consultants through my Department's consultancy initiatives. The Secretary of State recently announced an extension of these initiatives for a final three years. Consultancies under the scheme will in future focus where appropriate on specific themes of which the application of modern technology is one.

The Department of Trade and Industry also provides information on modern technology and current best practice through various technology transfer programmes including those on modern materials, advanced information technology and industrial lasers. The Secretary of State plans to introduce two new programmes to assist small and medium-sized firms. One will help firms to plan the introduction of modern manufacturing systems. The other will encourage firms to use experts in universities, polytechnics and research organisations to help solve immediate technical problems.

Japanese Cars

52. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had in Europe about import ceilings for Japanese cars after 1992.

94. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had in Europe about import ceilings for Japanese cars after 1992.

Mr. Lilley: I attended an informal meeting of Community Trade Ministers and the Commission in September which discussed this matter. The Commission is proposing a transitional period of continuing restrictions lasting until the late 1990s. The United Kingdom continues to press for early liberalisation. We remain adamant that cars made in the EC by Japanese-owned companies must continue to be allowed unlimited free circulation throughout the Community. I believe this has now been accepted by other member states and the Commission.

Free Trade (EC)

54. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress towards achieving the free movement of goods within the EC.

Mr. Sainsbury: Progress towards the completion of the single market continues at an excellent rate; 187 measures out of 282 in the Commission's White Paper programme (two thirds) have now been agreed. A more detailed analysis of these figures can be found in my Department's progress on Commission White Paper checklist which has been deposited in the House Library.

British Telecom

55. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to meet the chairman of British Telecom to discuss the regulatory framework under which British Telecom operates.

114. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he intends to meet the chairman of British Telecom to discuss the regulatory framework under which British Telecom operates.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have no current plans to meet the chairman of British Telecom.

Scottish Exports

57. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make an assessment of the contribution of Scottish manufacturing and service industry exports to the balance of payments.

70. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make an assessment of the contribution Scottish manufacturing and service industry exports make to the balance of payments.

109. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make an assessment of the contribution of Scottish manufacturing and service industry exports to the balance of payments.

115. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make an assessment of the contribution Scottish manufacturing and service industry exports make to the balance of payments.

Mr. Sainsbury: A survey by the Scottish Council for Development and Industry shows that Scottish manufactured exports amounted to £7·2 billion in 1988. United Kingdom exports of manufactures in that period amounted to £71·1 billion (SIC basis). Information is not available on the value of Scottish service exports.

Information Technology

58. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the latest estimate of the balance of trade in information technology.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the latest estimates, the United Kingdom had a deficit of £685 million in the manufactured products of the electronics and information technology sector in the first quarter of 1990. This sector is defined as the principal products of activity headings 3301-2, 3441-4 and 3453-4 of the standard industrial classification. These figures are for hardware only. There are no separate figures for trade in software.

64. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the future of the British information technology industry.

131. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the future of the British information technology industry.

Mr. Dougls Hogg: My Department regularly receives representations about many areas of industry, including the IT sector.

Textile Industry

61. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet his European counterparts to discuss the textile industry.

88. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet his European counterparts to discuss the textile industry.

135. **Mr. Cohen :** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet his European counterparts to discuss the textile industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I will be meeting my EC counterparts at the Industry Council on 26 November to discuss Commission proposals on industrial policy, covering all sectors. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular meetings with his counterparts to discuss trade matters, including the phasing-out of the multi-fibre arrangement. which are of interest to the textile industry.

129. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of the textile industry in west Yorkshire to discuss textile imports.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives of the United Kingdom textile industry on 29 October to discuss trade policy as it affects the industry in west Yorkshire on 22 August where this was one of the subjects discussed, and on 23 October I met a TUC delegation to discuss the MFA.

Legal Advice (Single Market)

62. **Mr. Barry Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to promote access to legal advice which crosses national frontiers to enable United Kingdom firms to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the single European market; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: The Government are anxious to ensure that there is continuing progress towards the freedom of provision of legal services in the Community. Member states are obliged by 4 January 1991 to implement directive 89/48/EEC on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas. This will allow lawyers from one member state to be admitted to the corresponding profession in another member state and practise as members of that profession, using the title of the host member state. Entry to the profession in another member state will be subject only to a limited written test or period of supervised practice where necessary to show competence in provisions of the national law of the host state.

We are also anxious that there should be as few restrictions as possible on the provision of legal advice in another member state not as a member of that state's profession but as a member of the lawyer's home state profession.

In the United Kingdom, there is only a small range of activities that is reserved to members of our legal profession: rights of audience in court, the issue of certain court proceedings, probate and conveyancing. Beyond those activities, we do not impose any restrictions on who may give legal advice, and we welcome foreign lawyers or law firms practising under their home state title in the United Kingdom. Not all member states adopt such a liberal approach. My right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor and I will continue our efforts to persuade colleagues in other member states that freedom to provide legal advice throughout the Community using home state title should be allowed, and that the provisions of the treaty of Rome on rights of establishment are adhered to.

Baghdad Arms Fair

63. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assistance was given by his Department to British companies attending the 1989 Baghdad arms fair; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The assistance given by the Department of Trade and Industry to British companies attending the 1989 Baghdad international exhibition for military production was as follows:

Licences were issued where appropriate to participating companies to allow the *temporary* export of their products for exhibition purposes.

Officials attended the exhibitors briefing meeting on 20 March 1989 to provide advice on current bilateral commercial relations.

Net Book Agreement

65. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to review the net book agreement.

Mr. Redwood: I have no such plans. Under the relevant legislation, the review of arrangements such as the net book agreement (NBA) is a matter for the Restrictive Practices Court, on application by the Director General of Fair Trading.

The Director General considered the case for a fresh application in August 1989. He noted that, since 1962, there had been many changes in the book publishing and retailing trades, but the question he had to consider was whether these changes were of such magnitude as to lead the court to a different conclusion on the effects of ending the NBA. He concluded that there was an insufficiently strong basis to justify him in making an application to the court to reopen the case.

British Exporters

66. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new proposals to help British exporters.

108. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new proposals to help British exporters.

116. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new proposals to help British exporters.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department offers a wide range of advice and support to assist United Kingdom exporters of which many firms make use. We continue to monitor the performance and relevance of our services to ensure that they fully meet the needs of our customers.

95. **Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Britain's export performance.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have seen a significant and sustained growth in United Kingdom exports. The value of non-oil exports doubled between 1979-1988. It increased again by 16 per cent. in 1989. In the three months to September, the value of goods exported was 9 per cent. higher than a year ago. This is a remarkable success, achieved in the face of increasingly strong competition, on which British exporters are to be congratulated.

128. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what meetings he has had with representatives of those manufacturers or industries which are significant exporters during recent weeks.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend frequently meets members of the United Kingdom business community involved in exporting for Britain, as do all Ministers in the Department.

Financial Regulation

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he expects to discuss financial regulation at his next meeting with the chairman of the stock exchange.

134. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he expects to discuss financial regulation at his next meeting with the chairman of the stock exchange.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the stock exchange as frequently as necessary for discussion on a range of topics.

72. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's latest assessment of the effectiveness of City regulation.

79. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's latest assessment of the effectiveness of City regulation.

111. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's latest assessment of the effectiveness of City regulation.

Mr. Redwood: Regulation of investment business is for the most part the responsibility of the Securities and Investments Board, which is the designated agency under the Financial Services Act 1986. Other aspects of City activity are regulated under other arrangements, such as the Insurance Companies Act 1982 and the Banking Act 1987. If the hon. Members have complaints about specific matters they should contact the relevant regulatory body.

Mining Engineering Companies

69. **Mr. Hinchcliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet representatives of British mining engineering companies to discuss their export performance.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have no such plans at present.

Trade Links (Soviet Union)

73. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has to promote increased trade links with the Soviet Union and in particular the three Baltic republics.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Department has a very full forward programme of events to promote trade with the Soviet Union, including high-level visits, sectoral working groups and specific support for British companies attending trade fairs, missions and seminars. In addition, the Department handles over 100 inquiries a week from British companies seeking business in the Soviet Union.

Although there are no events currently targeted on specific Republics, the major trade event in 1991 will be a British week in Leningrad, which we hope will promote business with a wide area of the Soviet Union, including the nearby Baltic republics.

Iraq

74. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the number of firms affected by the withdrawal of contracts from Iraq.

125. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the number of firms affected by the withdrawal of contracts from Iraq.

Mr. Sainsbury: We do not have a complete count of United Kingdom firms affected. The DTI, the Bank of England and the FCO have dealt with a large volume of inquiries since the beginning of the crisis. ECGD is in contact with most of the firms which insured their contracts and will be meeting established claims.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he possesses concerning the export arrangements which Ordnance Technologies Ltd of Reading have had with Iraq since 1987.

Mr. Sainsbury: It has not been the practice of successive Governments to disclose such information.

Cosmetics Industry

77. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest export figures in the cosmetics industry.

Mr. Sainsbury: Exports of cosmetics in the last six months are shown in the following table: ("cosmetics" include all products covered by code 553.2 of the Standard International Trade Classification revision 3 (SITC. rev. 3).

	£ million
March 1990	20·6
April	15·1
May	16·6
June	16·3
July	18·4
August	17·8

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom.

Registered Businesses

78. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the change in the number of registered businesses since 1979.

Mr. Redwood: In the 10 years to the end of 1989 the number of live puplic and private companies registered in Great Britain rose from 727,000 to 1,014,000. During the same period the total number of businesses registered for VAT in Great Britain, including sole proprietors, partnerships etc. as well as companies, increased from 1,246,000 to 1,611,000.

Waste Recycling

80. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proposals his Department has produced recently to encourage greater waste recycling in industry.

Mr. Redwood: My Department is in regular contact with industry to encourage the development of projects which seek to recycle unavoidable waste. Recycling projects are eligible for consideration under two schemes announced on 2 October, ETIS and DEMOS.

ETIS, the environmental technology innovation scheme, is a joint Department of Trade and Industry/ Department of the Environment scheme designed to encourage environmental innovation and improved environmental standards. DEMOS, the DTI environmental management options scheme, is to promote the spread of best environmental practice among companies. Both these schemes have a particular focus on recycling, including recycling of industrial waste.

Zimbabwe

82. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to publish the names of United Kingdom-registered companies to which licences have been granted to export computer hardware and software to Zimbabwe.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. The established practice is not to publish information of this kind.

Privatisation

83. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on independent studies on the impact of privatisation on managerial effectiveness; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: Much has been written about privatisation, and one point at least is clear. Privatisation has freed businesses from bureaucratic constraints, and management can at last use commercial judgment to deliver the goods and services demanded by customers in a competitive market.

Federal Republic of Germany

85. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the value of goods exported to and imported from the Federal Republic of Germany in the last full year of which figures are available.

Mr. Sainsbury: United Kingdom visible exports to the Federal Republic of Germany in the 12 months ended August 1990 totalled £12.5 billion. Visible imports in the same period were £20.5 billion.

GATT Talks

87. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on current progress in the GATT talks in the multi-fibre arrangement.

136. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the latest negotiations on GATT with particular reference to textiles and clothing and the future of the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The current round of GATT negotiations is due to end in Brussels in the first week in December. The textiles negotiating group is meeting almost continuously in Geneva with a view to producing a draft text of an agreement on the integration into GATT of trade in textiles and clothing. Subjects being discussed include the length of the transitional period between the expiry of MFA IV and full liberalisation, the process by which the various categories of products are to be liberalised, the nature of the transitional safeguard mechanism and the link between the phasing out of the MFA and progress in other parts of the negotiations.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

92. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the future of the multi-fibre arrangement.

93. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement about the future of the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The latest extension of the multi-fibre arrangement expires next year. The EC and the United Kingdom are committed in the current Uruguay round of GATT negotiations to phasing it out over a subsequent transitional period on the basis of strengthened GATT rules and disciplines.

The textiles negotiating group is meeting almost continuously in Geneva with a view to producing a draft text of an agreement on the integration into GATT of trade in textiles and clothing. Subjects being discussed include the length of the transitional period between the expiry of MFA IV and full liberalisation, the process by which the various categories of products are to be liberalised, the nature of the transitional safeguard mechanism and the link between the phasing out of the MFA and progress in other parts of the negotiations.

Negotiations on how this should be done are due to be completed in Brussels in December.

Unit Trusts

102. **Mr. Bell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he will be taking to ensure that the British unit trust investment sector will not be put at a competitive disadvantage after 1992 compared to other European countries' industries.

Mr. Redwood: The European directive on UCITS (undertakings for collective investments in transferable securities) came into force on 1 October 1989. The directive provides for cross-border trade in UCITS, including most classes of United Kingdom authorised unit trusts. On 1 October 1990 my Department submitted a report to the Trade and Industry Select Committee on the operation and impact of the UCITS directive. As yet there is little evidence of any cross-border trade, but the report identifies the principal factors which will affect the long-term impact of the directive. The Government will continue, in conjunction with the unit trust industry, to monitor the competitiveness of the United Kingdom unit trust in Europe. Copies of the report have been laid in the Libraries of the House.

Global Financial Market

107. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action international regulators are taking to tackle the challenges of a global financial market.

Mr. Redwood: There are many current instances of international action to tackle the challenges of a global financial market. Examples include existing and proposed European Community ligislation on banking, insider dealing, insurance, investment services and capital requirements; bilaterial agreements on exchange of enforcement information.

The Department of Trade and Industry is joint signatory with SIB of memoranda of understanding with the United States and Japanese authorities; there are agreements between SIB and its counterparts in 37 countries.

There is worldwide recognition that these arrangements need to be developed in order to facilitate cross-border trade in financial services while protecting investors from risk.

International discussion takes place through formal and informal contacts on a bilaterial basis and in multilateral fora, such as IOSCO—the International Organisation for Securities Commissions.

One of the most recent initiatives was the first trilateral meeting of United Kingdom, United States and Japanese regulatory authorities which I attended at Airlie in Virginia on 18 and 19 September. This resulted in the Airlie house declaration which affirmed continuing close co-operation between the authorities in the three major world financial markets. A copy of this is in the Library.

Eastern Europe

113. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what visits he has made to eastern Europe in 1990 to discuss privatisation.

Mr. Lilley: In September, together with a party of British business men, I visited Berlin for talks with the West German Minister for the Economy and German business men. Among other things, we discussed investment in East Germany and in eastern Europe more generally, including opportunities arising from privatisation.

My predecessor visited Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary earlier this year and privatisation was one of the key issues discussed. Over the last year or so other DTI Ministers have led parties of business men to these countries as well as to the USSR, Romania and the GDR, and have addressed the question of privatisation on most occasions.

Small Engineering Companies

117. **Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from small engineering companies about the business outlook for the sector.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department regularly receives representations about many areas of industry, including the engineering sector.

Financial Services

118. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

132. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the regulation of financial services.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend and I receive a considerable number of representations on a variety of topics relating to the regulation of financial services. We consider very carefully those which relate to the scope or the framework of the regulatory system or to the powers under the Financial Services Act which the Government retain. Those which relate to matters which are the responsibility of the Securities and Investments Board or another regulatory authority are passed to the appropriate body.

Wild Birds

119. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to ban the trade in wild birds for the purposes of domestic pets.

Mr. Sainsbury: The import of wild birds is already strictly controlled by conservation legislation. The United Kingdom is party to the convention on international trade in endangered species (CITES) under which trade in certain species is closely monitored while commercial trade in the most endangered species is completely banned. The import of many non-CITES species into the United Kingdom is also controlled under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976.

I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is currently looking at ways of improving and extending the controls on the import of species which are unlikely to survive in captivity.

Single Market (Takeovers)

120. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will implement the Trade and Industry Select Committee's recommendation in respect of the single market on early publication of the European Commission's study on barriers to takeovers in the Community.

Mr. Redwood: The Commission has decided not to publish the report. HMSO has, however, published the report on barriers to takeovers that the Department of Trade and Industry commissioned in 1989. This covers the same issues and arrives at broadly similar conclusions concerning the prevalence and significance of specific barriers.

Insurance Industry

123. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what future steps he will be taking to ensure that the British insurance industry is not put at a competitive disadvantage after 1992.

Mr. Redwood: The United Kingdom supports the Commission's proposals for the single insurance passport. The removal of trade barriers after 1992 will provide new opportunities for the United Kingdom industry, and is good news for the consumer. Our negotiations are designed to ensure fair access for our companies.

Motor Industry

124. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what visits he has made to companies in the motor industry; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I visited Motor Panels in Coventry on 22 October to open a tool shop. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State visited Toyota's Burnaston site and Rearsby Automotive Ltd. on 23 August, as well as Bostrom Ltd. on 2 October.

EC Financial Services Directives

126. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress he has made by his discussions within the Council of Ministers on the need to ensure that the capital adequacy and financial services directives do not unfairly discriminate against the United Kingdom independent intermediary sector.

Mr. Redwood: The investment services directive and its supporting capital adequacy directive are currently under negotiation. The Government recognise the special role of independent financial intermediaries in the United Kingdom financial sector and want them to benefit as far as possible from the opportunities of the single market. However, the Government are equally concerned not to subject such firms to inappropriately high capital requirements. As the negotiations progress, I expect that a balance will have to be struck between the benefits which could flow from the European "single passport" and the burdens which could arise from the terms of the capital adequacy directive. I am keeping progress on the directives under constant review in the light of this consideration.

Republic of Ireland

133. **Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received recently on trade with the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have received one representation about the import of cheese from the Republic of Ireland.

EC Shipbuilding Directive

137. **Dr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last discussed with his EC ministerial colleagues the sixth directive on the shipbuilding fund; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: On 13 March last.

Exchange Rate Mechanism

138. **Mr. [illegible]:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his Department's estimates of the opportunities for British industry concomitant on joining the ERM.

Mr. Lilley: Membership of the ERM will help to provide greater stability of exchange rates with our main trading partners which will help businesses plan for the future.

Post Office

141. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he plans to meet the chairman of the Post Office to discuss the regulation of, and investment in, the Post Office.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets the chairman of the Post Office, Sir Bryan Nicholson, regularly to discuss various matters of mutual interest and concern.

Footwear and Textile Industry

143. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to safeguard the footwear and textile industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The future of the United Kingdom companies in the footwear and textile sectors depends

essentially on their own efforts to compete effectively in the United Kingdom and world markets. My Department consults these industries closely in its efforts to create conditions for fair and open trade. These industries have also benefited from DTI schemes which support regional development and collaborative research and development:

£K

	1989-90	[1]1990-91
Textiles	11,708	7,715
Footwear	490	388
Totals	12,198	8,103

[1]To date.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

145. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement concerning the future of the ECGD.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to my replies of 19 July 1990, *Official Report*, column 677 and of 26 July 1990, *Official Report*, columns 409-10.

Exports (Middle East)

146. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the effect of the Gulf crisis on British exports to the middle east.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is too early to say with certainty how the Gulf crisis will affect United Kingdom trade over the next few months with the middle east region as a whole.

Confederation of British Industry

148. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has met the Confederation of British Industry in order to discuss appropriate recognition for those involved in industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No, but it is open to any individual or organisation to put forward suggestions for such recognition.

Science Parks

149. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on the number of science parks attached to universities and polytechnics today and in 1979.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Only two universities, Cambridge and Heriot-Watt, had science parks in 1979. According to the definition used by the United Kingdom Science Parks Association, there are now 39 science parks in the United Kingdom. Of these, 33 are linked with universities or university colleges, and the others are linked to polytechnics, higher educational institutions, and centres of expertise.

Technology and Development Group

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will order the closure of the London office of the Technology and Development Group in light of the Iraqi Government's use of it for arms purchases.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Government have no statutory power to order the closure of a company or organisation. However, all companies established in the United Kingdom are required to comply with United Kingdom legislation, including the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1989 relating to the export of military goods and the orders giving effect to United Nations Security Council resolution 661.

Company Investigations

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what investigations are being carried out by his Department, or by regulatory authorities set up under the Financial Services Act, into the affairs of the Gans Group Ltd. and Research and Development Investments of Enfield.

Mr. Redwood: There is no trace of either named business. It may be, however, that the question refers to the Genn Group Ltd. and Research Development & Investments (Building) Ltd.

The Genn Group Ltd. went into creditors voluntary liquidation on 7 September 1989. The Secretary of State is not investigating the affairs of that company nor is he aware of any similar inquiry by a regulatory body set up under the Financial Services Act 1986.

Research Development and Investments (Building) Ltd. was wound up by the High Court on 15 November 1989 on the petition of the Secretary of State. Further inquiries into its affairs are being undertaken by the Crown prosecution service.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will consider holding an inquiry into the activities of Eurocopy Ltd;

(2) if he will consider holding a further inquiry into the activities of Purdie and Kirkpatrick Ltd.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* I am prepared to consider any information the honourable Member may provide which might warrant an inquiry under the Companies Act into either company.

Environmental Pollution

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to require companies to inform their shareholders of their record on environmental pollution.

Mr. Redwood: The Government have imposed no requirements on companies to inform their shareholders of these matters. Companies are themselves best placed to decide, in the light of their individual circumstances, whether such information is likely to be of interest to their members. Interested members may in any case put questions on this subject at the annual general meeting.

Privatisation Advisers

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department was consulted on the appointment of advisers on privatisation.

Mr. Redwood: The appointment of advisers is handled on a competitive basis, and is a matter for the Department concerned.

Share Certificates

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking in line with the undertaking given by his predecessor in column 681 of Standing Committee D of 29 June 1989 to ensure that small shareholders will continue to be able to insist on having share certificates in companies when the TAURUS proposals are fully implemented; whether he is receiving acceptable assurances and co-operation from the stock exchange to that end; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Regulations which are being draften now, and which I will ask this House to affirm next year, will set out the steps any company must take if it wishes to join TAURUS. The regulations the Government will bring forward will not oblige companies to join, and will provide that a company may not do so unless its members have passed a resolution agreeing to such entry.

The consultative paper "Electronic recording and transfer of shares", published by my Department in July, sought comments on whether companies should be required to permit inactive shareholders the option of continuing with a certified holding, at least for an initial period even when the company had voted to join TAURUS. Some respondents considered that companies should have the option of retaining a certificated portion of their register, but only for shareholders who never transferred shares through the market. The clear majority of respondents argued for all shares of any company joining TAURUS to be uncertificated for the purposes of legal transfer and recording. Some companies may decide to join TAURUS but to issue a paper confirmation of holding to all those using the company's own account likely to be used by most small independent shareholders. This may be sufficient. I am considering the position of small shareholders in the light of all representations made about the full package of proposals for TAURUS, taking particular account of the need to safeguard the interests of small investors alongside the wish of the stock exchange to move rapidly to the TAURUS system to improve its international competitiveness.

Directors (Disqualification)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many directors were disqualified under companies and financial services legislation in each year since 1980; and in how many cases his Department's inspectors' reports were a material factor in the disqualification.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Disqualification order made are noted in the report on companies, pursuant to section 729 of the Companies Act 1975, published each year, copies of which are in the Library. Section 8 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 (disqualification after investigation of company) came into force on 29 December 1986 and enables applications to be made on the basis of reports made on or after 28 April 1986. No orders have yet been made under this section, but as the table shows many have been made under other sections.

Between 1980 and 1986 six orders were made under section 188 of the Companies Act 1988—power to restrain fraudulent persons from managing companies—and section 28 of the Companies Act 1976—disqualification for persistent default in delivering documents to registrar—involving companies where inspectors had been appointed.

Table 10
Disqualification Orders notified to the Registrar: 1978 to 1983

1978	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*
22	36	62	50	67	89

Note: Courts are required to send details of orders made which disqualify a person from taking part in the management of a company (Section 29, Companies Act 1976). Details of each current disqualification order are available for inspection by the public at Companies Houses in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh, and at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

Table 11
Prosecutions by the Department: 1983

Section Offence	*Prosecutions (Number of offences)*	*Convictions*	*Number dismissed (including acquitals)*	*Number not proceeded with (withdrawn, not served or left on file)*	*Number adjourned to later hearing date*
(a) Companies Act 1948					
126 Failure to forward an annual return	1,494	848	13	460	173
187 Undischarged bankrupt acting as a director or concerned in the management of a company	23	20	—	3	—
283 Not having reasonable grounds for declaration of solvency	2	2	—	—	—
328 Offences by officers of company in liquidation	12	5	—	7	—
330 Frauds by officers of company in liquidation	4	1	2	1	—
331 Failure to keep proper books of account	2	2	—	—	—
332 Fraudulent trading	16	8	[2]3	7	—
(b) Companies Act 1976					
1(7) Failure to deliver accounts[1]	1,920	1,188	15	528	189
12 Failure to keep accounting record	76	57	—	19	—
161 Companies Act 1948 / 13 Companies Act 1976 / 33 Companies Act 1967 / 26 Companies Act 1976 — Auditor not qualified to act; Failure to notify company of acquisition, etc. of voting shares	1	1	—	—	—
	4	4	—	—	—

[1] 497 companies and 871 directors were involved in the prosecutions.
[2] 2 convictions recorded in 1982, were quashed on appeal in 1983.

The statistics in the table relate to the prosecution of individual officers of companies, except those shown under Sections 187 and 332 (where the offences, by their nature, may involve persons other than officers).

Section D. Legal Proceedings

Table D1. Disqualification Orders notified to the Secretary of State: 1984 to 1986, and 1986-1987 to 1989-90

Act and description		*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Companies Act 1948								
s 188	Restraint of fraudulent persons from managing companies	120	85	14	9	0	0	0
Companies Act 1985								
s 296-299	Disqualification on conviction of indictable offence, for persistent default under the Companies Acts, for fraud in winding-up and on summary conviction	0	23	74	58	1	5	3
s 300	Disqualification by reference to association with insolvent companies	0	5	29	30	23	11	2
Insolvency Act 1976								
s 9	Disqualification of directors of insolvent companies	8	7	7	0	1	0	0
Insolvency Act 1985								
s 12	Disqualification of unfit directors of insolvent companies	0	0	0	4	1	1	0
Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986								
s 2-5	Disqualification on conviction of indictable offence, for persistent breaches of companies legislation, for fraud in winding-up and on summary conviction	0	0	0	11	102	105	154
s 6, 8 & 10	Disqualification of unfit directors of insolvent companies, disqualification following investigation of companies and disqualification for wrongful trading	0	0	0	0	69	210	159
TOTALS		128	120	124	112	197	332	318

Note: Courts are required to send details of orders made which disqualify a person from taking part in the management of a company (Section 18, Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986). Details of each current disqualification order are available for inspection by the public at Companies House in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh, and at the Royal Courts of Justice in London.

Harris Queensway Ltd.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what investigations his Department has carried out into Harris Queensway Ltd.

Mr. Redwood *(holding answer 29 October 1990):* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to Lowndes Queensway plc because that company came into existence in 1988 as a result of a merger of Harris Queensway plc and Lowndes Ventures plc.

I am prepared to consider any information the hon. Member may provide which might warrant an inquiry.

Accountancy Firms

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many representations he has made to the European Economic Community competition commissioner about his investigation of United Kingdom accountancy firms; and if he will publish those representations.

Mr Redwood *(holding answer 30 October 1990):* My Department has been in contact with the consultants carrying out the study for the European Commission.

Inspectors' Reports

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the cost of preparing inspectors' reports under the Companies Acts since May 1979 distinguishing between reports that were published, and those that were not.

Mr. Redwood *(holding answer 30 October 1990):* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 18 July, *Official Report*, cols *647-48*. The available information for the period June to December 1979 is given in the table:

	June to December 1979
Completed Reports	8
Published Final Reports	[1] [2]4
Published Interim Reports	—
Unpublished Final Reports	[1]2
Unpublished Interim Reports	[3]2

[1] The cost of one report was £106,441. The costs of the five others are not now readily available.

[2] Reports were not necessarily published in the same year they were completed.

[3] Costs of investigations to interim report stage are not readily available.

Companies House

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the surplus of income over expenditure achieved by the Companies House agency in

the financial year 1989-90; and whether that surplus is net of the expenditure on the companies investigation branch of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* For 1989-90 Companies House executive agency achieved a gross surplus of income over expenditure of £11·1 million. This gross operating surplus funds other costs of running the system of regulating companies and developing law, including the companies investigation branch of the DTI.

Company Accounts

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies, distinguishing between financial services companies and other companies, have failed to file annual accounts *(a)* since 1986, *(b)* since 1987 and *(c)* since 1988.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* It is not possible to distinguish between financial services companies and other types. The following figures relate to all companies currently registered in England and Wales.

Latest accounts received for 1986 = 14,227
Latest accounts received for 1987 = 30,707
Latest accounts received for 1988 = 154,193.

Consultants (Cost)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions in the last two years his Department has consulted the accountancy firm Stoy Hayward; about what issues; and at what cost.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* This information is not held centrally by my Department.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what matters he has sought the advice of Coopers and Lybrand in the last two years, and at what cost.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* This information is not held centrally by my Department.

Polly Peck Limited

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) on what date his Department became aware that the latest accounts of Polly Peck Limited show current liabilities of £800,000,000;

(2) on what date his Department became aware that brand names and goodwill appeared as substantial assets in the latest accounts of Polly Peck Limited.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* I assume the hon. Member is referring to Polly Peck International plc, which is the listed company. The latest accounts received by the Department are those for the year ending 31 December 1989. These were filed at Companies house on 7 August 1990 and made available to searchers on 13 August. The subsequent interim statement is not required to be filed. The level of borrowings in any company and their composition are matters for the company, its shareholders and bankers, not for Government. If a company is no longer able to pay its bills then there are provisions for creditors under the insolvency legislation.

DEFENCE

Over-the-horizon Radar, Dyfed

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether agreement has been reached over funding by the United States of America of the possible over-the-horizon radar installation being considered for Brawdy in Dyfed.

Mr. Alan Clark: Yes. The memorandum of understanding signed by the United Kingdom and United States Governments on 20 April 1990 makes general provision for the equitable contribution, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, of both Governments to the costs of a two-year trial of an over-the-horizon radar in the United Kingdom; and specifically for the United States Government to provide, among other things, a production OTHR system for the trial.

Salmon Fishing

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any salmon netting stations in Northumberland are still owned by Greenwich Hospital Estates.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No.

105. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the proceeds of the sale of a salmon netting station at Spittal by Greenwich Hospital Estates to the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust; and whether the sale included any conditions or covenants affecting its future operation.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Greenwich hospital sold the salmon netting station at Spittal, otherwise known as Hudshead fishery, to the River Tweed commissioners (not the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust) in August 1988 for £3,000. The sale of the fishery did not include any conditions or covenants affecting its future operation.

Low Flying

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many fast jet low-level sorties were flown by British military aircraft over the Federal Republic of Germany in 1989; and how many movements by such aircraft through the West German 250 ft areas were recorded;

(2) how many low-level sorties were flown by British military fast jet aircraft over the Federal Republic of Germany between 1 January and 16 September inclusive; and how many movements by such aircraft through the West German 250 ft areas were recorded.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: This information is not available in the precise form requested but Royal Air Force Germany carried out some 14,000 fixed-wing low-level sorties over the Federal Republic of Germany in 1989 and some 9,000 sorties between 1 January and 16 September 1990. The numbers of recorded entries into the 250 ft low-flying areas in the Federal Republic of Germany over the same periods were 21,100 and 15,600 respectively. Individual sorties may incorporate several entries into the flying areas.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the figures for low-flying sorties by aircraft type,

provided in his reply to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) of 26 July, *Official Report*, columns *527-28*, include sorties by F-4, Jaguar and Tornado aircraft operated by foreign air forces.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Yes.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if allied aircraft participating in unit exchange visits to the United Kingdom are permitted to fly over the United Kingdom at 250 ft.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: NATO squadrons carrying out Headquarters Allied Air Forces Central Europe approved exchange visits to the United Kingdom are normally permitted to use the United Kingdom low-flying system subject to appropriate regulations.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what definition is used for centre, expressed as a radius in nautical miles, in the instructions to pilots concerning overflight of the centres of major conurbations and built-up areas in the United Kingdom low-flying system.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: As the Government's response to the Defence Committee's report on low flying made clear, (HC659, page v) the instructions are not expressed in terms of any specific radius.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the regulatory measures introduced for foreign aircraft flying at low level in the United Kingdom since 17 September.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Strict controls have always applied to flying in the United Kingdom low flying system by any foreign aircraft based outside the United Kingdom and full account is taken of any restrictions applied in the aircraft's country of origin. This remains the case.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 1 January low flying over the United Kingdom has been permitted on Saturdays and Sundays; and how many sorties were booked on those occasions.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I regret that the information requested is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost and effort.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out the differences between the basis of recording low flying movements in the borders tactical training area *(a)* before and *(b)* after July 1988.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I have nothing to add to the reply which my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) gave to the hon. Member on 20 July 1989, at column *316*.

Foreign Military Aircraft

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if his Department holds copies of the reports of inquiries into accidents to foreign military aircraft which have occurred in the United Kingdom;

(2) what is his policy on the recording of details of accidents to foreign military aircraft in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I refer the hon. Member to the Government's formal response to the House of Commons Defence Committee's fifth report, Session 1989-90, on low flying. The response was published on 30 October as House of Commons Paper 659.

Under the arrangements for obtaining information on foreign military aircraft accidents in the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Defence holds either copies of the reports of inquiries, or information on the accidents provided in reply to MOD requests.

Trident

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will itemise the overspend incurred in the Trident nuclear weapons programme over the past two years.

Mr. Alan Clark: There has been no overspend. Indeed, expenditure over the past two financial years (1988-89 and 1989-90) was almost £10 million below estimate.

Gulf Crisis

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements have been determined for the access offered to British journalists to report events in the Gulf *(a)* at present and *(b)* in the event of an escalation of violence.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Satisfactory arrangements have been established which ensure that British journalists have access to United Kingdom forces in the Gulf. We are developing appropriate contingency plans with Saudi Arabia and our other allies in the multinational force.

Nuclear Test Explosions

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many nuclear test explosions have been conducted at the Nevada test site by the United Kingdom since 1979 for the purposes of improving the safety in storage and transport of United Kingdom nuclear warheads.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) on 29 October at column *416*.

Military Flying

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the dates and locations of any deployments of mobile threat emitter equipment outside the Spadeadam range.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Mobile threat emitter equipment is occasionally deployed to various parts of the country each year in support of RAF-sponsored exercises. The deployments for 1990 are representative of a typical annual deployment programme and were as follows:

Date	
23 to 31 March	Otterburn Range
15 to 19 May	Salisbury Plain
13 to 19 July	Mid Wales
17 to 21 July	East Lothian
30 July to 4 August	Otterburn Range

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the purpose of the fast jet low-flying activity scheduled to take place on Saturday 21 and

Sunday 22 October in northern England and south-east Scotland; what types of aircraft and which units were involved; how many sorties took place on each day; and if the Spadeadam range was specially activated for the exercise.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Low flying was exceptionally authorised on the weekend of 20-21 October for Jaguar aircrew conducting training connected with our current commitment in the Gulf. However, in the event bad weather forced all the sorties to be flown at medium level, and no use was made of Spadeadam range.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish the results of the military aircraft noise survey held at RAF West Freugh earlier this year.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) gave to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 13 June 1990 at column *241*.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the types of stores or materials which military aircraft are permitted to drop within the Spadeadam range area.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Within the Spadeadam range area aircraft are permitted to drop small amounts of chaff. In addition, the range is cleared, up to a maximum of 28 days per year, to allow the dropping of practice bombs on Wiley Sike (an air weapons range within the Spadeadam range).

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the areas of the United Kingdom where military aircraft are permitted to release infra-red decoy flares.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Military aircraft are not normally permitted to release infra-red decoys over the land anywhere in the United Kingdom, but may do so over the sea when clear of shipping or other hazards.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the purpose of the recent changes made to the southern boundary of the Spadeadam area of intense aerial activity; and whether concomitant changes have been made to the southern boundary of low flying area 13.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom low flying system is continuously monitored and changes are made where necessary to spread low-flying more evenly and enhance flight safety while at the same time reducing, where possible, disturbance to those on the ground. The southern boundaries of low-flying area 13 and the Spadeadam area of intense air activity remain coincident.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the areas of the United Kingdom where military aircraft are permitted to dispense chaff.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The dispensing of chaff in the United Kingdom by military aircraft is strictly controlled and is generally carried out over the sea. Over land military aircraft are permitted to dispense small quantities of chaff when operating at the electronic warfare training range at Spadeadam.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to introduce a limit on the number of military aircraft permitted to operate in low flying area 16 at any one time.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom low-flying system is kept under constant review but there are no such plans at present.

Borders Tactical Training Area

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the Borders tactical training area first came into use.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Borders tactical training area was formally incorporated in the United Kingdom low-flying system in 1984.

Military Hospitals

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the consequences for military hospitals of the preparations for the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The medical support to the Gulf has been drawn in part from all the service hospitals in the United Kingdom. The Cambridge military hospital at Aldershot, together with the Queen Elizabeth military hospital, Woolwich and the Princess Mary's RAF hospital at Halton, are not accepting new NHS patients other than for maternity and paediatrics and oncology at Halton. The remaining five hospitals at Catterick, Wroughton, Ely, Haslar and Plymouth are still accepting NHS patients, but on a reduced scale. Discussions have been held between officials of the Ministry of Defence and Department of Health on how alternative provision can best be made for the NHS patients affected by these changes.

"Options for Change"

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in considering the "Options For Change" policy which was announced on 25 July.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) on 30 October at column *501*.

Atlantic Conveyor

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what compensation was paid for the loss of the Atlantic Conveyor in the Falklands war.

Mr. McLoughlin: I have been asked to reply.

A payment of £9·3 million in respect of the loss of the Atlantic Conveyor was made from the marine and aviation insurance (war risks) fund under the Government's war risks insurance arrangements.

EMPLOYMENT

Sheltered Placement Schemes

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities about the

failure to expand the number of sheltered placements schemes; what assurances the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has sought about future policy; and what replies he has sent.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a copy of a letter from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on this issue, and a reply will be sent shortly. A further letter has been received by the Employment Service's assistant resettlement adviser for Scotland. The convention has sought the assistance of the Department in ensuring that the sheltered placement scheme expands wherever desirable in the interests of the employment of people with disabilities. The Government remain committed to the scheme.

Departmental Reorganisation

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what organisations and sections within his Department presently being housed in London are being considered for dispersal to provincial areas.

Mr. Jackson: On 2 August 1989 my predecessor announced that 1,100 posts from my Department's headquarters, the Training Agency's head office and the Employment Service head office would be moved to Runcorn—800—and Sheffield—300.

Relocation is kept under constant review and, as a result, I have decided that a further 90 posts from the Employment Service will also be relocated to Sheffield.

Employers (Prosecutions)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in which year an employer was last prosecuted for *(a)* illegal underpayment of wages, *(b)* failure to produce records and *(c)* producing false records.

Mr. Forth: Employers have been prosecuted on one or more of these charges during the course of 1990.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of civil proceedings taken by the wages inspectorate in Scotland in each year from 1979 to 1989 inclusive.

Mr. Forth: Two civil proceeding cases were taken by the wages inspectorate in Scotland between 1979 and 1989; both were in 1984.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of cases in Scotland passed by the wages inspectorate to the procurator fiscal for consideration or prosecution in each year from 1985 to 1989; and if he will indicate for the cases where there was decision not to prosecute, the reasons for these decisions.

Mr. Forth: No cases were passed to the procurator fiscal during the period specified.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the prosecution of the five companies forming Translink Joint Venture concerning the death of Keith Lynch on 10 January during construction of the channel tunnel.

Mr. Forth: On 12 October 1990 the Health and Safety Executive announced its decision to prosecute Translink Joint Venture for an alleged breach of Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 following the investigation into the circumstances which led to the death of Keith Lynch on 10 January. The case is due to be heard before Dover and East Kent magistrates court on 12 December 1990.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will detail the prosecutions against the five companies forming Translink Joint Venture, the British half of the Anglo-French consortium Transmanche-Link, building the channel tunnel; and in each case itemise the outcome of each prosecution and Government action taken as a result of the outcome.

Mr. Forth: The Health and Safety Executive has successfully prosecuted the five constituent companies of Translink Joint Venture (TJV) on three occasions:

(i) on 26 July 1988 at Canterbury Crown court total fines of £8,750 and costs of approximately £7,500 were imposed for breaches of sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974—HSW—and the Construction (General Provisions) Regulations 1961. This followed HSE's investigation into an incident on 2 December 1987 when four eight-ton railway wagons ran 300m down an adit into the tunnel workings;

(ii) on 16 November 1988, Dover magistrates court imposed fines totalling £20,000 and costs of £500 for breaches of sections 2 and 3 of the HSW Act arising out of HSE's investigation into an incident underground on 5 April 1988 when a cylinder of liquefied petroleum gas was hit and punctured by a train;

(iii) on 26 March 1990 at Maidstone Crown court fines totalling £50,000 and costs of nearly £6,000 were imposed for a breach of section 2 of the HSW Act following HSE's investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of David Symes on 6 February 1990.

The HSE's prosecution of TJV for alleged breaches of section 2 of the HSW Act following the investigation into the death of Gary Woodward on 23 October 1989, the third site fatality, is before the courts. The HSE is also prosecuting Robbins-Markham joint venture companies—suppliers of the tunnel boring machine—for an alleged breach of section 3 of the HSW Act. On 24 October 1990 Dover magistrates committed these cases to Maidstone Crown court.

On 12 October the HSE announced its decision to prosecute TJV for an alleged breach of section 2 of the HSW Act following the investigation into the death of Keith Lynch, the fourth site fatality, on 10 January 1990. The case is due to be heard before Dover and East Kent magistrates court on 12 December 1990.

It is the duty of the Health and Safety Executive to make arrangements to enforce the 1974 Act. When investigating accidents or other incidents, HSE inspectors will ensure that the firms concerned take prompt remedial action to prevent any recurrence. Such action is not linked to the outcome of a particular prosecution.

Temporary Work Sites

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the European Community directive on temporary and mobile work sites.

Mr. Forth: I refer the hon. Member to the explanatory memorandum on the directive which was submitted to the House by the Department on 12 October 1990. Copies of the memorandum are available from the Vote Office.

Beryllium

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution will conduct an evaluation of the safety practices currently in place for the transport, storage and fabrication of the metal beryllium.

Mr. Forth: No. A number of regulations have been made under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 which specify the precautions necessary during the transport, storage and fabrication of hazardous substances such as beryllium. Additionally, occupational exposure to beryllium is currently under review by the Health and Safety Commission's advisory committee on toxic substances.

Profile Training, Bradford

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what financial monitoring has been carried out by the training agency of Profile Training, Bradford; whether all the sub-contractors to Profile Training have been paid; and how much has been paid by the training agency to Profile Training for 1990.

Mr. Jackson: Financial monitoring was carried out in accordance with the Training Agency's system of financial appraisal and monitoring which is designed to protect public funds and reduce the risk of fraud. Details of financial arrangements between the Training Agency and training managers and between training managers and their sub-contractors are commercial and are treated in confidence.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many redundancies have been notified in the Bradford travel-to-work area during 1990 to the most recent practicable date in textiles, engineering, machine tools, steel fabrication and welding, textile engineering, building, electrical engineering and transport.

Mr. Forth: Figures on notification of redundancies are not held for areas smaller than economic regions.

Astra Training Services Ltd.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the value of the freehold sites transferred to Astra Training Services Ltd.; how many employees have been made redundant from all sites; what provision has been made by his Department for redundant persons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Government appointed King and Co. to value the Skills Training Agency estate prior to the sale of STA to the private sector. The acquisition of Astra of 28 freehold sites formed part of their overall sale package which involved a payment from the Government to Astra of some £10·7 million.

As the hon. Member was informed on 21 May 1990, staffing levels in parts of STA which have been sold to the private sector are a matter for the new purchasers. Most of these purchasers have made it clear that they will need to restructure the businesses to secure commercial viability.

Staff in the parts of STA which were not included in sale packages have been redeployed as far as possible but some redundancies were inevitable. Sixty five staff in instructional officer grades in the unsold sites of STA have accepted voluntary redundancy and 41 staff in industrial and support grades in these unsold units have been made redundant.

My Department has reached agreement with trade unions that preferential consideration for reinstatement in the Employment Department group will be given to certain staff employed in STA immediately before sale if they are made redundant in the private sector within three years of sale.

Community Programme

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many community programme projects have been adapted to employment training initiatives; and what moneys are spent in providing the community with those benefits such as child care which are not directly part of employment training programmes but which were formerly an aspect of the community programmes.

Mr. Jackson: All community programme providers were encouraged to enter employment training. Information is not available on the number of specific projects which carried over from the community programme to employment training, and on moneys spent on community services like child care, which were previously funded under the community programme.

Long-term Unemployment

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any further plans to develop his Department's services for the long-term unemployed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Over the last few months I have been reviewing the wide range of help my Department offers through training and employment service to long-term unemployed people. The number of those unemployed for over six months has fallen by 60 per cent. since April 1986. Our measures have played an important part in this very substantial fall, but there is always scope for further refinement, better targeting and the introduction of new approaches.

Already this year I have announced the introduction of new "back to work" plans for each unemployed person; the establishment of a unified advisory service within the Employment Service to enhance the effectiveness of the support it can provide; extra intensive counselling and advice for those who have been unemployed for two years or more; more systematic follow-up of those who do not take up places on our programmes even though they have agreed to do so; our intention to require those who have been out of work for two years or more and persistently refuse help in finding work to attend a restart course designed to build confidence and motivation by identifying capabilities and strengths.

I am also asking the chief executive of the Employment Service to develop further a number of its existing initiatives for the long-term unemployed, to increase the number of people helped by job clubs, in particular specialist job clubs for people with particular difficulties; extend the job interview guarantee programme which offers the long-term unemployed a range of help in competing better in the labour market and which has been successfully piloted in a number of inner city areas over the

last year; develop the work being done to provide support for one-off projects to help disadvantaged groups back to work.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Seaside Rock

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the food safety of seaside rock.

Mr. Maclean: I am not aware of any issues of food safety. But if there are any questions raised on the safety of seaside rock my scientists in the food safety directorate would be happy to investigate them.

Bees

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to ensure that health requirements on the importation of bees are sufficient to prevent the introduction of varroa to this country.

Mr. Maclean: Our aim is to keep this country free of varroasis. The Importation of Bees Order 1980 prohibits imports of honey bees except under licence from countries of high bee health status which are free from varroasis.

France (Livestock Exports)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the recent incidents in France relating to the import of British livestock; and what action he has taken.

Mr. Curry: My colleagues and I have made it absolutely clear to the French Government and in the Council of Agriculture Ministers that we totally condemn the incidents in France involving attacks on imported livestock and carcases. As a result of our sustained pressure, the French authorities expressed their determination to maintain law and order and to take action against those concerned in the incidents. They have also said that they will compensate for financial losses arising as a direct result of the incidents. We remain determined to ensure the safety and free passage of animals, drivers and goods. We shall continue to monitor the situation and will not hesitate to raise the matter again with the French authorities if further incidents threaten our trade.

Food Imports

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make representations to the Commission of the European Community about the dumping of pork by Germany on to the United Kingdom market.

Mr. Curry: Despite persistent rumours to the contrary, imports of pigmeat from Germany on to the United Kingdom market have remained at similar levels to last year. Stocks of pigmeat in ex-German Democratic Republic territories are being exported to eastern Europe.

Green Pound

Mr. Moate: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement showing the extent of progress so far achieved in eliminating the green pound.

Mr. Curry: The green pound devaluations agreed at the price fixing have reduced our monetary gaps considerably. On the basis of the position at the time of the price fixing, the changes to MCAs would have been, for cereals, a reduction from 19·7 per cent. to 8 per cent., for milk from 18·8 per cent. to 11·1 per cent. and for beef from 15 per cent. to 5·8 per cent. In fact, by 29 October, these MCAs had been reduced to 3·8 per cent. for milk and 1 per cent. for cereals and had been removed altogether for beef.

We remain committed to the elimination of all MCAs and monetary gaps by the end of 1992 at the latest. Joining the exchange rate mechanism is a further step towards this goal.

Salmon

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to lay the report on his review of salmon net fishing before the House.

Mr. Curry: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply which was given to my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) on 15 October, *Official Report*, column *765*.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information is available to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland about the presence of dichlorvos in salmon.

Mr. Curry: A survey was carried out by this Department between 1987 and 1989. Ninety-two salmon samples were obtained from farms, processors and markets. No residues of dichlorvos were detected.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to respond to the Select Committee on agriculture's report on BSE.

Mr. Maclean: Shortly.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has on the absence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy from the cattle populations of other European Community countries.

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in respect of which European Community countries his Department has evidence of the existence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: Since 1 April this year, member states have been required under European community law to notify the Commission of any cases of BSE in their territory. To date the disease has been reported only in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland.

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether his Ministry carries out any tests on farmed mink to determine whether they are infected with transmissible mink encephalopathy or any other encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: The Ministry's veterinary investigation service can provide histopathological diagnosis on farmed mink if requested to do so. Transmissible mink encephalopathy has not been recorded in the United Kingdom.

Bird Quarantine

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on his meeting with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to discuss its response to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food report, "Bird Mortality Statistics for Quarantine Returns".

Mr. Maclean: I understand that officials in the Department had a constructive meeting with a representative from the RSPB on 20 September, and that he was satisfied with the measures being taken and proposed by the Ministry in connection with welfare during transport and conditions at quarantine premises. The Ministry agreed to consider suggestions on improving the content and presentation of the mortality statistics.

Straw and Stubble

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what consultations he has had with the Health and Safety Executive, local authorities and the emergency services in respect of introducing legislation governing the height, size and distance from living premises for the storing and stacking of straw and stubble after the straw and stubble burning legislation comes into effect in 1992; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what legislation is to be enacted by 1992 governing the height, size and distance from the living premises for straw and haystacks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The regulations which my right hon. Friend the Minister proposes to introduce following the enactment of the Environmental Protection Bill will prohibit the burning of crop residues, subject to limited exemptions, and will specify the conditions under which any exempted burning may be carried out. We will be consulting widely on the proposed regulations.

The safety aspects of stacking and storing of straw and hay are matters for the Health and Safety Executive and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

Intervention Stocks

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields on 25 October, *Official Report*, Column *312*, if he will give the latest estimates for the amounts of *(a)* skimmed milk powder, *(b)* butter, *(c)* beef and *(d)* cereals in (i) public and (ii) private intervention in (1) the United Kingdom and (2) the European Community beyond those currently deposited in the Library.

Mr. Gummer: Estimates of United Kingdom and EC public private intervention stocks will be deposited in the Library of the House next week.

Irradiated Food

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had in the Council of Ministers concerning the draft directive on the irradiation of foodstuffs; and what is his position on the proposal to make the directive applicable to a narrow range of foodstuffs.

Mr. Maclean: The Internal Market Council has discussed this draft on two occasions. These meetings have confirmed that a majority of member states wish discussions to continue with a view to an agreed directive being introduced.

In publishing draft regulations on 6 August the Government have proposed limitation of the use of food irradiation to those products for which the process has been confirmed as acceptable from a public health standpoint by the EC scientific committee for food.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 1 November 1990

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Prosecution Costs

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General by how much the total costs of prosecutions in the United Kingdom have risen in the last five years.

The Attorney-General: The total costs of prosecutions in England and Wales prior to the creation of the Crown prosecution service are not readily available. The Crown prosecution service became fully operational on 1 October 1986. The total running costs of the service between the financial years 1987-88, the first full year of its operation, and 1989-90 increased by £50·3 million. The voted expenditure for the current financial year is £25 million more than the total expenditure for the financial year 1989-90. The total expenditure figures for the Crown prosecution service, excluding receipts from costs awarded to the service, are:

	£
1986-87	74,153,000
1987-88	133,840,000
1988-89	156,882,000
1989-90	184,141,000

The voted expenditure for the current financial year is £209,157,000.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by location the establishments that produce radioactive *(a)* high-level waste, *(b)* intermediate-level waste and *(c)* low-level waste.

Mr. Needham: No high-level or intermediate-level radioactive waste is produced in Northern Ireland. Low-level radioactive waste is generated at the following establishments and locations.

Eastern Health and Social Services Board
Belfast City Hospital, Lisburn Road, Belfast
Musgrave Park Hospital, Stockman's Lane, Belfast
Blood Transfusion Service, 89 Durham Street, Belfast
NI Radiotherapy Centre, Belvoir Park Hospital, Hospital Road, Belfast
Royal Victoria Hospital, Grosvenor Road, Belfast

Northern Health and Social Services Board
Waveney Hospital, Cushendall Road, Ballymena
NI Radiological Protection Service, Purdysburn Hospital, Belfast

Southern Health and Social Services Board
Craigavon Hospital, Portadown

Western Health and Social Services Board
Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry
Stradreagh Hospital, Clooney Road, Londonderry
Erne Hospital, Cornagrade Road, Enniskillen

Ulster Independent Clinic
Stranmillis Road, Belfast

Atlas Communications Ltd
67 West Street, Newtownards

Norbrook Laboratories Ltd
Station Works, Camlough Road, Newry

Richardsons Fertilisers
Herdman Channel Road, Belfast

Queen's University Belfast
Main Site, University Road, Belfast
Medical Biology Centre, Lisburn Road, Belfast

University of Ulster
Coleraine, Co Londonderry
Newtownabbey, Co Antrim
Limnology Lab, Tread point, Drumenagh, Magherafelt

Dyslexia

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teachers in Northern Ireland have had specialist training to enable them to assist in developing the full potential of children suffering from dyslexia.

Mr. Needham: Dyslexia can describe a variety of specific learning difficulties experienced by children. All courses of initial teacher training include an element designed to enable students to develop the capacity to identify and deal with pupils with learning difficulties.

Northern Ireland Centre, Brussels

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Northern Ireland district councils, health and social services boards and education and library boards are empowered to make financial contributions towards the cost of a Northern Ireland centre in Brussels.

Mr. Cope: District councils have discretionary powers under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to incur expenditure or to contribute towards the expenses of any voluntary body or association which carries on activities which are in the interests of the council, the council area or the inhabitants of the area.

Neither health and social services boards nor education and library boards are empowered to make financial contributions towards the cost of a Northern Ireland centre in Brussels.

Water and Sewerage Services

Mr. Bell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has for the future delivery of water and sewerage services.

Mr. Brooke: I propose to transfer the water and sewerage functions of the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland to a Government-owned company, in line with the Government's policy of applying private sector disciplines wherever possible. The target date for the transfer is 1 October 1992.

The Government are committed to improving the quality of drinking water in line with EC standards and to

protecting the environment. They believe the transfer of the water service to a commercially orientated water company will enable these aims to be met in the most cost-effective way. This will safeguard the interests of ratepayers and metered water consumers. The separation of water and sewerage services from DOE will also facilitate the establishment of effective regulatory regimes, with benefits for the whole community.

A major programme of work lies ahead to achieve an orderly transition from the present arrangements to the new ones. The effective and efficient delivery of water and sewerage services depends on the skills and commitment of the staff of the water service and the Government intend to discuss with the trade unions the basis on which staff will transfer from the Northern Ireland civil service to the new company.

Parliamentary approval to funding for the establishment of the company will be sought in a supplementary estimate for the DOE, vote 3—water and sewerage. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £50,000 will be met by repayable advances from the contingencies fund.

Newtownbreda

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland within the parameters of which area plan planning applications for private residential developments in the vicinity of the village of Newtownbreda are considered.

Mr. Needham: The Belfast urban area plan 2001.

School Employees

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the remit of the Fair Employment Commission extends to employees of integrated schools and of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

Mr. Needham: A teacher in a primary or a secondary school is exempt from the operations of the Fair Employment (NI) Acts 1976 and 1989. They apply however to the employees of educational bodies such as integrated schools and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools unless they are exempt under section 37 of the 1976 Act, because the essential nature of their jobs requies a particular religious belief or political opinion.

Castlereagh Area Plan

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has for the preparation of an area plan for the borough of Castlereagh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: The main urban parts of Castlereagh borough council area are covered by the Belfast urban area plan 2001—BUAP—and the recently adopted Carryduff local plan covers a further portion of the council area. Throughout the remaining rural parts of the area the BUAP green belt policy applies.

Work on the preparation of an area plan for the whole of the Castlereagh district is expected to commence in 1993 following a reassessment of the development lands proposed in the BUAP and the expiry of the Carryduff local plan.

Local Government Finance

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* domestic and *(b)* other ratepayers in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years and the current year in each council area in Northern Ireland received a rate rebate of (1) 20 per cent. to 29 per cent., (2) 30 per cent. to 39 per cent., (3) 40 per cent. to 49 per cent., (4) 50 per cent. to 59 per cent., (5) 60 per cent. to 69 per cent., (6) 70 per cent. to 79 per cent., (7) 80 per cent. to 89 per cent. and (8) 90 per cent. or over of their rates; and what percentage of the total ratepayers each such cohort of ratepayers represented.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 22 October 1990]:* Housing benefit is granted only to domestic ratepayers and the schedule shows the total number of ratepayers by district council area who were in receipt of benefit for the last five years and the current year—column A—and the percentage of domestic ratepayers that this represents—column B. Figures relating to the percentage bands requested are not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Numbers of ratepayers receiving rate rebate/housing benefit 1985-86 to 1990-91

	1985-86		*1986-87*		*1987-88*		*1988-89*		*1989-90*		*1990-91*	
District council	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*	*A*	*B*
Antrim	4,381	30·8	4,473	31·0	4,348	29·6	3,023	20·2	2,943	19·7	3,002	20·0
Ards	6,382	26·9	6,546	27·2	6,255	25·8	4,304	17·5	4,353	17·4	4,336	17·2
Armagh	5,132	31·1	5,174	30·9	5,239	30·9	3,453	20·1	3,470	20·2	3,577	20·7
Ballymena	5,737	29·9	5,696	29·1	5,645	28·5	3,837	19·3	3,889	19·1	3,848	18·8
Ballymoney	2,848	37·2	2,922	37·5	2,907	36·8	1,943	24·3	1,961	24·2	1,963	24·2
Banbridge	3,250	29·7	3,334	29·9	3,261	28·9	2,196	19·0	2,189	18·7	2,233	19·0
Belfast	50,426	43·7	49,349	42·4	49,338	42·3	38,830	33·0	38,684	32·7	38,750	32·7
Carrickfergus	2,862	24·8	3,584	30·2	3,487	28·8	2,404	19·2	2,487	19·5	2,465	19·2
Castlereagh	5,743	25·3	5,659	24·5	5,666	24·2	3,846	16·2	3,845	15·8	3,877	15·8
Coleraine	6,428	35·2	6,382	34·3	6,461	33·9	4,335	22·3	4,403	22·3	3,930	19·8
Cookstown	3,706	39·7	3,805	40·1	3,870	39·8	2,641	26·7	2,743	27·5	2,644	26·3
Craigavon	12,302	46·6	10,074	37·7	9,616	35·6	6,730	24·7	6,814	24·9	6,866	24·9
Downpatrick	5,196	28·9	5,565	30·4	5,598	30·0	3,746	19·7	3,865	20·0	3,873	19·8
Dungannon	5,367	37·5	5,634	38·8	5,677	38·6	3,850	25·9	3,963	26·3	3,900	25·7
Fermanagh	6,294	35·4	6,612	36·3	6,649	35·8	4,396	23·5	4,519	23·7	4,474	23·3
Larne	3,117	27·1	3,287	28·3	3,098	26·4	2,131	18·1	2,186	18·4	2,178	18·3
Limavady	3,134	38·5	3,208	38·5	3,227	38·0	2,116	24·6	2,230	25·7	2,255	25·8
Lisburn	10,143	32·5	10,278	32·2	10,082	30·9	7,828	23·2	7,792	22·6	7,835	22·6
Derry	12,968	46·8	13,035	46·5	13,055	45·8	10,399	36·1	10,672	36·0	10,695	35·7
Magherafelt	4,197	40·1	4,284	40·0	4,306	39·8	2,848	25·8	2,891	25·6	2,820	24·8
Moyle	1,940	37·3	1,966	37·0	1,993	37·3	1,392	25·7	1,415	25·7	1,401	25·3

District council	1985-86		1986-87		1987-88		1988-89		1989-90		1990-91	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Newry	10,591	41·6	11,254	43·4	11,131	42·5	7,787	29·3	8,066	30·0	8,174	30·2
Newtownabbey	8,035	29·8	8,631	31·7	8,193	29·7	5,013	18·0	5,715	20·3	5,703	20·2
North Down	6,416	24·5	6,239	23·3	6,166	22·7	4,318	15·7	4,357	15·5	4,352	15·3
Omagh	5,023	37·7	5,088	37·5	5,270	38·0	3,508	25·0	3,546	25·0	3,641	25·5
Strabane	5,007	45·7	5,205	46·8	5,075	45·1	3,644	31·9	3,689	31·9	3,715	31·9
TOTAL	196,625	36·2	197,284	35·8	195,593	35·0	140,518	24·8	142,687	24·9	142,507	24·7

Column A—Total number of ratepayers receiving housing benefit.
Column B—Ratepayers receiving housing benefit as a percentage of total domestic ratepayers.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 1 November.

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 1 November.

The Prime Minister: This morning I attended the Prorogation of Parliament. Later today I shall preside at a meeting of the Cabinet and have meetings with ministerial colleagues and others.

Receptions, Downing Street

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what was the estimated total cost of the reception held at Downing street on 29 October; how many of these "getting to know you" receptions have been held in the past year; and how many are proposed for the next 12 months.

The Prime Minister: The estimated cost of the reception is £1,700. During the past year one similar reception was held and one other is planned within the next 12 months.

European Council (Rome)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* the titles and origins of all papers placed before the European Council at its meeting in Rome on 27 October and place copies of each in the Library.

The Prime Minister: The conclusions of the European Council have been placed in the Library of the House in the usual way. Published documents submitted to the European Council fall within the terms of reference of the Select Committee on European Legislation and are deposited.

Nuclear Test Ban

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister if she has received any communications this year from Parliamentarians Global Action, based in New York, on a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

The Prime Minister: I was invited to meet a delegation from Parliamentarians Global Action in November. I am unable to do so, and the delegation will instead be received by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my right hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave).

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to address the amendment conference of the 1963 partial nuclear test ban treaty in New York in January 1991; and what information she has on plans by any other Head of Government or state to address the conference.

The Prime Minister: I have no plans to address the partial test ban treaty amendment conference. I am not aware that any other Head of Government or state plans to do so.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what arrangements are in hand for interdepartmental consultations on the appointment of accountancy firms to advise on privatisation.

The Prime Minister: It is for the sponsoring Departments of each privatisation to appoint advisers, which is done on a competitive basis. Her Majesty's Treasury is the co-ordinating Department for privatisations and, as such, provides advice to sponsoring Departments as required.

European Commission

Q24. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to the EEC Commission.

The Prime Minister: I have no plans to visit the European Commission at present. I meet European Commissioners during the regular meetings of the European Council and, at times, in London.

German Fishing

Q224. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister if, when last she met Chancellor Kohl, and other EC Heads of Government, they discussed the increase in the size of the German fishing fleet, resulting from German unification and the need to persuade German fishermen to move into other areas of the German economy and labour market.

The Prime Minister: The special European Council in Rome on 27 and 28 October did not discuss the specific question of German fishing fleets. But the German authorities have given repeated assurances to the Council of Ministers that they will not seek any adjustments which would affect existing access to Community waters under the common fisheries policy.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Written Questions

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Lord President of the Council what has been the total number of written questions tabled in the 1989-90 Session; what estimate he has for the cost of replying to them; and what were the comparable figures in the previous Session.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The total number of written questions tabled in Sessions 1988-89 and 1989-90 are 39,540 and 41,371 respectively. Estimates of the average costs of preparing answers and of printing questions and answers are not prepared on a regular basis; the latest figures available are £53 and £38 respectively. These would indicate that the total cost of replying to written questions in the current Session is in the order of £3·7 million.

Telephone Facilities

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Lord President of the Council, pursuant to his oral answer of 25 June, *Official Report*, column 18, if he will make a further statement on consideration by the Services Committee of the provision of free official telephone communication facilities for hon. Members to the institutions of the European Community in Brussels and elsewhere; and when he expects the Services Committee study to be concluded with appropriate recommendations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Services Committee is close to reaching conclusions on the provision of free telephone and postal communications with the main European Community institutions. Early in the new Session decisions are expected on these and other aspects of links with the European Community.

I shall arrange for the House to be informed of the Committee's conclusions.

Ministerial Statements

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many ministerial statements were made in the House during the current and each of the previous five Sessions; and if he will analyse them by Department.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information requested is as shown in the table.

	1984-85	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Prime Minister	9	6	3	7	5	7
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	7	17	2	2	3	6
Her Majesty's Treasury	6	6	1	6	1	1
Home Office	10	8	4	8	7	8
Ministry of Defence	6	4	7	3	2	5
Department of Health and Social Security	13	12	7	8	—	—
Department of Health	—	—	—	0	5	2
Department of Social Security	—	—	—	1	3	4
Department of Education and Science	5	4	3	3	1	3
Scottish Office	7	8	4	9	7	3
Department of Transport	6	6	2	5	11	3
Department of Energy	5	0	1	4	2	3
Department of the Environment	7	9	6	7	5	4
Northern Ireland Office	1	2	1	6	4	2
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	4	4	2	2	6	5
Department of Employment	5	7	3	2	3	2
Welsh Office	4	4	1	5	2	2
Department of Trade and Industry	8	11	5	17	7	5
Attorney General	2	0	0	3	1	0
Minister for the Arts	0	1	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	105	109	52	98	76	66

Broadcasting

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Lord President of the Council how many offices in the Palace of Westminster and its outbuildings currently receive a clean feed of proceedings in the House; and who occupies them.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As indicated in my reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 27 June at columns *232-33*, the following offices or rooms within the House and its outbuildings are currently in receipt of a clean television and sound feed from the Chamber: Mr. Speaker's residence; the office of Mr. Speaker's Secretary; the office of the Chairman of Ways and Means; the office of the Supervisor of Broadcasting; and the Press Gallery (within which some broadcasting organisations have made their own separate arrangements). There are, of course, also monitors in each of the Division Lobbies, though these do not carry sound.

In addition, the Votes and Proceedings Office, occupied by staff of the Department of the Clerk of the House, is equipped with a sound-only feed. I regret that this was inadvertently included in my answer of 27 June amongst those offices which receive a television feed.

Private Bills

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list the private Bills and the petitions against private Bills that have been placed before the House since the 1987 general election promoted by the parliamentary agents Sharpe Pritchard, showing the dates on which they were first tabled and their progress within the House.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information requested is as follows:

Petitions for Private Bills deposited on or before 27th November 1987
(Agent: Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.)

1. Birmingham City Council
2. Brighton and Preston Cemetery

3. Cardiff Bay Barrage
4. Hampstead Radio Station
5. London Local Authorities
6. Northampton

Petitions for Private Bills deposited on or before 25th November 1988
(Agent: Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.)

1. Penzance Albert Pier Extension
2. British Film Institute South Bank
3. Bromley London Borough Council (Crystal Palace)
4. Buckinghamshire County Council
5. London Local Authorities (No. 2)
6. Queen Mary and Westfield College
7. Wesleyan Assurance Society
8. Nottingham Park Estate
9. Cardiff Bay Barrage
10. Hayle Harbour
11. Redbridge London Borough Council
12. Birmingham City Council (Miscellaneous Provisions)
13. Birmingham City Council (No. 2)
14. Hythe, Kent, Marina (joint promotion with Sherwood & Co.)
15. Hythe Marina Village (Southampton) Wavescreen
16. Isle of Wight
17. Kingston upon Hull City Council

Petitions for Private Bills deposited on or before 27th November 1989
(Agent: Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.)

1. Cattewater Reclamation
2. Humberside County Council
3. Hythe, Kent, Marina (joint promotion with Sherwood & Co.)
4. London Local Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions)
5. Penzance South Pier Extension
6. Ventnor Harbour

Petitions Against Bills deposited on or before 30th January 1988
(Agent: Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.)

1. Calor Gas Limited
2. Conoco Limited
3. Doncaster Borough Council
4. Humber Oil Terminals Trustee Limited and Associated Petroleum Terminals (Immingham) Limited
5. City of Wakefield District Council
6. Kenneth Tynsley Hadfield
7. Falmouth Container Terminal Action Group, and others
8. North East Derbyshire District Council
9. City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
10. Doncaster Borough Council
11. St. George's Hill Golf Club Limited

Petitions Against Bills deposited on or before 30th January 1989
(Agent: Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.)

1. Brook Street Bureau plc
2. Noel Employment Ltd.
3. Blue Circle Industries plc
4. Northumberland County Council
5. Runnymede Borough Council

Petitions Against Bills deposited on or before 30th January 1990
(Agent: Sharpe, Pritchard & Co.)

1. Exeter City Council
2. Wetherby Limited
3. Associated Newspapers plc
4. Delta, plc, Delta Repetition Components Limited, K. W. B. Controls Limited and Delta Electrical Systems Limited
5. C. I. Property Investments Limited
6. The Trustees of the Army & Navy Club
7. Goddard & Smith
8. County Hall Development Group plc
9. Caphold Limited, O. G. M., Belt Mountains B. V., O. G. M., Elongo Mountains B. V.
10. The Council of the London Borough of Newham
11. The Westminster City Council
12. Shopping Centres Limited
13. Rosehaugh Stanhope Development (Holdings) plc
14. Noel Employment Limited
15. Brook Street Bureau plc
16. Northern Engineering Industries plc
17. Haniel Transport (UK) Limited
18. Birmingham Airports Developments Limited
19. Norwich Union Life Insurance Society
20. The Post Office
21. BIFFA Holdings Limited

Information about the progress of private Bills is readily available in the list of private Bills printed at the end of each Session.

Members' Staff (Overtime)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will make a statement on the backlog of overtime payments to hon. Members' office staff.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is a small backlog of overtime payments caused by many hon. Members giving instructions to increase staff salaries; authorising bonus and other payments and seeking information about their expenditure on office costs consequent upon the recent uplift in the maximum of the office costs allowance. I have been assured that this backlog is being progressed as quickly as possible.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Spongiform Encephalopathies

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any evidence to show that the incubation period of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle is diminishing; what was thought to be the average incubation period for the disease in 1988; and what is thought to be the average incubation period today.

Mr. Maclean: The evidence from the epidemiological data available so far suggests that since BSE was first identified the mean incubation period may have reduced slightly. However, it would be premature to make a definitive statement about the average incubation period and any changes which may have occurred until data about future cases have accumulated.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether there have been any occurrences of spongiform encephalopathies in animals in London zoo; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: A spongiform encephalopathy was confirmed in an Arabian oryx and a greater kudu in London zoo in 1989.

New Forest

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether any restriction is placed on the evisceration of culled deer on New Forest land; and what steps he has taken to restrict the spread of tuberculosis from culled deer.

Mr. Maclean: Surveys since 1971 have shown that the incidence of tuberculosis in wild deer is very low. There are

no restrictions on the evisceration of culled deer, although local authorities have been advised to consider extending meat inspection to venison. Tuberculosis in deer was made notifiable in June 1989, and it is for local authorities to take appropriate action when a suspect infected carcase is notified. A proposal providing for compulsory meat inspection of venison is under consideration in the Community.

The practice in the New Forest is that evisceration of culled deer takes place only in a deer larder, where the carcases are inspected. Suspect carcases are kept separate from other carcases and samples are sent to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's veterinary investigation centre for clinical examination. Carcases which are deemed unfit for human consumption are removed from the forests for final disposal to prevent reinfection of the wild population.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many incidents of tuberculosis in deer have been recorded in the New Forest during the last three years; and whether Forestry Commission officials routinely examine culled deer for such infection.

Mr. Curry: There have been two confirmed cases of tuberculosis in deer in the New Forest in the last three years. All deer carcases for human consumption are examined by Forestry Commission staff for infection.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his current estimate of the deer population of each species of the New Forest; and how many were culled and by what means during the 1989-90 season.

Mr. Curry: The information is as follows:

	Fallow deer	*Sika deer*	*Red deer*	*Roe deer*
Estimated current population	1,300	85	170	360
Total cull 1989-90	640	26	—	6

All the deer culled were shot.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will require the deputy surveyor of the New Forest to reply to the questions submitted to him by Mr. Eric Ashby on 14 and 26 October.

Mr. Curry: The deputy surveyor replied to Mr. Ashby's letter of 14 October on 19 October. His letter of 26 October, received by the deputy surveyor on 30 October, will be replied to soon.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on how many occasions during the present hunting season the programme for each of the New Forest hunts has been changed; and what were the circumstances, in each case.

Mr. Curry: There was only one change during the present season. For their meet on 13 October the New Forest hounds were given permission to extend their ground over part of an adjacent beat because they believed that people opposed to hunting were likely to attempt to draw hounds on to a trunk road, thus causing a nuisance to the general public.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place in the Library copies of the permissions to hunt in respect of those hunts licensed to hunt the New Forest, together with details of any special conditions imposed.

Mr. Curry: These documents were placed in the Library on 15 January 1990 in response to an earlier question from the hon. Member.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the Forestry Commission has received any complaints concerning the use by followers of the New Forest hounds of mountain bikes to cross open heathland on 3, 10 and 17 September; and what action he proposes to enforce commission regulations relating to such use.

Mr. Curry: The Forestry Commission has received complaints about the use of mountain bikes on open land in the New Forest and is considering what action it may be possible to take.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he proposes to take in respect of damage caused by the New Forest hounds to a recorded badger sett in Markway enclosure on 18 December 1989; and whether such action was in breach of the hunting licence.

Mr. Curry: On 16 December the hunt allowed hounds to mark a disused badger sett, in contravention of its authority to hunt, as it had mistaken it for a fox earth. The hunt was penalised by the loss of one day's hunting.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under what circumstances the Forestry Commission agrees to variation in the programme of hunts; how much notice is required of such applications; and what steps are taken to minimise nuisance to the general public resulting from such changes.

Mr. Curry: The Forestry Commission is asked only occasionally to agree to variations in the programme of hunts. Requests are received for a variety of reasons, for example the planned programme might be impossible because of the weather. There is no standard period of notice, although some permissions require a week's notice. The commission takes into account any possible nuisance to the general public before agreeing to changes.

Zoonoses Order

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received to date seeking the repeal of the Zoonoses Order; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Some representations have been received about the Zoonoses Order 1989 in relation to the compulsory slaughter policy for salmonella-infected poultry flocks. The Government measures are clearly reducing potential sources of salmonella infection and I have no plans to repeal this legislation, although it is kept constantly under review.

Rural Housing

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what response he intends to make to the statement published by Housing Choice on 22 October on set-aside land being used for rural housing, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Set-aside is a scheme operated under European Community rules. Those rules, while permitting the use of set-aside land for non-agricultural purposes, require that the set-aside land be kept in good agricultural condition. The farmer must also continue to exercise legal rights of occupation.

Foodstuffs

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list those foodstuffs in which Britain was not self-sufficient in the latest year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the amount of the deficit.

Mr. Curry: Information on production, trade and self-sufficiency for the main basic food commodities produced in the United Kingdom is contained in section 5 of "Agriculture in the United Kingdom": the 1989 edition is available in the Library of the House. The United Kingdom also imports a wide range of tropical and other non-indigenous agricultural products as well as supplies of specialist varieties and out-of-season indigenous type foodstuffs demanded by consumers. Details of trade are contained in the "Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom" available in the Library of the House.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what would be the cost of extending the environmentally sensitive area scheme into the less-favoured areas in each individual national park and area of outstanding natural beauty in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Curry: I regret that it is not possible to provide a reliable estimate of the cost of such extension since the environmentally sensitive areas scheme covers many different farming types with differing environmental objectives which are reflected in the payment levels.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the maximum increase permitted by European Community rules for each grant made under the hill livestock compensatory allowances; and how much it would cost to implement such increases.

Mr. Curry: The maximum headage payment allowed under the European Community regulation governing the payment of hill livestock compensatory allowances will be 102 ecus per livestock unit from 1 January 1991. This converts, at 1991 green rates, to a maximum of £77·33 per cow and £11·60 per ewe. The current headage rates are:

	Severely disadvantaged area £	*Disadvantaged area* £
Cows	54·50	27·25
Hardy breed ewes	7·50	—
Other eligible ewes	4·50	2·25

The cost of increasing all these rates to the maximum possible in the United Kingdom would depend on the extent to which other financial ceilings (for example, the limit per hectare) applied, and this cannot be readily assessed. The total costs without taking account of these other ceilings would be of the order of £98 million a year.

There is provision in the European Community regulation for a higher ceiling (121·2 ecus per livestock unit) in areas where the permanent natural handicaps are serious enough to justify the higher level.

East Germany (Food Imports)

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps will be taken to ensure that all food supplied into the European Community via an eastern Germany entry point has been processed and packed in accordance with existing European Community regulations.

Mr. Curry: Only food products which meet European Community standards are permitted to circulate within the Community. The German authorities are required by Community regulations, which form part of the package of transitional measures on German unification, to ensure that products not complying with Community standards are not placed on the market in the Community except within the territory of the former German Democratic Republic.

Global Climate Change

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what studies have been undertaken or commissioned by his Department since 1985 into the effects of potential patterns of global climate change on United Kingdom agriculture and fisheries.

Mr. Curry: The Department will be spending £121 million on R and D in 1990-91. Much of this research is relevant to the response of agriculture to a changing climate. In 1991-92 my Department expects to spend £1·3 million on agriculture and fisheries projects directly relevant to climate change. Since 1985 relevant R and D topics have included:

The impact of climate change on field drainage.

Methane production by ruminants and its control.

The development of grasses likely to tolerate climate change.

Development of the arable crop model to assess the likely impact of climate change.

The likely impact of climate change on aphid pest incidence.

The effects of CO_2 and aerial gaseous composition on growth and development of horticultural and other crops.

Climate sensitivities of United Kingdom soils with respect

to agricultural production.

The effects of future climatic change on agricultural potential in the United Kindom.

Maintenance and improvement of the quality, reliability and availability of sea level data obtained from the national tide gauge network.

Assemblage, analysis and maintenance of a bank of well documented and verified observations from the principal tide gauges round Great Britain.

Geocentric fixing of tide gauge bench marks and thereby removing the inaccuracies due to land movement.

Devise methods of estimating the effects of climatic variation on waves around the United Kingdom.

Estimation of extreme sea levels due to tides, surges and waves.

The economic impact of sea level rise on the South Coast.

United Kingdom sea level trends in relation to climatic change.

The economic impact of sea level rise.

Climate change in relation to biological oceanography.

Study of CO_2 partial pressure in the ocean surface leading to a fuller understanding of marine controls on atmospheric CO_2.

Continuous plankton recorder for measurement of phytoplankton variations including responses to climate change.

Undulating oceanographic recorder for vertical assessment of phytoplankton variations including responses to climate change.

Variation of fish stock recruitment in response to planetary scale climatic changes.

Salmonella

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the incidence of salmonella typhymurium currently being found in egg-laying flocks and on the rate at the same time last year.

Mr. Maclean: Thirty-three incidents of salmonella typhymurium in laying flocks (including pullets) were reported to the Ministry in the eight-week period ending on 26 October 1990, compared with eight such reports in the corresponding period in 1989. These figures relate to reports under the Zoonoses Orders and may include cases where the presence of salmonella typhymurium was not confirmed following a detailed on-farm investigation. Sixteen pullet and laying flocks infected with salmonella typhymurium have been compulsorily slaughtered in the first nine months of 1990, compared with 24 in 1989 following the introduction of the slaughter policy in April of that year.

Pesticide Residues

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what prosecutions have been instigated by his Department in respect of those suppliers found to be in possession of produce tainted with pesticide residues above the maximum residue limit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The Government have an extensive surveillance monitoring programme. Results for 1988-89 covering over 80,000 pesticide/commodity combinations were published recently. They show that only 2 per cent. of produce contained residues above MRLs (including proposed MRLs) and in every case, action has been taken to avoid recurrence. Details are set out in the report of the working party on pesticide residues published by HMSO on 27 September. The results of enforcement monitoring are appended to this report. A copy is being placed in the Library.

Cattle Records

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he proposes to introduce his new measures to amend cattle breeding and movement records; and if he will make a statement on the responses he has received to his consultation document of 1 June,

Mr. Curry: The Bovine Animals (Identification, Marketing and Breeding Records) Order 1990 (SI 1990/1867) and the Movement of Animals (Records) (Amendment) Order 1990 (SI 1990/1868) came into force on 15 October, following a supportive response to the consultation document.

Hedgerows

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many miles of hedgerows have been removed, and at what cost to the Exchequer, in the northern region for the year 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Sudan

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether DG VI of the European Community has purchased any food from Sudan since July of this year; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Lady to the final paragraph of my answer of 19 October at column *936*. Detailed statistics are not available for the period since July 1990, but I understand that small quantities of similar foodstuffs to those set out in my earlier reply have been purchased by DG VI during the last three months.

THE ARTS

Royal Shakespeare Company

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on future subsidy of the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Barbican.

Mr. Mellor: This is a matter for the Arts Council. I understand that the chairman of the Arts Council is in close touch with the Royal Shakespeare Company about its financial position. I am being kept informed of developments.

Public Lending Rights

Mr. Cormack: To ask the Minister for the Arts by what amounts payments to authors from the public lending rights fund will increase this year; and whether he has any plans to increase the sum allocated to the fund.

Mr. Mellor: The Registrar of Public Lending Right cannot calculate payments to authors for this year until Parliament has approved the necessary rate per loan. The fund currently stands at £3·5 million. My predecessor announced increases of £1 million for 1991-92 and £0·25 million for 1992-93, subject to parliamentary approval.

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will list in the *Official Report* the figures for the number of loans and size of the public lending right funds on which the public lending right registrar has set the rate per loan for eligible loans from public libraries under the public lending right scheme for the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* The figures on which the registrar has based his rate per loan calculations for payments to authors under the public lending right scheme for the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 are as follows:

	Total Loans million	*Fund £ million*
1988-89	624	3·5
1989-90	611	3·5
1990-91	583	3·5

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Minister for the Arts what account is taken of the annual rate of inflation in determining the rate per loan for eligible loans from public libraries under the public lending right scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* The rate per loan is dependent on the size of the public lending right fund and on various factors that are unknown at the time when funding is allocated, including the numbers of eligible books and loans. Government policy has been to make substantial increase in the fund at appropriate intervals rather than attempt to anticipate inflation and the other unknown factors through annual increases. Overall, however, the rate per loan has broadly kept pace with inflation.

Arts Expenditure

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish a table showing the expenditure by the Arts Council of Great Britain, the regional arts associations, the Scottish and Welsh Arts Council and by the Government in Northern Ireland, per capita, in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 31 October 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

	1979-80 £	*1980-81* £	*1981-82* £	*1982-83* £	*1983-84* £	*1984-85* £	*1985-86* £	*1986-87* £	*1987-88* £	*1988-89* £	*1989-90* £
ACGB	1·15	1·30	1·47	1·67	1·77	1·86	1·84	2·46	2·54	2·68	2·76
SAC	1·48	1·65	1·87	2·09	2·32	2·34	2·52	2·65	2·79	3·01	3·09
WAC	1·63	1·80	1·99	2·39	2·33	2·53	2·58	2·76	3·11	2·99	3·07
ACNI	1·05	1·13	1·45	1·67	1·78	1·82	2·06	2·09	2·36	2·44	2·88
England	1·09	1·23	1·40	1·58	1·68	1·76	1·84	2·43	2·48	2·62	2·70
Eastern	0·09	0·10	0·11	0·14	0·15	0·18	0·23	0·24	0·34	0·38	0·40
East Midlands	0·11	0·15	0·19	0·22	0·25	0·28	0·42	0·44	0·47	0·51	0·53
GLA	0·10	0·14	0·18	0·21	0·22	0·23	0·26	1·03	1·18	1·17	1·18
L and H	0·24	0·28	0·33	0·37	0·40	0·42	0·56	0·57	0·64	0·67	0·71
Merseyside	0·18	0·21	0·24	0·27	0·29	0·33	0·37	0·58	0·62	0·63	0·65
Northern	0·35	0·42	0·47	0·55	0·58	0·63	0·68	1·11	1·14	1·15	1·18
North Western	0·12	0·14	0·16	0·18	0·20	0·22	0·32	0·40	0·42	0·46	0·47
Southern	0·12	0·14	0·16	0·20	0·21	0·22	0·26	0·27	0·29	0·36	0·38
South Eastern	0·10	0·12	0·14	0·17	0·18	0·20	0·34	0·37	0·40	0·43	0·45
South Western	0·15	0·18	0·20	0·25	0·25	0·27	0·34	0·34	0·43	0·47	0·49
West Midlands	0·13	0·15	0·17	0·20	0·21	0·24	0·30	0·37	0·44	0·47	0·49
Yorkshire	0·11	0·13	0·14	0·18	0·18	0·21	0·33	0·49	0·51	0·53	0·57

I have consulted my hon. Friend who has responsibility for funding the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and he has supplied the information on Northern Ireland.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Taxation

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish figures showing, for 1978-79 and for 1990-91, the percentage of gross income taken in taxes, including indirect taxes and the community charge, for each decile group of households ranked by original income, giving the best available estimates.

Mr. Maude: Information on which to base estimates will not be available until the 1990 and 1991 family expenditure survey data have been collected and processed.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will estimate what increase would have to be made in the standard rate of tax if the whole of the community charge and commercial rates in the year 1990 were transferred to income tax; and whether he will set out the basis for such calculations.

Mr. Maude: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update his reply to the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) on 12 June, *Official Report*, column *152*, on the standard rate of tax and the community charge; and whether he will set out the basis for his calculation.

Mr. Maude: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Balance of Payments

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the respective balances of payments between Britain and its European Community partners during 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information on the balance of payments with the European Community is available on an annual basis in the CSO Pink Book. The latest available data are in section 10—pages 6 to 71—of the 1990 edition which is available in the Library. Information on visible trade, on an overseas trade statistics basis, between Britain and individual member states is published in the monthly review of external trade statistics which may also be accessed in the Library.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Soley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the additional average relief receivable by those people with incomes of *(a)* up to £5,000 a year, *(b)* between £5,000 and £10,000 a year, *(c)* between £10,000 and £15,000 a year, *(d)* between £15,000 and £20,000 a year, *(e)* between £20,000 and £25,000 a year, *(f)* between £25,000 and £30,000 a year and *(g)* over £30,000 a year if the ceiling on mortgage interest tax relief were to be raised to (i) £35,000, (ii) £40,000, (iii) £45,000 and (iv) £50,000; and how many beneficiaries there would be in each income band assuming (x) that relief would continue to be available at the higher marginal tax rate where applicable and (y) the relief was restricted to the standard 25 per cent. rate of income tax.

Mr. Maude: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Petroleum Products

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his answer of 29 October to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, *Official Report*, column *365*, if he will provide equivalent figures on value added tax for each quarter of 1987 and 1988 and the first two quarters of 1989.

Mr. Ryder: Estimates of value added tax accruing on private consumption of petroleum products for the periods in question are as follows:

	£ million
1987	
Quarter 1	230
Quarter 2	260
Quarter 3	260
Quarter 4	260
1988	
Quarter 1	250
Quarter 2	270
Quarter 3	280
Quarter 4	270
1989	
Quarter 1	270
Quarter 2	310

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his answer of 29 October to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras, *Official Report*, column *365*, when he expects to be able to publish an equivalent estimate of value added tax for the third quarter of 1990.

Mr. Ryder: It is expected that an estimate of value added tax accruing on private consumption of petroleum products will be available early in January.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Ryder: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Tax Forms

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which month are personal tax forms normally posted to individuals by the Inland Revenue; and whether this practice has varied at any time since 1970.

Mr. Maude: The Inland Revenue makes its annual issue of tax returns to individuals in April, and always has done; there has been no variation since 1970.

Theatre Tickets

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is now prepared to remove theatre tickets from liability to value added tax.

Mr. Ryder: I have no plans to alter the arrangements for taxation of theatre tickets.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the cash value and percentage amounts of annual public expenditure in each of the last three years which have been allocated to *(a)* housing and *(b)* roads in Great Britain.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Relocation

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what organisations and sections within his Department presently being housed in London are being considered for dispersal to provincial areas.

Mr. Ryder: The location of Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) London-based staff is under review; the rest of the CCTA is already located in Norwich.

ENERGY

Electricity Prices

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has to reconsider the retail prices index component in the annual price increase allocated to the electricity distribution companies.

Mr. Baldry: None.

Nuclear Safeguards

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas), *Official Report*, 22 October, column *14*, he will place in the Library a copy of the statement made by the United Kingdom delegation in support of nuclear safeguards at the annual International Atomic Energy Agency conference.

Mr. Baldry: I am arranging for copies of the relevant statement made by the head of the United Kingdom delegation at the 1990 IAEA general conference to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Geothermal Power Research

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the future of geothermal power research sponsored by his Department.

Mr. Moynihan: The results of a review of the Department's geothermal hot dry rock research programme are currently being considered. I hope that a decision on the future of the programme will be announced in the next month or so.

Nuclear Reactors (Indonesia)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that the supply of nuclear reactors to Indonesia would not lead to the development of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Wakeham: Indonesia is a party to the non-proliferation treaty. Any export of nuclear materials, equipment or technology would have to be fully consistent with our obligations under that treaty.

Privatisation Advisers

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy which of the firms which have advised or are advising his Department or himself on electricity privatisation have been criticised by Department of Trade and Industry inspectors appointed under the Companies Acts since 1979.

Mr. Wakeham: Further to the answer that I gave to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 25 October 1990 at column *272*, the following additional firms have been criticised in reports by the inspectors:

Firm	*Date of report*	*Involving*
Kleinwort Benson	7 March 1990	House of Fraser Holdings PLC
James Capel	6 September 1989	Consolidated Gold Fields PLC

Gas Turbine Power Stations

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the number of gas turbine power stations now under construction and the number planned.

Mr. Baldry: The timing of the construction of any new gas turbine power station is a matter for the company concerned.

My right hon. Friend has granted his consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the construction and operation of the following gas turbine stations:

Killingholme "PowerGen", Humberside.	PowerGen plc
Killingholme "A", Humberside.	National Power plc

In addition, my Department is aware of four other new gas turbine stations where the necessary permissions were obtained from local planning authorities under town and country planning legislation before section 36 came into effect.

My right hon. Friend is currently considering applications for his consent under section 36 to construct and operate the following gas turbine stations:

Little Barford, Bedfordshire.	National Power plc
Rye House, Hertfordshire.	PowerGen plc
Wilton, Cleveland.	Teesside Power Co. Ltd.
Shotton, Clwyd.	Deeside Power Development Co. Ltd.
Keadby, Humberside.	Energy Resources Ltd.
Plymouth, Devon.	PowerGen plc
Staythorpe "C", Nottinghamshire.	National Power plc
Rugby, Warwickshire.	Rugby Power Co. Ltd.

He has also been notified under regulation 6 of the Electricity and Pipe-line Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1990 of the intention by Texaco Ltd. to apply for consent under section 36 to construct and operate a gas turbine station at Pembroke, Dyfed and from Coryton Cogen Ltd. to construct and operate one at Coryton, Essex.

My Department has also been advised, in confidence, of several other proposals for new gas turbine generating stations. It will be for the companies concerned to decide when to make public details of these proposals.

AGR Refuelling

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of refuelling is currently being achieved on load by each Nuclear Electric advanced gas-cooled reactor.

Mr. Wakeham: This is an operational matter for Nuclear Electric.

Electricity Distribution Companies

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what valuation his advisers have placed on each of the electricity distribution companies, including their share of the National Grid Company.

Mr. Wakeham: The value of the regional electricity companies will depend on a wide range of factors including each company's share of National Grid Holdings plc and on market conditions at the time of sale. Details of the capital structures, future prospects as well as profit and dividend forecasts for each company will be included in the prospectus.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the estimated profits and dividends, respectively, of each of the electricity distribution companies.

Mr. Wakeham: Details of the capital structures, future prospects as well as profit and dividend forecasts for each company will be included in the prospectus.

National Power and PowerGen

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy on what date he agreed the debt to be borne by National Power and PowerGen.

Mr. Wakeham: Agreement on the amount of debt to be issued by PowerGen and National Power on flotation was reached in August and September 1990 respectively.

Vibration White Finger

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the anticipated number of ex-employees and employees of British Coal, by region, who are suffering from vibration white finger; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: This is a matter for the British Coal Corporation.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Wakeham: The Department's general objective is to answer letters from hon. Members within three weeks of receipt. The specific information requested by the hon. Member could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Privatisation Vetting Committee

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy for what reasons the privatisation vetting committee told the chairman of Eastern Electricity that he should not address the Energy Industries Club on Thursday 25 October.

Mr. Wakeham: The decision not to address the Energy Industries Club was taken by the chairman, Dr. James Smith and no advice was sought or issued from a committee.

North Sea Gas

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the latest calculations of gas reserves in the North sea.

Mr. Moynihan: The latest estimate of remaining gas reserves on the United Kingdom continental shelf is given in the latest edition of the publication "Development of the Oil and Gas Resources of the United Kingdom" [the Brown Book] which my right hon. Friend presented to Parliament on 30 April 1990.

Plutonium

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will set out, in regard to departmental news release number 195 concerning annual civil plutonium figures, the specific quantities of plutonium exported to Austria, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and France, respectively, as mentioned in footnote 4(a); if he will list the safeguard agreements covering this exported plutonium; and what amounts of plutonium were involved per annum sent temporarily to France as mentioned in footnote 4(b,ii).

Mr. Baldry: Quantities of exports of civil plutonium to individual countries cannot be disclosed on the grounds of commercial confidentiality. Each country listed has a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency; the texts are in IAEA INFCIRCs 156 (Austria/IAEA), 193 (Euratom/Non Nuclear Weapon States/IAEA) and 290 (France/Euratom/IAEA) respectively.

Combined Heat and Power

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement concerning Her Majesty's Government's interest in promoting combined heat and power plants.

Mr. Baldry: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Oil Companies (Gifts)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his answer of 15 October, *Official Report*, column *681*, concerning entertainment or gifts offered by oil companies, (1) whether he will publish the names of the oil companies that made the five gifts, the ranks and duties of the officials to whom the gifts were made, the nature of the gift and the reason for accepting it and whether the gifts were handed over to establishment division for disposal;

(2) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table, showing for each of the oil companies the number of invitations made and the number accepted in 1989, together with a breakdown into such categories of entertainment as are distinguished in the records maintained.

Mr. Moynihan: As the answer given on 15 October at column *681* made clear, there are specific rules laid down for the acceptance of gifts and entertainment by civil servants.

I am satisfied that these procedures have been followed.

WALES

House Building

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many new houses were started by Welsh local authorities in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Grist: In 1989, a total of 501 new dealings were started by local authorities.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what resources he intends to allocate to Welsh district councils for new house building.

Mr. Grist: It is too early to say what resources will be available next year. However, it is a matter for each local authority to determine its own housing priorities within the resources available to it taking account of local needs and securing value for money.

Tai Cymru

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he intends to appoint to the board of Tai Cymru any representatives of Welsh local authorities.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has no plans at this stage to appoint any new members to the board of Tai Cymru.

Further and Higher Education

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of those persons aged 16 years have continued in full-time education in Wales on a county-by-county basis.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The information in respect of persons aged 16 years continuing in full-time education as a percentage of the total population aged 16 in 1989-90 is given in the table:

Numbers attending schools[1] and Colleges of Further Education as a percentage of total population aged 16

	Percentage
Clwyd	54·3
Dyfed	57·9
Gwent	55·6
Gwynedd	51·9
Mid Glamorgan	54·5
Powys	60·7
South Glamorgan	51·5
West Glamorgan	58·8

[1] Includes maintained secondary and special schools and independent schools.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will show the public expenditure in Wales on *(a)* agriculture, fisheries and food, *(b)* trade and industry, *(c)* employment, *(d)* health, *(e)* educational grants and *(f)* the administration of justice for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. David Hunt: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Housing (Waiting Lists)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are on local authority housing waiting lists in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The information is not collected centrally.

Denominational Education

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he intends to continue supporting denominational education in Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: I will continue my support for denominational education in Wales as part of the Government's overall policy for choice in education.

Welsh Language

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what extra resources he intends to make available for the compulsory teaching of Welsh, particularly in non-native Welsh-speaking areas such as Gwent.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Grants for in-service training of teachers in Welsh was increased from £223,000 in the financial year 1989-90 to £1 million in 1990-91. This will be further increased to £1·64 million in 1991-92. Additionally, £0·5 million is available through the grants for education support and training scheme for the appointment of specialist training advisers in each LEA and the Welsh Joint Education Committee. Areas such as Gwent will also benefit from other initiatives, supported by Welsh Office funding, to develop teaching materials for pupils studying Welsh as a second language and the award of financial incentives to student teachers.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what effect he expects the requirement of the national curriculum in Wales for the compulsory teaching of Welsh to GCSE level to have on the teaching of modern languages.

Sir Wyn Roberts: The national curriculum in Wales includes both Welsh and a modern foreign language. This will increase the number of pupils who study a modern foreign language. It is not intended that pupils should be required to study Welsh to GCSE level: there is the alternative for 14 to 16-year-olds of a more limited programme of study taking up about half the time of a GCSE course.

The Welsh Office has been consulting education interests in Wales about the structure of key stage 4 of the national curriculum, including the possibility of greater flexibility and choice. A copy of the consultation letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Inside Lavatories

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many houses in Wales are without inside lavatories.

Mr. Grist: In 1986, a total of 20,800 dwellings in Wales lacked a WC inside the dwelling.

Teachers

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the latest information he has about the number of teachers in secondary schools who are teaching subjects for which they have *(a)* no degree qualification, *(b)* no A-level qualification and *(c)* no O-level qualification.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Information is not available in the form requested. Information is not centrally available on the A and O-level qualifications of teachers.

A secondary school staffing survey was conducted in Wales in February 1989 and the results published in the "Welsh Education Statistics Bulletin No. 7", in July 1990. A copy is available in the House of Commons Library. A summary of tables 5.9, 6.5 and 6.6 of that bulletin is given in the following table:

Periods taught classified by teachers' qualifications

	The percentage of periods where the subject taught was:								
	The main subject of the teacher's					*A subsidiary subject of the teacher's qualification*	*The teacher had a qualification in a related subject*	*None of these*	*Total*[1]
	Degree or higher degree	*BEd.*	*PGCE*	*Certificate of Education*	*Other post A-level qualification*				
All periods[2] (Table 5.9)	32·1	7·5	5·6	16·2	1·9	8·9	8·9	19·0	100·0
Periods[3] for GCSE tuition (Table 6.5)	39·2	8·1	6·6	15·1	2·3	8·5	6·9	13·2	100·0
Periods[3] for A-level tuition (Table 6.6)	63·4	5·7	8·7	6·2	1·5	5·5	3·0	6·0	100·0

[1] Rows will not necessarily sum to 100·0 due to rounding errors.
[2] Periods taught by all teachers.
[3] Periods taught by full-time teachers.

Source: 1989 Secondary School Staffing Survey.

Roads

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proposals he has to improve road links between north and south Wales.

Sir Wyn Roberts: Our proposals for selective improvements are clearly set out in "Roads in Wales: Progress and Plans for the 1990s".

Mental Illness Hospitals

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the trend in admissions for mental illness hospitals and units in the last decade in the age groups for which statistics are kept.

Mr. Grist: Information on the number of admissions to mental illness hospitals and units in Wales for 1979 to 1988 is given in the table. Information for 1989 is not yet available.

Analysis of all admissions (including readmissions) to mental illness units and hospitals in Wales

Year	*Age* 0-4	5-9	10-15	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	*Not known*	*Total*
1979	1	19	90	308	614	1,787	1,675	1,724	1,784	1,661	1,155	1	11,219
1980	0	7	98	318	666	1,879	1,941	1,726	1,875	1,675	1,657	3	11,845
1981	0	7	84	313	741	1,942	1,985	1,682	1,743	1,817	1,758	0	12,072
1982	11	11	81	275	691	1,844	1,864	1,711	1,755	1,779	1,942	1	11,965
1983	7	18	100	240	710	1,881	2,011	1,796	1,916	1,892	2,182	1	12,754
1984	3	16	92	254	729	1,712	1,977	1,629	2,034	1,933	2,734	1	13,114
1985	1	9	86	285	779	1,800	2,141	1,730	2,155	2,179	3,055	1	14,221
1986	23	7	86	290	811	1,825	2,166	1,609	1,868	2,039	3,076	20	13,820
1987	13	4	73	258	815	1,862	2,107	1,547	1,793	2,017	3,166	2	13,567
1988	11	2	71	311	800	1,878	2,059	1,602	1,674	2,148	3,290	6	13,852

Prescription Charges

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his reply of 1 December 1989, *Official Report*, column *449*, if, on the same basis, he will publish how much money was raised in 1988-89 in prescription charges in Wales; and to what specific purpose this money, credited to class XVII, vote 7, was put.

Mr. Grist: Prescription charges, including receipts from the sale of pre-payment certificates, raised £10·7 million in Wales in 1988-89. This amount, along with other national health service charges, was used to offset the cost of the NHS.

Medical Research

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether, pursuant to his reply of 8 May, *Official Report*, column *58*, the review of the arrangements for managing and funding medical research in Wales parallel

with developments in England, identified in the White Paper "Priorities in Medical Research", has been completed; and whether the danger he identified of separate development resulting in duplication or wastage of effort has been avoided.

Mr. Grist: The review has yet to be completed. I am confident that unnecessary duplication and wastage of effort will be avoided.

Disability Relief

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in each district council area in Wales received disability relief on their rates bill in 1988-89; what was the average amount of relief per property given in each district; and what is his estimate of the number of households previously receiving disability rate relief which are *(a)* better off and *(b)* worse off with the poll tax.

Mr. Grist: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mental Handicap Hospitals

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the trend in admissions to mental handicap hospitals and institutions in the last decade in the age groups for which statistics are kept.

Mr. Grist: Information on the number of admissions to mental handicap hospitals and units in Wales for 1979 to 1988 is given in the table. Information for 1989 is not yet available.

Analysis of all admissions (including readmissions) to mental handicap hospitals and units in Wales

Year	*0-4*	*5-9*	*10-15*	*16-19*	*20-24*	*25-34*	*35-44*	*45-54*	*55-64*	*65-74*	*75+*	*Not known*	*Total*
1979	35	184	355	253	163	213	115	80	73	22	12	0	1,505
1980	57	202	434	271	183	186	128	81	88	18	5	1	1,654
1981	63	204	427	342	226	233	123	79	67	13	4	1	1,782
1982	20	201	464	312	301	296	112	85	52	28	7	0	1,878
1983	49	164	410	265	362	394	126	133	50	22	6	1	1,982
1984	22	153	336	278	443	392	154	119	46	43	6	0	1,992
1985	40	159	334	330	462	365	173	96	44	40	16	0	2,059
1986	35	122	251	384	372	325	193	152	61	35	28	0	1,958
1987	7	52	185	262	306	371	194	127	37	33	58	0	1,632
1988	7	23	170	185	342	350	239	109	45	34	70	0	1,574

Rookwood Hospital

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many handicapped children are treated annually at Rookwood hospital with therapeutic care; and how many need therapeutic care for spine and hip deformities;

(2) what is the current staffing of the custom-built special seats section at Rookwood hospital; what was the annual budget of the custom-built special seats section; and if he will give more cash and more staffing to the special seats section;

(3) what is the size of the waiting list of Rookwood hospital concerning children needing therapeutic care and equipment from the rehabilitation engineering section.

Mr. Grist: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give for 1978, 1979, 1988 and 1989 for Paisley social security office the number of *(a)* claimants and *(b)* dependents on (i) supplementary benefit or income support and (ii) family income support or family credit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information is as follows:

	1978	*1979*	*1988*	*1989*
Number of claimants receiving Supplementary Benefit/Income Support	[1]11,705	[1]11,717	[1]15,274	[1]15,207
Number of families receiving Family Income Supplement/Family Credit	n/a	n/a	n/a	[2]1,074

Information about the number of dependants is not available.

Notes:

(1) November count of 100 per cent. of cases in action which include a number where payment has ceased but other action was continuing.

(2) Number of families receiving family credit on 24 November 1989 who at the time their award was made were living in the area covered by Paisley social security office.

n/a = Not available.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security for each region and for Great Britain as a whole how many income support and unemployment benefit claimants have (i) successfully and (ii) unsuccessfully claimed income support, under the hardship rules in each month since March 1990, showing those whose claim was in doubt due to *(a)* actively seeking work and *(b)* availability for work.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The statistics kept are given in the tables. The remainder of the information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Income Support MR255			March 1990	April 1990	May 1990	June 1990	July 1990	August 1990	September 1990
London South Region									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	24	13	19	16	16	12	21
		Number of awards refused	7	4	2	1	3	1	2
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	10	10	7	7	11	10	1
		Number of awards refused	2	15	3	4	1	0	1
London North Region									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	78	39	65	62	67	29	33
		Number of awards refused	17	3	11	9	8	10	9
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	27	15	11	23	10	8	14
		Number of awards refused	4	5	3	2	3	4	10
Midlands Region									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	10	13	24	17	9	8	10
		Number of awards refused	7	9	22	7	8	11	6
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	3	3	3	9	8	2	2
		Number of awards refused	3	0	7	2	0	3	1
Wales and South West Region									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	29	41	42	53	52	22	29
		Number of awards refused	20	16	15	32	13	33	16
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	18	8	7	13	8	6	9
		Number of awards refused	8	4	6	9	3	1	4
North East Region									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	27	37	31	37	13	21	10
		Number of awards refused	8	18	10	14	16	12	17
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	11	5	10	7	10	10	2
		Number of awards refused	0	1	9	4	2	1	1
North West Region									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	25	20	17	21	28	46	37
		Number of awards refused	10	8	8	12	51	54	56
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	3	3	4	3	2	8	4
		Number of awards refused	3	4	0	3	3	7	5
Scotland									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	30	13	14	20	15	36	16
		Number of awards refused	12	4	17	4	10	21	7
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	14	1	6	4	4	5	1
		Number of awards refused	1	3	6	4	3	0	2
National									
Availability	Hardship claims under REG B(3)	Number of awards made	223	176	212	226	200	174	156
		Number of awards refused	81	62	85	79	109	142	113
Actively seeking work	Hardship claims under REG 10A(2)	Number of awards made	86	45	48	66	53	49	33
		Number of awards refused	21	32	34	28	15	16	24

Retirement Pension

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of people currently retiring will receive more than the basic rate by way of retirement pension.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The precise information requested is not available. However, during the six-month period ending 31 March 1989, 57 per cent. of those awarded basic retirement pension received an additional pension from the state earnings-related pension scheme. Many pensioners also received a small award from the earlier graduated retirement pension scheme. In addition, the latest figures available—for 1987—show that 73 per cent. of all recently retired pensioners receive additional income from occupational pensions.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the number of state retirement pensioners in Easington in each of the last five years.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: This information is not available.

Community Charge Benefit

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the community charge benefit case load, as at 30 September, for the Doncaster standard region.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The 31 August 1990 quarterly count of community charge benefit claims in local authorities is not yet available. However, the number of community charge benefit claims as at 31 May 1990 for the Doncaster standard region was 660,000—couples count as

one. The May 1990 data reflect a time when local authorities in England and Wales were coping with the introduction of the community charge scheme and were faced with large numbers of unprocessed claims. The May 1990 figure of 660,000 is, therefore, likely to understate the true position.

Source: Housing Benefit and Community Charge Benefit Management Information System.

Earnings Disregards

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the earnings disregards which currently apply to unemployed people in receipt of income support, formerly supplementary benefit; when and by how much they have been increased since 1979; and what they would be worth today if *(a)* they had been annually increased since 1979 in line with inflation, and *(b)* they had been annually increased since 1979 in line with average earnings; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is in the tables.

Weekly earnings disregards applying to unemployed people receiving Income Support:

Couples aged under 60 years who have been continuously in receipt of Income Support for 2 years or more £15.

Single people and couples receiving (or with underlying title to) the disability premium, and lone parents £15.

All other single people and couples £5 each person.

Levels of earnings disregarded under the Supplementary Benefit scheme since 1979:

	1979 £	*November 1980* £
People required to register for employment	2	4
People not required to register for employment	4	4
Lone Parents	6	[1]12

[1]Maximum—£4 plus half the amount of any earnings between £4 and £20.

November 1979 earnings disregards revalued in line with *(a)* the RPI and *(b)* the average earnings index (whole economy):

November 1979 £	*(a) RPI* £	*April 1990 (b) Average earnings* £
2	4·15	5·10
4	8·31	10·21
6	12·46	15·31

Kuwait Invasion

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if any increase is planned in the resources available to the social fund to allow for the unpredictable extra expenditure incurred in helping people who have returned to the United Kingdom from Iraq and Kuwait since the invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Scott: All such expenditure is being recorded and monitored. At this stage it is not thought that extra resources will be required, but close monitoring will continue.

Income Support

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many requests for attachment to income support in connection with non-payment of the community charge have been made by each regional and island council in Scotland; and how many requests for attachments for outstanding community charge debts have been refused because there were too many existing attachments.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No records are maintained in local offices of the number of applications made by individual local authorities for deductions from income support to clear community charge arrears. No information is available on the reason for refusal of requests for deductions from income support.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many income support claimants are still receiving transitional protection and have not had a benefit increase since 1987; how many of these are people with disabilities; and how many are pensioners.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Shortly after last April's uprating benefits, the number of income support claimants receiving statutory transitional additions was about 110,000. About 86,000 of these were receiving a total benefit income at their old supplementary benefit level, of whom around 19,000 claimants were in receipt of the pensioner premium and some 7,000 were disabled people aged under 60.

Special transitional additions for people with former high supplementary benefit additions for domestic assistance are uprated every year. Older and disabled pensioners on income support received a cash increase last October, through improvements to the pensioner premiums which did not erode transitional protection. In addition, increases in mobility allowance and attendance allowance are normally disregarded. As a result of these measures, about 24,000 of the claimants still on transitional protection have received some increase in their total benefit income.

Industrial Injuries

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he intends to recommend changes to regulation 25(2) of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985 (SI No. 967) in view of the Court of Appeal decision in the case of McKiernon *v.* the Secretary of State for Social Security in 1989 affecting claims for industrial deafness which are more than five years old; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: No. The legality of regulation 25 of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985 has been put beyond doubt by the provisions in paragraph 4(3) of schedule 6 to the Social Security Act 1990.

Social Fund

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list for each social security office in Newham the number of social fund applications *(a)* submitted and *(b)* rejected on grounds of insufficient priority since 5 April in each of the categories (i) grants, (ii) budget loans and (iii) crisis loans.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list the number of social fund applications submitted, accepted or rejected over the last two years at the Seaham and Peterlee offices.

Mr. Scott: Details of applications processed and awards made can be obtained from information placed in the Library.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what percentage of households claiming income support are repaying social fund loans by deductions from their benefit payments.

Mr. Scott *[pursuant to his reply, 24 October 1990, c. 226]:* I regret that information used to calculate the percentage of income support recipients repaying social fund loans was misinterpreted. Currently 10 per cent. of income support recipients are repaying social fund loans.

Social Security Appeals

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many appeals were made to the social security tribunal in 1989 and in the quarters of 1990 for which figures are available; and what is the average time appellants have had to wait for a decision in the specified periods in each standard planning region of the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In 1989 there were 161,294 new appeals lodged with the social security appeal tribunals. I regret that similar details for the first quarter of 1990 are not yet available.

The figures show, for each of the social security regions, the average time from the date of lodgement of an appeal to the date of the tribunal hearing for the year ending 31 December 1989.

Social Security Appeal Tribunals in year ended 31 December 1989
Average number of weeks from lodgement to hearing

Region	*Number*
Great Britain	25·4
North Eastern	22·8
London North	24·0
London South	27·2
Midlands	25·2
North Western	29·1
Scotland	28·4
Wales and South Western	19·0

The figures do not include any time taken between the date of the appeal hearing and the eventual promulgation of the tribunal's decision. Responsibility for this action lies with the president of the social security and medical appeal tribunals and he has advised that a recent survey produced the following results.

Number of weeks from date of hearing to issue of decision

Region	*Number*
North Eastern	3
London North	2-3
London South	3-4
Midlands	2-3
North Western	[1]10
Scotland	2-3
Wales and South Western	2-3

[1]Days-2.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many disabled children between the ages of five and 14 years are receiving mobility allowance.

Mr. Scott: There are 18,167 such children receiving mobility allowance.

Nursing and Residential Homes, Easington

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many residents in private nursing and residential homes in the Easington constituency have been discharged because they cannot afford the charges for such accommodation.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: This information is not available.

Disablement Benefit Gratuities

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by Department of Social Security office in Scotland, the number of disablement benefit gratuities paid under regulation 13 of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries and Diseases) Miscellaneous Provisions 1986.

Mr. Scott: The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Polygamous Marriages

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many pensioners in *(a)* London and *(b)* the United Kingdom have had the entitlement of their first wife to a retirement pension refused because they have entered into a second, polygamous, marriage.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is not available.

Disabled People

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will take steps to monitor the impact of the community charge on disabled people.

Mr. Scott: This is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Child Support

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures for each year since 1974-75 showing Government support for families with children, at constant April 1990 prices and in the form of indices 1974-75 = 100, and distinguishing between *(a)* all families with children, family allowance/child benefit, child tax allowances, non-contributory maternity benefits, *(b)* two-parent families, family income supplement/family credit, supplementary benefit/income support, rent and rate rebates/housing benefit, community charge benefit and *(c)* lone-parent families, one-parent benefit, additional personal allowance, family income supplement/family credit, supplementary benefit/income support, rent and rate rebates/housing benefit and community charge benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 June 1990]*: The information is not available in the form requested but the table sets out such information as is available.

Figures are as defined in the public expenditure White Papers: that is, they include child benefit, one-parent benefit, family income supplement/family credit, maternity benefits and statutory maternity pay, and supplementary benefit/income support and housing benefit payments to one-parent families. They have been supplemented by estimates of the cost of child tax allowances and additional tax allowances for lone parents in the relevant years.

All benefits/tax allowances

Year	*At 1990-91 prices (£ million)*	*Indexed (1974-75 = 100)*
1974-75	8,411	100
1975-76	7,732	92
1976-77	8,616	102
1977-78	7,032	84
1978-79	7,711	92
1979-80	7,919	94
1980-81	7,330	87
1981-82	7,941	94
1982-83	8,485	101
1983-84	9,228	110
1984-85	9,275	110
1985-86	9,517	113
1986-87	9,757	116
1987-88	10,104	120
1988-89	9,971	119
1989-90	10,000	119
1990-91	10,177	121

Places of Entertainment (Access)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he is taking to ensure that blind people and wheelchair users are not refused access to places of entertainment.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I have been asked to reply and will write to my hon. Friend.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Developing Countries

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's response to the proposal of the Italian Foreign Minister that European Community members spend 1 per cent. of gross domestic product annually to support developing countries.

Mrs. Chalker: The Italian Foreign Minister suggested in July 1990 that 1 per cent. of GDP be spent on economic assistance, with one quarter of it going to eastern Europe, one quarter to the Mediterranean countries and one half to the developing countries in general. He has not pursued the idea further with the British Government.

Pergau Hydro-electric Project

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Overseas Development Administration examined a feasibility study of the Pergau hydro-electric project carried out by consultants from Snowy Mountains Co. before offering aid for the project; and what other feasibility studies and appraisal reports were examined before the decision to offer aid was made.

Mrs. Chalker: The Overseas Development Administration considered a feasibility study of this project carried out by the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation and mounted its own appraisal mission before making an aid offer.

Malaysia

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any British aid has been given or offered for road building projects in Malaysia; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: In 1989 the Government offered to finance a study of a proposed road building project connecting the Genting Highlands, Frasers Hill and the Cameron Highlands. This offer is still under discussion with the Malaysian authorities. Apart from this offer we have not provided or offered aid for road building projects in Malaysia in recent years.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any British aid has been given or offered for gas turbine projects in Malaysia in 1989 or 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The Government have recently offered £23·485 million from the aid and trade provision to finance waste heat recovery units for the gas turbines at the Connaught Bridge power station. These units will increase fuel efficiency by an estimated 50 per cent. Apart from that commitment, we have not provided or offered aid for gas turbine projects in Malaysia in 1989 or 1990.

Civil Service Pensioners

Mr. Stanbrook: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if arrangements have been made with the Government of Hong Kong for those of their pensioners who are or were expatriate members of the overseas civil service to receive credit for war service in their pensions.

Mrs. Chalker: The Hong Kong Government are still actively considering whether to include credit for war service in the calculation of pensions for those of their staff who are, or were, members of Her Majesty's overseas civil service. We were told last month that they hope to complete their deliberations by the end of this year. I will inform my hon. Friend when a decision has been made.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Licensed Teachers

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of those individuals granted a licensed teacher award on 30 September have qualifications gained overseas.

Mr. Fallon: A total of 230 licences to teach had been granted up to 30 September 1990 of which 117 licensed teachers hold qualifications gained overseas.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications for the granting of a licence under the licensed teacher scheme had been received and granted by his Department on 30 June and 30 September respectively.

Mr. Fallon: Up to 30 June 1990 a total of 68 applications for a licence to teach had been received by the Department all of which were accepted and licences to teach were granted. From 1 July 1990 to 30 September a further 164 applications were received, of which 162 were accepted and licences to teach were granted.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what qualifications are held by those individuals granted a licensed teacher award on 30 September.

Mr. Fallon: The information is not available in the form requested.

Between 1 September 1989 and 30 September 1990, 230 licences to teach were granted, of which 187 of those licensed teachers are graduates.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of those individuals who have been granted the award of licensed teacher since September 1989 have an existing qualification in the secondary shortage subjects of mathematics, physics, computer and design technology and modern languages.

Mr. Fallon: The information requested is not readily available centrally.

Local Management of Schools

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the average percentage of their budget distributed by shire counties for local management of schools and what is the figure for Cumbria; what is the overall education budget for Cumbria education authority; and how many schools in Cumbria are participating in local management of schools.

Mr. Fallon: The average share of the potential schools budget distributed to schools by shire counties is 77·4 per cent.; Cumbria local education authority distributes 71·2 per cent. The general schools budget of Cumbria local education authority is £149 million. All Cumbria's 361 primary and secondary schools will have control of their own budgets by April 1992.

Polytechnics

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the bid prices for student numbers in each programme area from each polytechnic together with the relevant Her Majesty's inspectorate's quality assessment.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not held by the Department but by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council. The PCFC makes it own judgments as to what information about its recurrent funding decisions should be made generally available, and what information should more appropriately remain confidential between the council and individual institutions.

Higher Education Corporations

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many academic and research staff, both full time and part time, are employed in each of the higher education corporations in the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council sector;

(2) how many academic and research staff in each of the higher education corporations are funded from sources other than the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not currently available, but will be collected by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council's new staff record to be introduced for the 1991-92 academic year.

Doncaster LEA

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list by school for the Doncaster local education authority *(a)* the number of teacher vacancies and *(b)* the subjects or speciality.

Mr. Fallon: Information on teacher vacancies by school is not held by the Department.

For Doncaster local education authority as a whole:

(a) There were 21 teacher vacancies on 18 January 1990, giving a vacancy rate of 0·8 per cent.

(b) Of these 21 vacancies, 11 were in primary schools and 10 in secondary schools. Secondary subjects with recorded vacancies were mathematics, modern languages, art, music and physical education.

Secondary School Teachers

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the latest information he has about the number of teachers in secondary schools who are teaching subjects for which they have *(a)* no degree qualification, *(b)* no A-level qualification and *(c)* no O-level qualification.

Mr. Fallon: In 1988 the proportion of tuition in maintained secondary schools in England provided by teachers who did not have a post A-level qualification in the subject taught or in a closely related one was 20 per cent. The proportion of tuition provided by teachers for whom the subject taught was not the main subject of a degree was 61 per cent. This information is taken from the 1988 secondary school staffing survey, copies of which are available in the Library.

No information is available on the A and O-level qualifications of secondary teachers.

Physical Education

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to make physical education and games a compulsory part of the national curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fallon: Physical education, which includes games, will be a compulsory part of the curriculum in all maintained schools under the requirements of the national curriculum.

Adult Education

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) on 12 July, *Official Report*, column *313*, if he is now in a position to announce his decision on the future of REPLAN.

Mr. Alan Howarth: It remains my right hon. Friend's hope that a decision will be announced later this autumn.

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether city technology colleges are subject to the same regulations as local education authority schools so far as requesting the submission of tenders is concerned;

(2) if he will list the rules governing the tendering procedures of city technology colleges;

(3) whether city technology colleges are subject to the European Community regulations so far as requesting submission of tenders is concerned.

Mr. Fallon: There are no specific regulations governing tenders for school buildings. The Department does however recommend that competitive tenders should be invited from a number of approved contractors. Where other methods are chosen, the Department seeks assurance that these represent good value for money. The same considerations apply to the tender process for city technology colleges, which, while subject to European Community regulations, are not governed by specific rules. In each project, the tender method used has been subject to scrutiny by the Department to ensure that effective competition has been obtained.

Research

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the numbers of non-scientific staff employed at each of the AFRC institutes since 1980, including those expected to be employed in 1991 and 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: AFRC-funded institutes were restructured during the period 1985-87. The figures for non-science staff in post are shown on the basis of the present institutes of research.

The figures for actual numbers employed at 1 April in the relevant years to 1990 and estimates for 1991 are shown in the table. The number of support staff employed in 1992 will depend on a number of factors, including the funding available to the Agricultural and Food Research Council (AFRC) through the science budget and the extent of commissions from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and externally funded research. The present estimate is that the total number of non-science staff will be about 1,400, including AFRC staff employed in the British Society for Horticultural Research (BSHR).

	80	*81*	*82*	*83*	*84*	*85*	*86*	*87*	*88*	*89*	*90*	*91 (est.)*
IACR	401	402	411	390	368	323	273	253	229	233	251	246
IAH	451	448	443	440	401	359	321	281	268	237		227
IAPGR	338	331	330	326	288	275	258	234	224	219	222	208
IER	240	246	263	257	252	254	237	214	208	205	194	163
IFR	284	290	290	284	284	223	213	211	198	192	171	131
IGER	324	315	329	324	316	302	291	266	260	253	224	209
IHR	359	364	362	361	339	325	304	286	265	269	(269)	(245)
IPSR	159	166	164	160	153	145	140	137	90	93	92	92
Total	2,556	2,562	2,592	2,542	2,401	2,206	2,037	1,180	1,742	1,701	1,382 (1,651)	1,276 (1,521)

Notes:

1. Abbreviations
   IACR—Institute of Arable Crops Research
   IAH—Institute for Animal Health
   IAPGR—Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics
   IER—Institute of Engineering Research
   IFR—Institute of Food Research
   IGER—Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research
   IHR—Institute of Horticultural Research
   IPSR—Institute of Plant Science Research
2. IHR became part of the British Society for Horticultural Research (BSHR) from 1 April 1990. The figures in brackets show the number of AFRC support staff seconded to BSHR.
3. The figures for IACR for 1980-84 include the former Letcombe Laboratory and the Weed Research Organisation, which closed in 1985 and 1986 respectively. They also include the former Soil Survey and Land Resource Centre, which was transferred to the Cranfield Institute of Technology in 1986-87.
4. The figures for IPSR for 1980-86 include that part of the former Plant Breeding Institute which was purchased by Unilever plc in 1986-87.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, further to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields on 25 October, *Official Report*, column *282*, how many scientific staff were employed at the Letcombe laboratory and Weed Research Organisation prior to closure; how many scientific staff were employed at the former soil survey and land resource centre prior to being transferred to the Cranfield Institute of Technology; how many people were employed at the Plant Breeding Institute prior to purchase by Unilever plc; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The numbers of science group staff employed at the Letcombe laboratory and the Weed Research Organisation prior to closure were 68 and 75 respectively.

The number of science group staff employed at the soil survey and land resource centre prior to transfer to the Cranfield Institute of Technology was 34.

The number of staff employed at the Plant Breeding Institute prior to purchase of Unilever plc was 223, which included 113 in the science group.

Higher Education

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many academics in United Kingdom universities, polytechnics and other higher education institutions have resigned to take posts abroad in each of the last 10 years; how many academics from abroad have taken up posts in United Kingdom universities, polytechnics and other higher education institutions, in the same period; and what comparison he has made of the qualifications, experience and subject areas of those who went abroad and those who came to work in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The following information is contained in university statistics volume 1, "Students and Staff" published by the Universities' Statistical Record.

Intake and Outflow of full-time non-clinical wholly university financed academic staff in Great Britain universities[1]

Calendar year	*Intake*[2] *Where non-clinical and previous year was employment/study abroad*	*Outflow*[3] *Where non-clinical destination during the year was employment/study abroad*	*Total Full-time non-clinical wholly university funded academic staff*
1980-81	276	249	30,674
1981-82	183	203	30,243
1982-83	118	214	28,352
1983-84	220	153	27,859
1984-85	318	138	27,433
1985-86	292	154	27,814
1986-87	260	204	27,901
1987-88	199	191	27,788
1988-89	244	160	27,234

Source: USR.

[1] Excludes transfers between universities.

[2] New recruits to university service or staff returning after a period with other employment.

[3] Members of staff leaving university service.

Comparable information for other higher education insitutions is not available centrally.

Information on the qualifications of university academic staff is collected by USR but not published separately.

It is for institutions to judge the qualifications of all academic staff entering their employment.

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many persons 17 and 19 years, respectively, per thousand are in full-time education in England, Scotland and Britain's major economic competitors.

Mr. Eggar *[pursuant to his reply, 29 October 1990, c. 369-70]:* I regret that some of the data given in the previous answer on the proportion of 17 and 18-year-olds in education and training, are incorrect. The corrected table is as follows:

Proportion of 17 and 18-year-olds in education training[1] *1986*[2]

		Percentage of age group					
		17			*18*		
		FT	*PT*	*All*	*FT*	*PT*	*All*[3]
United Kingdom[4]	(1986)	34	27	61	19	24	42
	(1988)	35	40	75	20	22	42
England[4]	(1988)	36	40	76	18	23	42
Australia		50	17	67	25	23	47
Belgium		77	5	82	64	5	69
Canada[5]		77	—	77	53	—	53
Denmark		68	6	75	57	10	67
France		68	10	78	52	4	56
Germany, West[2,6]		43	49	92	33	47	80
Italy[2]		47	23	70	41	15	56
Japan[7,8]		89	3	91	50	2	51
Netherlands[6]		77	10	88	61	11	72
Spain[9]		52	—	52	44	—	44
Sweden[10]		85	1	86	52	4	55
United States of America[7]		87	1	88	55	3	59

Notes:

[1] Includes apprenticeships, YTS and similar schemes.

[2] 1987 for Germany; 1982 for Italy.

[3] Includes higher education for some 18-year-olds.

[4] Includes estimates for public sector evening study and for private sector further and higher education, including training courses with employers.

[5] Excludes certain part-time students, 10 per cent. at 16-18.

[6] Includes compulsory part-time education for 16 and 17-year-olds in Germany and Netherlands.

[7] Includes private sector higher education.

[8] 1988. Estimated for special training and miscellaneous schools, providing vocational training.

[9] Includes estimates for 18-year-olds in universities.

[10] 1985. Includes estimates for part-time.

Sources: DES Statistical Bulletins.

1/90 International Statistical Comparisons of the Education and Training of 16 to 18 Year Olds.

9/90 Education and Economic Activity of Young People Aged 16 to 18 Years in England from 1975 to 1989.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will show the breakdown by Wales, Scotland and the standard regions of England of *(a)* moneys disbursed on education directly by central Government and *(b)* university grant awards, exclusive of parental contributions whether by central Government or local authorities for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Foreign Languages

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the foreign languages taught in schools in England and Wales in order of popularity.

Mr. Eggar: The five modern foreign languages most commonly taught in maintained schools in England are, in order of popularity, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian. A number of other languages are taught to a lesser extent. Schools in Wales are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Trainee Psychologists

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students commenced initial training as educational psychologists in September 1990; and how many of these trainees are *(a)* fully funded, *(b)* partially funded through local authority training grants and *(c)* self-funded.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not available.

The operation of the school psychological service is a matter for the local education authorities. The Government provide specific funds to LEAs for the training of educational psychologists. In 1990-91 £2·8 million was made available which allowed all bids submitted by LEAs to be met in full.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Ministerial replies despatched in September took an average of 29 working days to issue. A significant proportion of ministerial correspondence involves inquiries to be made of outside bodies. The rest of the information requested is not readily available.

Teacher Vacancies

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list, by school, in the Easington district area, the number of teacher vacancies, and the subjects or speciality.

Mr. Fallon: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

HEALTH

Hospital In-patients

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by year for the past 10 years, and by regional health authority, the number of hospital in-patients treated.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is given in the table.

Number of patients by RHA (1979-88/89)

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Northern	368,578	393,788	395,694	376,067	409,115	420,080	433,131	441,095	462,766	461,033
Yorkshire	433,783	456,885	465,514	454,013	490,644	499,895	517,543	525,296	549,.847	551,458
Trent	464,917	497,306	511,888	505,247	543,221	557,930	578,370	592,398	612,890	626,102
East Anglian	201,867	216,878	219,585	213,297	229,580	238,332	250,343	253,483	264,117	269,637
North West Thames	403,264	412,723	418,144	394,415	408,474	415,559	418,753	419,008	421,582	416,153
North East Thames	455,851	473,469	474,758	512,655	526,398	534,760	541,080	530,372	527,585	521,291
South East Thames	438,889	453,149	462,239	461,394	477,283	487,772	501,557	495,246	504,666	487,815
South West Thames	312,264	320,149	324,683	315,210	329,334	338,587	344,430	347,089	351,932	344,259
Wessex	302,772	318,509	322,017	320,939	332,378	345,528	357,311	366,421	389,492	391,376
Oxford	251,898	264,990	269,685	266,304	276,523	284,583	297,524	299,270	300,416	296,433
South Western	338,890	357,966	365,849	370,348	385,293	399,018	408,004	417,443	443,179	451,586
West Midlands	547,773	575,105	582,892	591,061	619,743	644,202	666,217	673,375	708,225	689,457
Mersey	282,629	297,465	299,349	293,928	312,615	322,138	330,990	336,944	345,652	347,893
North Western	509,049	541,776	554,967	553,727	582,667	597,756	617,628	624,678	644,540	640,548
Special health authorities	87,696	89,843	92,613	91,032	92,317	91,405	90,931	91,671	92,465	90,941
England	5,400,120	5,670,001	5,759,877	5,719,634	6,018,585	6,177,545	6,353,812	6,413,789	6,619,354	6,585,982

Source: SH3 return, 1979-86; SH3a and KP70 returns, 1988-89.

Elderly Mentally Ill People

Mr. Whitney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average number of residents occupying the three experimental units for elderly mentally ill people at High Wycombe, Liverpool and Hertford between 1984 and March 1990.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not available. A total of 60 residential places were provided by the units—17 in High Wycombe, 23 in Liverpool and 20 in Hertford.

Secondary Sensory Impairment

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the Sunderland, Hartlepool and Durham area health authorities have been monitored, year by year, since 1985 for the development of a secondary sensory impairment.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not held centrally.

Child Sex Abuse Cases

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the full cost to date of litigation and other legal expenses to the Northern regional health authority of the

Cleveland child sex abuse case and other related matters concerning the continued employment of Doctors Higgs and Wyatt.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is not available centrally. My hon. Friend may therefore wish to contact the chairman of Northern regional health authority.

Health Spending

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will show the total public expenditure on health by standard economic planning region for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Dorrell: I will write to the hon. Member.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the annual cost to the Northern regional health authority of a hospital bed.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is not available centrally. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of Northern regional health authority.

Loop System

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the public buildings in the Easington constituency which have installed the loop system to assist the deaf and hard of hearing.

Mr. Dorrell: This information is not available centrally.

General Practitioner Lists

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average general practitioner's list size in the Barnsley health authority area in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: At 1 October 1987, the average general practitioner list size in the Barnsley family health services authority's area was 2,088. The corresponding figures for 1988 and 1989 are 2,112 and 2,067. Figures for 1990 are not yet available.

Elderly People (Residential Care)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to provide for a guaranteed place in a local authority home in any case where supplementary income support for board and lodging payments to elderly people of limited or no means in private or voluntary care residential and nursing homes is inadequate or insufficient to pay the costs.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Local authorities already have a duty to provide or arrange residential accommodation for elderly people in need of care and attention not otherwise available. Health authorities have similar responsibilities for people who require nursing care.

Children Act

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when local authorities will be able to obtain each of the 12 out of the total of 29 regulations pursuant to the Children Act which are still outstanding.

Mr. Dorrell: We hope to make the regulations well in advance of the implementation date of 14 October 1991.

Prescriptions

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the reply of 29 November 1989, *Official Report*, column *299*, if, on the same basis, he will publish how much money was raised in prescription charges in England in 1988-89; and for what specific purposes this money, credited for class XIV, vote 2, was put.

Mr. Dorrell: Prescription charges, including receipts from the sale of pre-payment certificates, raised £176·9 million in England in 1988-89. This amount, along with other national health service charges, was used to offset the total cost of the national health service.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the annual figures for the awarding of free prescriptions on the grounds of low income for the past three years for which figures are available.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is given in the table.

Year ending 31 July	*Number of prescription items*[1] *million*
1988	38·6
1989	34·4
1990	35·7

[1] These figures represent the total number of items dispensed free of charge to persons receiving income support, family credit or who held a valid exemption certificate on low income grounds, and their dependants.

NHS (Early Retirement)

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been given early retirement on health grounds by the superannuation board of the national health service in each of the last five years.

Mr. Dorrell: In each of the last five financial years the number of NHS employees who have retired prematurely on the grounds of ill-health and drawn their superannuation benefits is as follows:

Financial year	*Number prematurely retired*
1985-86	6,282
1986-87	6,427
1987-88	6,147
1988-89	6,695
1989-90	6,627

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been refused early retirement on health grounds by the superannuation board of the national health service in each of the last five years.

Mr. Dorrell: In each of the last five years the number of NHS employees who have been refused early payment of superannuation benefits on the grounds of ill-health is as follows:

Year	Number
1985-86	315
1986-87	321
1987-88	307
1988-89	334
1989-90	328

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people suffering from myalgic encephalomyelitis have applied for early retirement on the grounds of ill-health to the superannuation board of the national health service in each of the last five years; and how many have been granted early retirement.

I will write to the hon. Member with information for the years 1987-88 and 1988-89 in due course.

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the trend in admissions for mental handicap hospitals and units in the last decade in the age groups for which statistics are kept.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mental Illness

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the trend in admissions to mental illness hospitals and units in the last decade in the age groups for which statistics are kept.

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is shown in table 1 for the years 1976-86. The figures are for admissions not individuals; an individual may be admitted more than once during the year.

Table 2 expresses these admissions as rates per 100,000 population, in each age band.

Table 1

All admissions to NHS Mental Illness hospitals and units, by age, in England

Age group (years old)	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
All ages	178,841	175,422	171,914	169,310	180,164	185,514	183,593	188,518	192,258	199,995	197,251
0-9	725	758	767	669	710	701	647	689	671	677	707
10-14	1,340	1,350	1,237	1,240	1,334	1,284	1,247	1,203	1,198	1,222	1,077
15-19	7,071	6,176	6,080	5,808	5,956	6,025	5,446	5,458	5,527	5,438	5,272
20-24	13,804	13,249	12,302	11,806	11,841	11,956	11,628	12,300	12,963	12,952	13,267
25-34	34,852	33,274	31,317	30,178	30,931	31,711	29,951	29,690	29,792	30,118	30,476
35-44	29,780	28,324	27,608	27,105	28,884	29,831	29,514	30,434	30,879	31,235	31,069
45-54	28,926	27,574	26,153	25,102	26,019	25,963	24,825	24,443	24,812	25,314	23,859
55-64	23,122	23,759	23,526	23,271	24,670	25,266	25,044	25,756	25,675	26,539	24,423
65-74	20,789	21,767	22,319	22,341	24,014	24,932	24,758	25,373	25,271	27,944	27,487
75 plus	18,432	19,191	20,605	21,790	25,805	27,845	30,533	33,172	35,470	38,556	39,614

Table 2

Rates of all admissions to mental illness hospitals and units, by age, in England (per 100,000 population in age group)

Age group (years old)	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
All ages	385	378	371	365	388	397	392	402	409	425	417
0-9	11	12	12	11	12	12	11	12	12	12	12
10-14	35	35	33	33	36	35	35	35	36	38	36
15-19	204	174	168	156	157	157	140	140	145	145	143
20-24	432	411	376	355	347	345	321	331	338	329	334
25-34	534	506	474	457	468	478	458	460	459	459	455
35-44	564	537	517	497	521	523	499	499	495	491	479
45-54	519	505	487	474	497	494	478	471	478	489	464
55-64	442	452	449	447	477	480	481	489	482	510	479
65-74	489	509	519	516	553	570	579	611	624	676	656
75 plus	769	781	818	844	973	1,009	1,078	1,141	1,188	1,263	1,276

Mr. Dorrell: The information requested is shown in table 1 for the years 1976-86. The figures are for admissions not individuals; an individual may be admitted more than once during the year.

Table 2 expresses these admissions as rates per 100,000 population in each age band.

Table 1

All admissions to mental handicap hospitals and units, by age, in England

Age group years old	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
All ages	14,023	14,936	15,815	16,665	18,954	21,974	24,951	31,106	35,014	37,800	40,060
0-1	83	79	108	112	99	110	163	163	143	108	216
2-4	567	557	542	577	669	716	789	827	941	1,159	869
5-9	2,312	2,371	2,582	2,444	2,547	2,835	3,077	3,536	3,491	3,873	3,998
10-14	2,770	2,949	3,241	3,495	3,924	4,512	5,214	6,115	6,154	5,921	5,568
15-19	2,407	2,806	3,006	3,352	3,945	4,549	5,379	7,029	8,154	8,584	8,751
20-24	1,612	1,743	1,892	2,176	2,594	3,104	3,643	4,753	5,728	6,663	7,613

Age group years old	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
25-34	1,982	2,091	2,021	2,188	2,567	3,170	3,332	4,434	5,572	6,385	7,141
35-44	927	962	955	841	1,083	1,401	1,561	1,920	2,449	2,841	3,354
45-54	696	683	709	684	744	823	918	1,262	1,334	1,166	1,273
55-64	454	483	438	470	480	469	547	579	679	744	793
65-74	183	179	210	189	210	221	244	340	262	241	273
75 plus	30	33	111	137	92	64	84	148	107	115	211

Table 2

Rates of all admissions to mental handicap hospitals and units, by age, in England

Age group years old	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
All ages	30	32	34	36	41	47	53	66	75	80	85
0-1	7	7	10	10	9	10	14	14	12	9	18
2-4	30	31	32	35	41	43	46	47	53	65	49
5-9	64	66	74	73	79	94	108	128	127	139	140
10-14	73	77	85	93	106	124	146	176	185	185	184
15-19	70	79	83	90	104	118	138	180	213	229	237
20-24	50	54	58	65	76	90	100	128	149	169	192
25-34	30	32	31	33	39	48	51	69	86	97	107
35-44	18	18	18	15	20	25	26	32	39	45	52
45-54	12	12	13	13	14	16	18	24	26	23	25
55-64	9	9	8	9	9	9	11	11	13	14	16
65-74	4	4	5	4	5	5	6	8	6	6	7
75 plus	1	1	4	5	3	2	3	5	4	4	7

I will write to the hon. Member with information for the years 1987-88 and 1988-89 in due course.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what reports of people suffering campylobacter enteritidis he has received this year, to date; how many cases of people living in Bradford have been reported; what advice he has issued to combat this disease; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what action he has taken and what advice he has issued to combat the spread of campylobacter enteritidis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The PHLS communicable disease surveillance centre has received 26,607 reports of faecal isolates of campylobacter by laboratories in England and Wales in the first 39 weeks of this year. There have been 2,618 from the Yorkshire health region. The number from Bradford is not routinely abstracted from national surveillance data.

The advice that the Government have issued to contain the disease relates primarily to good kitchen hygiene and is contained in the publication "Food Safety: a Guide from Her Majesty's Government" copies of which are available in the Library. In May 1989 14 million copies of this food safety leaflet, jointly published by the Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, were distributed to the general public.

Income Generation Unit

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the work of the income generation unit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dorrell: The unit's role is to formulate national policy on income generation; to provide a source of advice on this for health authorities and the private sector; to assist health authorities to develop and implement projects, monitor their achievements, and disseminate information and good practice.

I am pleased to report that income generation activity raised £26·8 million for the NHS in 1989-90 and it is expected that £50 million will be raised in 1990-91. The initial top target of £75 million is therefore well in sight. These substantial sums of money are making a significant contribution to improving the care offered to patients by the NHS.

Children (Employment)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to give preliminary approval to proposed byelaws, concerning the employment of children submitted to him by Bradford council on 25 October 1989 and the subject, to date, of seven further letters; when he acknowledged receipt of the various documents; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Bradford council's draft amended byelaws have been considered by the Department; and a response was sent to the local authority on 26 October. I regret the delay; and will ensure that every effort is made to expedite approval of the byelaws.

The Gulf

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what quantitative provision is being made for casualties from a Gulf war.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on 31 October at column *528*. Should the need arise, NHS beds would be made available through restrictions on non-urgent admissions. No request for such action has yet been made by the Ministry of Defence.

Unruly Certificates

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will publish a table of all local authority social services departments showing the number of unruly certificates applied for in each department in 1989-90.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not collected centrally.

Public Interest Immunity Certificates

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by date, and by location, the number of occasions in the past 10 years when public interest immunity certificates have been issued in the three counties of Yorkshire and Humberside concerning matters before coroners and other courts preventing members of the police forces and others within the remit of his Department from attending such courts, and to prevent such courts hearing details of operations, indicating which operations were involved and how many individuals were covered by such certificates.

Mr. Waddington: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 17 October at column *820*.

ENVIRONMENT

County Hall, London

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will hold urgent discussions with the board of the London residuary body concerning the practical steps needed to retain county hall and its outbuildings in public ownership, following the collapse of the consortium offer in the recent tender application.

Mr. Key: No. The future of county hall is a matter for the London residuary body whose responsibility it remains to dispose of the property in the interests of London charge payers.

Planning Permission

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to include in any future changes to planning legislation provisions governing the extension of planning permission applications to cover the demolition of existing dwelling units.

Mr. Atkins: I am considering the need for legislation in the light of the consultations which we undertook earlier this year.

Pollution Control

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list firms that have been *(a)* advised on pollution control and *(b)* prosecuted for discharging pollution into the River Rother by the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution or their predecessors since 1979.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Detailed information about advice given to firms on pollution control, and about prosecutions for water pollution offences, is not held centrally. For information on prosecutions for pollution of the River Rother brought by the former Yorkshire water authority, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) on 18 January 1990, at columns *360-62*. I have asked the National Rivers Authority to write to the hon. Member about prosecutions it has brought since its formation.

Private Contractors

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what advice was sought by Warrington and Runcorn development corporation from its in-house solicitors concerning the redundancy of staff and their re-employment as private contractors; and what advice was proffered;

(2) what information he has on the reasons why Milton Keynes sought outside legal advice concerning the redundancy of staff and their re-employment as private contractors and the advice that was proffered.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice has been issued to local authorities concerning campylobacter enteritis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No specific advice has been issued to local authorities by my Department. The Department of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have issued jointly a food safety leaflet advising the public on how to avoid health risks posed by some types of bacteria including campylobacter enteritis. This leaflet was also made available to environmental health officers in local authorities.

Houses of Parliament

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the total identified cost of maintaining the Houses of Parliament for the financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Maintenance costs, including consultants' fees, were as follows:

	£'000
1987-88	5,283
1988-89	6,316
1989-90	6,897

Environment White Paper

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has been invited to contribute to the conference on the business implications of the environment White Paper and future environmental legislation, to be held on 19 November.

Mr. Trippier: I will be addressing the conference.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people in each district council area received disability relief on their rate bills in 1988-89;

what was the average amount of relief per property in each district; and what is his estimate of the number of households which are *(a)* now better off and *(b)* worse off under the poll tax.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list those local authorities that gave grants to regional theatres in 1986, 1987, 1989 and the first six months of 1990;

(2) if he has yet decided upon the criteria for capping poll tax levels, in 1991; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish figures revising his analysis of the distributional impact of the community charge placed in the Library on 15 February 1990.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what are the implications of the introduction of local authority waste disposal company rules for existing contracts that local authorities may have previously entered into;

(2) what time limits local authorities will be under to make a decision on the formation of a local authority waste disposal company;

(3) if local authorities will in the future continue to be in a position to deal directly with private sector companies as an option to a local authority waste disposal company;

(4) when his Department plans to publish local authority waste disposal company regulations.

Mr. Key: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Environmental Projects

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* those United Kingdom-based environmental projects in receipt of financial support from the European Community under Council regulation 2242/87, since 1987; and if he will make a statement on the future prospects of United Kingdom projects receiving support under this programme.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

EC Environment Council

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions have taken place in the European Environment Council on the proposed European Community directive for harmonising and rationalising reports on the implementation of certain directives relating to the environment—Com (90) 287 final —dated 26 July; what consideration has been given to that directive by the European Parliament and the European Community economic and social committee; and when he expects the Environment Council to take a decision on the Commission proposal.

Mr. Trippier: The proposal has not yet been discussed in the Environment Council. The European Parliament and the economic and social committee have not yet given their opinions on the proposed directive. It is for the EC presidency to decide when the proposal will be discussed at Environment Council.

Climate Change

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he plans to make to the second world climate change conference in Geneva at the beginning of November.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

European Environment

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom contribution to the Council of Europe conference on the European environment recently held in Vienna; and what decisions arose from that conference.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Chris Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Urban Development Corporations

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the total cost of Government investment in each of the urban development corporations set up by the Government since 1981;

(2) how many low-cost houses have been built by each of the urban development corporations since 1981;

(3) how many compulsory purchase orders have been enacted by each of the urban development corporations;

(4) what is the total number of jobs created by the investment in each of the urban development corporations;

(5) how much private investment has there been in each of the urban development corporations for each year since 1981.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Water Quality

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what reports he has received about the effects on the sea bed of licensed dumping of sewage sludge in the Bristol channel, in the area between south Wales, Lundy Island and Ilfracombe;

(2) what reports he has received from Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution about damage to the environment and the sea bed of the Bristol channel through the dumping of sewage sludge or the licensed input of effluent or other substances;

(3) what are the tests carried out and with what frequency by the National Rivers Authority to check on beaches and adjacent waters for compliance with the European Community bathing waters directive and the award of blue flags;

(4) if he will list the holders of current licences to discharge any effluent into the Bristol channel and give details of the effluents the licence covers.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Parliamentary Commissioner for Local Government

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will bring forward legislation extending the role of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Local Government to include complaints made against parish and town councils.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Environment Offences

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the offences which may be committed by companies in their activities relating to the environment, in each case specifying the notices which may be served on companies which fail to comply with statutory provisions.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Anti-competitive Behaviour

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply of 30 October, if the circular he intends to issue regarding anti-competitive behaviour will take into consideration any legal rulings that may have resulted from a local authority appealing against his decision to issue a section 13 and/or 14 notice.

Mr. Portillo: I will write to the hon. Member.

Standard Spending Assessments

Sir Thomas Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the criteria he will use for calculating the standard spending assessment for the metropolitan boroughs in the financial year 1991-92.

Mr. Portillo: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will show the breakdown of his Department's spending by standard economic planning region for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chris Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Home Repossessions

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the number of homes repossessed by mortgage lenders in 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and the first six months of 1990.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

Planning Gain

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will issue a planning gain code of conduct for local authorities and developers.

Mr. Atkins: I will write to the hon. Member.

Crown Suppliers

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek to mitigate the impact on the staff of the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers.

Mr. Portillo: I will write to the hon. Member.

Tourism, Harrogate

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what are the data on which the tourism element of the SSA for the Harrogate borough council will be based for 1991-92;

(2) what is the amount the Harrogate borough council will receive from Government for the tourism element in its SSA for 1991-92; and what is its receipt for the current year.

Mr. Key: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Antarctica

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the United Kingdom delegates who will be attending the special consultative meeting of the Antarctic treaty parties to discuss comprehensive measures for the protection of the Antarctic environment to be held in Santiago, Chile starting on 19 November; and what representation his Department will have.

Mr. Chris Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Satellite Television

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce changes to planning controls over satellite television antennas in the light of responses to the 11 July consultation paper; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We received over 500 responses to the consultation paper. They revealed a wide divergence of views on the need for stronger controls over the siting of dishes and on the case for two dishes per house. The proposed changes to permitted development rights which we are announcing today are designed to address both these concerns: to increase the controls over installations which would damage visual amenity, especially in sensitive areas, while at the same time to ensure that the development of broadcasting services is not unduly constrained. We have also taken into account the potential use of communal systems and the likely growth of cable networks which over the next few years will contribute significantly to the further protection of the environment.

The main features of the new package being proposed by my right hon. Friend and the Secretary of State for Wales are a general provision that dishes must be sited to minimise their effect on a building's external appearance: this, combined with a new national code of practice, will give planning authorities wider power than they have at present to reduce the obtrusiveness of poorly sited dishes and will provide clearer guidance to installers on how to adopt a more consistently acceptable approach; a requirement that specific planning permission must be obtained for all installations on chimney stacks, walls and roof slopes fronting the highway in national parks, areas

of outstanding natural beauty and conservation areas, as well as those fronting the waterway in the Broads; a general permission for two dishes per dwellinghouse, but with stricter limits on the size of dishes; new permitted development rights for the installation of particularly small dishes on chimney stacks, where they may be less obtrusive than elsewhere on the building; new permitted development rights for installations on smaller blocks of flats, but subject to the limitations on number and size set out earlier in my reply; new permitted development rights for installations on smaller, non-domestic buildings, subject to the limitations on number and size set out above, except on chimney stacks, walls and roof-slopes fronting the highway.

We have tightened the present restrictions to take advantage of the reductions that are being achieved in the size of dishes. There will of course be further developments in antenna technology over the next few years: and by about 1995 some 65 per cent. of the population may have access to television services through underground cable networks. For these reasons we intend to review the situation again in about two years' time, to ensure that the rules take maximum advantage of technological improvements which can reduce the visual intrusiveness of dishes. I should say now that I cannot envisage any circumstances in which a general permission for more than two antennas per house would be acceptable.

To give effect to these changes, amendments to parts 1 and 25 of schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988 will be laid before Parliament as soon as possible.

Energy Conservation

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to paragraph 6.34 of the environment White Paper, "This Common Inheritance?", he will state where the Government have asked local authorities to have particular regard to the conservation of energy as an issue in development plans.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will revise planning policy guidance note 15 to reinstate the reference to the need for development plans to consider energy conservation matters which was deleted when section 4 of circular 22/84 was superseded.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mud Slide

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assistance is available to the Isle of Wight's local authorities to assist with the clearance of the mud slide last weekend.

Mr. Key: I will write to the my hon. Friend.

Uniform Business Rate, Easington

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many appeals have been lodged against the uniform business rate in the district council area of Easington.

Mr. Key: I will write to the hon. Member.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EC Treaty

Mr. Cash: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what opinions he has sought as to the applicability of the veto *(a)* to amendments to the European Community treaty relating to (i) economic and monetary union or (ii) political union and *(b)* to any new treaty which may be proposed by member states excluding the United Kingdom as to (1) economic and monetary union and (2) political union; and if he will place any such opinion sought in the Library.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The two forthcoming intergovernmental conferences have been called to amend the treaty of Rome. Such amendments must be agreed by common accord among the member states. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said in the House on 30 October, our objective in the IGCs will be to find solutions which enable the Community to go forward as Twelve.

Mr. Cash: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what opinions he has received as to whether other member states of the European Economic Community would be in breach of their Community obligations if they sought to make a new European Community treaty for economic and monetary union or political union exclusive of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The intergovernmental conferences on economic and monetary union and political union have been called under article 236 of the treaty, which states that the conference must determine by common accord the amendments to be made to the treaty. This precludes amendment of the treaty of Rome by fewer than all member states.

Commonwealth

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will indicate for the Commonwealth *(a)* those countries which have left, *(b)* those countries which have been expelled, *(c)* those countries which have been refused admittance and *(d)* those countries whose applications for membership are pending.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information is as follows:

(a) Republic of Ireland (1949)
South Africa (1961)
Pakistan (1972—rejoined in 1989)
Fiji (1987)
(b) None
(c) None
(d) Cameroon.

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries of the Commonwealth, indicating the date they achieved Commonwealth status, and their current populations.

Mr. Waldegrave: Namibia, population approximately 1·26 million, joined the Commonwealth on 21 March 1990. The remainder of the information requested is available from the "Commonwealth Yearbook 1990", a copy of which is held in the House of Commons Library.

Hong Kong

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his estimate of the present numbers of the population of Hong Kong *(a)* registered or *(b)* eligible to register as Hong Kong British dependent territory citizens.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: According to Hong Kong Government statistics:

(a) the estimated number of Hong Kong British dependent territories citizens, principally by birth, descent, registration and naturalisation, is 3·56 million. The number of those who have acquired BDTC status by registration alone is about 5,200; and

(b) the estimated number of Hong Kong residents eligible for naturalisation or registration as BDTCs is 1·9 million.

Iraq and Kuwait (Mail)

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the statement made in the answer to the Adjournment debate by the hon. Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale (Mr. Lennox-Boyd) on 24 October, *Official Report*, column 479, if he is now able to give any further details of his Department's efforts to speed mail deliveries to Iraq and Kuwait.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: I am pleased to announce that we have now set up a PO box to receive mail from families of detainees and other British nationals prevented from leaving Iraq. We hope this will improve the reliability and speed of delivery of letters to our people in Iraq. The PO box address is:

PO BOX No. 1370
LONDON SW1A 2AW

Cambodia

Sir Russell Johnston: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with European Community partners about recent developments in Cambodia.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have regular discussions on Cambodia with our European colleagues and others among our friends and partners.

Middle East

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any commitment has been given by the United Kingdom to Israel should Iraqi forces seek to wrest the occupied territories from Israeli control.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. Such a commitment has been neither sought nor given.

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 29 October, on the Palestinian homeland, what is Her Majesty's Government's policy with regard to the exercise by Israel of a veto over the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Palestinian right to self-determination is not negotiable. What is for negotiation between the parties to the conflict is the shape of a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israel dispute.

Defence and Disarmament

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the topics raised by non-governmental organisations at the six-monthly briefing on defence and disarmament issues held at his Department, on 23 October; which issues were raised most often by non-governmental organisations; and what was the response of non-governmental organisation representatives to the review of Government policy positions presented by the Minister of State.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) on 31 October, at column *564*.

Nuclear Non-proliferation

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department received a copy of the resolution on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty passed at the annual general meeting of the nuclear free zone local authorities; when a response was sent; and if he will publish the text of the letter of reply in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Waldegrave: A copy of the resolution was received on 20 September, and an official response was sent on the same day. It is not our policy to publish the content of such correspondence.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) *Official Report*, 22 October, column *58*, he will list the states in the middle east region to which the reply makes collective reference.

Mr. Waldegrave: I referred to all states in the middle east region, which is generally regarded as comprising:

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Republic of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates.

However, it is not our intention that this list should be definitive.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the reply given to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) *Official Report*, 22 October, column *57*, what response was given by the South African Government to the urging of Her Majesty's Government that South Africa accede to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty during the visit of the Minister of State on 19 September.

Mr. Waldegrave: The South African Government expressed their willingness to sign the nuclear NPT provided other states in the region also did so. The South African Government have also expressed their readiness to discuss full-scope safeguards for nuclear facilities with the International Atomic Energy Authority.

Antarctica

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who will represent Her Majesty's Government at the conference to be held later in November in Santiago, to discuss the future of Antarctica.

Mr. Garel-Jones: Present intentions are that a team made up of officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Departments of Energy, Environment and Trade and Industry will represent Her Majesty's Government. Individual participants from these Departments have not yet been nominated.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Mans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement of forthcoming business in the European Community Council of Ministers.

Mr. Garel-Jones: The Development Council will meet on 5 November. Ministers are expected to adopt conclusions arising from a Commission paper on co-operation with the developing countries of Asia and Latin America in the 1990s. The Council will discuss progress on the Lome IV programming exercise which is currently under way and will exchange views on its increasing concern over the situation in the Horn of Africa. Ministers will also discuss the recent review of the tropical forestry action plan.

The Internal Market Council will meet on 8 November to discuss a number of measures relevant to the completion of the single market.

At the Foreign Affairs Council on 12 November Ministers will discuss follow-up action to the special meeting of the European Council held in Rome on 27 and 28 October. The Council will also consider the Commission's proposals for enhancing the Community's relations with Mediterranean countries through a mixture of aid schemes and improved trade and industrial co-operation, and will review progress in the negotiations with EFTA countries on the European economic area, in particular ideas for the industrial framework of the EEA. Ministers may also further discuss implications of German unification, association agreements with east and central European countries, and 10-year guidelines for co-operation with Asian and Latin American countries, and may consider the generalised scheme of preferences scheme in particular for 1991. An informal meeting of the EC/Arab Maghreb Union will be held in the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council

The Agriculture Council will meet on 27 November and will discuss the alignment of the Spanish and Portuguese olive oil regimes, and the review of the sugar regime. Other items which may be discussed are the agricultural aspects of German unification, animal welfare standards for pigs and veal calves on the farm, ACP sugar, agriculture and the environment and environmentally sensitive areas, inter-Community trade in fresh poultry meat, meat hygiene aspects of game meat and rabbit meat and plant protection products.

The Budget Council will meet on 16 November to discuss the European Parliament's amendments and modifications to the first reading draft budget.

The Economic and Finance Council will meet on 19 November to discuss the Commission's proposals for extending European investment bank operations to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, with a Community guarantee. The Council may also discuss further work on economic and monetary union in preparation for the forthcoming intergovernmental conference and the Commission's proposals for revisions of the financial perspective as a result of German unification and the Gulf crisis. The presidency is expected to submit a report on the progress on discussions of the Commission's VAT and excise technical proposals. Ministers may also discuss the investment services directive—ISD—a market-opening measure designed to give investment firms operating in one member state authority to set up branches and provide services in other member states. The presidency hopes to reach a common position by the end of the year. It is important that the ISD is implemented simultaneously with the capital adequacy directive and second banking co-ordination directive, by 1 January 1993.

At the Culture Council on 19 November Ministers are likely to be asked to reach agreement on proposals for the protection of national art treasures and on vocational training. There will also be a policy discussion of the MEDIA programme, and discussions of the European Cultural Month and copyright.

The Research Council will meet on 20 November and is expected to discuss co-operation with third countries on research; the EC's role in the international thermonuclear experimental reactor programme; the Community fusion programme including the proposed extension of the joint European Torus facility and aspects of the specific programmes under the third framework programme.

The Fisheries Council will meet on 20 November to discuss 1991 price fixing, the common fisheries policy in the Mediterranean, technical measures for conservation of resources, the effects of German unification on the common fisheries policy and fishery and aquaculture structures as defined in regulation 4028/86.

The Civil Protection Council will meet on 23 November to discuss the introduction of a Communitywide standard emergency telephone number. It will further discuss ways of improving mutual aid between member states in the event of a natural or man-made disaster and discuss further Community co-operation on civil protection.

The Labour and Social Affairs Council is expected to meet on 26 November to take forward proposed directives on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos and biological agents, and to discuss a Commission proposal for Community action for the elderly.

The Industry Council scheduled for 26 November is expected to discuss a Commission communication to the Council on industrial policy, a draft directive on aid for the Community shipbuilding industry and the future of national quantitative restrictions after 1992. Ministers are also expected to discuss the Community textile, biotechnology, semi-conductor and handicraft industries, as well as consider the future of the European Coal and Steel Community treaty, the industrial impact of the Uruguay round, a Commission green paper on standards, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Telecommunications Council will meet on 27 November. Ministers will discuss the draft directive on telecommunications terminal equipment aimed at establishing mutual recognition of type approval procedures between member states for telecommunications terminal equipment. A common position was adopted by Ministers at the last Telecommunications Council and the draft is now going through the co-operation procedure with the European Parliament. There may also be an orientation debate on an open network provision—ONP—framework directive aimed at defining the terms and conditions under

which telecommunications administrations will be required to give access to users of the telecommunications network infrastructure which was adopted at the last Council and which anticipated the application of ONP conditions to leased lines. A formal draft directive on leased lines is still awaited. An orientation debate is also expected on a draft directive on the protection of personal data processed and transmitted over public telecommunications networks which has been adopted by the Commission as part of a general package of measures aimed at approximating the data protection laws of member states. Ministers will also discuss the draft directive and recommendation aimed at establishing the necessary conditions for the commercial exploitation of digital European cordless telephone technology throughout the Community, and a Green Paper on the liberalisation of satellite services which is about to be published by the Commission. There is also likely to be an orientation debate on Commission plans to publish a Green Paper by the end of the year on proposals for a postal policy for Europe aimed at liberalising the provision of postal services.

At the Tourism Council on 29 November Ministers will consider a proposal for a Council decision on developing tourism statistics within the Community, and may consider papers on rural tourism and tourism and the environment.

Territorial Integrity

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the statements made over the past 10 years by the conference on security and co-operation in Europe about inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of states; and what provisions with regard to territorial claims are contained in *(a)* the charter of the United Nations and *(b)* the treaty of Rome.

Mr. Hurd: The concluding documents of both the 1980-83 Madrid and the 1986-89 Vienna CSCE follow-up meetings reaffirmed participants' determination to respect and put into practice all 10 principles from the Helsinki final act, which includes statements on the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of states. Neither the charter of the United Nations nor the treaty of Rome contains specific provisions with regard to territorial claims between member states.

India

Mr. Butcher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last visited India; and if he was able to take the opportunity to visit the Punjab.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has not yet visited India. I visited India on 21 to 26 September, but I did not have an opportunity to go to the Punjab.

Mr. Butcher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received reports of infringements of human rights in the Punjab from Amnesty International or from any other source.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We have received Amnesty International's 1990 report, which includes references to human rights abuses in the Punjab. We have repeatedly made clear our concern to the Indian Government that human rights must be respected and have also urged them to exercise the greatest restraint in dealing with the violent challenge to law and order from militant groups.

Gulf States

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the record on human rights in the Gulf states.

Mr. Waldegrave: We deplore all human rights violations, wherever they may occur, and the Governments of the Gulf states are well aware of the importance we attach to the observance of international human rights standards.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from human rights organisations concerning abuses of human rights in the Gulf states; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: A number of human rights organisations have made clear their concern. We have made our own views on Iraq's current human rights abuses in Kuwait entirely clear in UN Security Council resolutions including resolutions 664 and 674.

Environment Agreements

Sir Thomas Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply of 30 October, *Official Report*, column *456*, to how many of the 140 treaties and agreements concerned with the environment the United Kingdom is a signatory.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: Many of the 140 international treaties and agreements in the field of the environment listed by the United Nations Environment Programme in 1989 are regional in application, with no relevance to the United Kingdom. We have, however, signed 60 which have either global or regional importance for us.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session in Parliament.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: We reply to approximately 85 per cent. of MPs' letters within two weeks. The information requested at (a) and (b) is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

South Africa

Mr. Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to seek to exert pressure on South Africa through the EEC or the United Nations to relinquish Walvis Bay to Namibia and to accept responsibility for the accrued Namibian debt.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Diplomatic Missions (Parking Fines)

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish up-to-date figures recording the number of unpaid parking

fines incurred by each diplomatic mission in London in the first six months of the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd: The information requested by my hon. Friend is given in the table. The table also includes those international organisations which incurred unpaid fines. The figures may be reduced by late payments.

The total of 3,842 for the first six months of 1990 represents a 10 per cent. reduction from the figure of 4,292 for the same period in 1989. It compares with nearly 67,000 in the first six months of 1984 before publication of the 1985 White Paper. We welcome this further reduction in unpaid parking fines that has been achieved during 1989 and appreciate the co-operation of diplomatic missions since the introduction of the parking policy. We shall continue to monitor carefully the level of unpaid fines and bring pressure to bear on diplomatic missions to reduce this still further.

Unpaid parking fines

Diplomatic mission	*January-June 1990*	*January-June 1989*
Poland	344	99
Saudi Arabia	176	251
Soviet Union	171	335
Egypt	133	132
Pakistan	120	120
Qatar	111	102
Sudan	110	190
Cote d'Ivoire	105	195
United Arab Emirates	104	113
Kuwait	100	52
Cameroon	96	173
Morocco	87	71
Iraq	77	67
India	74	38
Korea	74	99
Greece	70	126
Yugoslavia	70	31
Zambia	68	14
Thailand	67	72
Malaysia	65	81
Israel	62	81
Spain	61	109
Cyprus	60	46
Hungary	58	21
China	57	36
Angola	55	29
Jordan	55	35
France	53	64
Bulgaria	52	94
Turkey	49	62
Brunei	47	62
German (Federal Republic)	41	82
Portugal	34	63
Oman	31	25
Romania	31	16
Sierra Leone	30	23
German (Democratic Republic)	29	42
Nigeria	29	8
Bangladesh	27	41
Brazil	27	43
Canada	27	32
Barbados	25	28
Jamaica	25	13
Seychelles	25	5
Gambia	24	40
PDR Yemen	23	20
Algeria	21	35
Italy	21	14
Ghana	20	53
Zimbabwe	20	6
Philippines	19	9
Japan	18	29
Liberia	18	15
Uruguay	18	29
Czechoslovakia	16	19
Indonesia	16	3
Cuba	14	20
Gabon	13	5
Mauritius	13	21
Tunisia	13	29
Ethiopia	12	20
Kenya	12	7
Vietnam	12	3
Yemen AR	12	16
Zaire	12	14
Belgium	11	29
Guyana	11	11
Nicaragua	11	26
Chile	10	7
Austria	9	7
Finland	9	27
Guatemala	9	4
Honduras	9	6
Norway	9	35
Somalia	9	11
Iceland	8	5
Lesotho	8	5
Mongolia	8	8
Senegal	8	11
United States	8	5
Bahrain	7	4
Ecuador	7	9
Myammar	7	16
Paraguay	7	8
Venezuela	7	32
Ireland	6	19
Togo	5	2
Malawi	5	5
Uganda	5	8
Lebanon	5	9
Trinidad	5	10
Tanzania	5	40
Australia	4	1
Dominica	4	2
Singapore	4	2
Sri Lanka	4	1
Botswana	3	2
Luxembourg	3	1
Mexico	3	8
Netherlands	3	2
Afghanistan	2	0
Benin	2	0
Bolivia	2	2
Denmark	2	3
Eastern Caribbean States	2	0
Panama	2	4
Sweden	2	22
Nepal	1	4
Peru	1	5
South Africa	1	0
Swaziland	1	1
Tonga	1	0
Antigua	0	0
Argentina	0	0
Bahamas	0	0
Belize	0	0
Colombia	0	1
Costa Rica	0	0
El Salvador	0	0
Fiji	0	13
Grenada	0	0
Iran	0	7
Malta	0	1
Mozambique	0	1
New Zealand	0	0
Papua New Guinea	0	1
Switzerland	0	2

Diplomatic mission	January-June 1990	January-June 1989
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS		
Commonwealth Secretariat	24	10
Cocoa	3	3
Coffee	1	0
IMO	0	3
EC	0	0
UN	0	0
WEU	0	0
Sugar	0	0
INMARSAT	0	3
Totals	3,842	4,292

Cyprus

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last received representations regarding the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement concerning Her Majesty's Government's policy toward the occupation.

Mr. Garel-Jones: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning amputations, flogging and execution by sword or stoning in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall write to the hon. Member.

TRANSPORT

Passenger Statistics

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the number of passengers carried by bus and rail transport in each year since 1979 and the cost of travel per mile on bus and rail services in real terms for each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: The information available is as follows:

	Passenger journeys		Real fares indices 1979 = 100	
	Local bus	Rail[1]	Local bus	Rail
1979	6,472	1,342	100·0	100·0
1980	6,224	1,326	108·5	105·3
1981	5,694	1,284	109·3	107·6
1982	5,518	1,179	116·3	113·8
1983	5,587	1,319	117·6	114·6
1984	5,650	1,422	114·4	110·3
1985	[2]—	1,494	112·6	110·6
1986	[2]—	1,520	118·0	114·2
1987	[2]—	1,576	120·8	115·2
1988	[2]—	1,653	122·3	117·5
1989	[2]—	1,619	122·2	119·0
1985-86	5,614		112·2	
1986-87	5,325		119·8	
1987-88	5,303		121·7	
1988-89	5,238		121·9	
1989-90	[2]—		122·1	

[1] British Rail, London Transport rail and the rail systems of the Strathclyde and Tyne and Wear PTEs.
[2] Not available.
Sources: Transport Statistics Great Britain 1979-89 (and later information); Retail Prices Index.

Underground Rail Link, London

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the assessed rate of return on the east-west underground rail link through London.

Mr. Freeman: The east-west crossrail proposal was shown to have a benefit to cost ratio of 1·32:1.

Ports and Docks (Police)

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on any plans to reform the law with regard to the employment of police officers at British ports and docks.

Mr. McLoughlin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) on 22 October 1990, at column *70*.

"Transport of Delight"

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will obtain a copy of the recent policy paper published by the Tory Green Initiative, "Transport of Delight", for his departmental library.

Mr. McLoughlin: My Department has received a copy.

Summerley Court Aston Airstrip

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, *Official Report*, 15 October, column *648*, whether he proposes to take any action following the issuing of the AAIB report on the accidents at the Summerley Court Aston airstrip on 24 July.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Civil Aviation Authority has the statutory responsibility for the safety regulation of civil aviation. The AAIB report has been passed to the CAA and it is for the authority to determine whether any further action is required.

Glasgow-Edinburgh Railway

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the chairman of British Rail about electrification of the Glasgow-Edinburgh railway line and the traffic volumes required to meet the investment criteria.

Mr. Freeman: The £12·5 million electrification of the line between Glasgow and Edinburgh via Carstairs is under way and due to be completed by the spring of 1991. ScotRail is introducing the new class 158 express diesel units on the route from Glasgow Queen Street to Edinburgh via Falkirk and Linlithgow. A full service using these new trains will be in operation by the end of this year. I understand that BR is still considering whether a case can be made for electrifying the route via Shotts. Its forecast of traffic levels will form part of that consideration.

A1

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the traffic flow counts for the stretch of the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth taken during the last 10 years.

Mr. Chope: The average annual daily two-way traffic flows measured immediately south of Dishforth are shown in the table.

Year	*AADT (Vehicles)*
1980	29,483
1981	30,000
1982	31,400
1983	34,100
1984	36,800
1985	38,600
1986	39,400
1987	40,592
1988	44,321
1989	46,353

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the full details of the current and proposed future works to the A1.

Mr. Chope: I have written to my hon. Friend with the details and placed a copy in the Library.

Greater Manchester Relief Road

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has considered in relation to the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road alterations to a dual three-lane motorway.

Mr. Chope: Our present proposals are to widen the M62 between junctions 12 and 17 to dual four-lane motorway and to provide the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road as a dual three-lane motorway. We shall review these standards as our investigations proceed.

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will bring public consultation over the proposed Greater Manchester northern and western relief road forward from its originally planned time scale.

Mr. Chope: Public consultation cannot take place until our initial investigations have been completed. These are continuing and are unlikely to be finalised in time to allow any advance in the programme.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the residents of Bury, South in relation to proposals from his Department for the Greater Manchester northern and western relief road.

Mr. Chope: There have been 31 written representations from residents of the Bury, South constituency.

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the metropolitan borough of Bury concerning the proposed Greater Manchester northern and western relief road.

Mr. Chope: The metropolitan borough of Bury was consulted on a confidential basis. I cannot therefore divulge the views expressed. It will be formally consulted at public consultation stage. Any responses will be made public after a decision on the options has been made.

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from residents in Bury, North over the proposed Greater Manchester northern and western relief road, M62.

Mr. Chope: There have been 42 written representations from residents of the Bury, North constituency.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance was given by his Department to the metropolitan borough of Bury in relation to its unitary development plan and the impact of such plans on his Department's proposals for the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road.

Mr. Chope: The council has been advised that unitary development plans should make proper allowance for proposed modifications to the existing motorway and trunk road network which have been announced and for other changes arising from the reviews of the trunk road network. One of the purposes in consulting local authorities on specific road proposals is to allow them to comment on the effect of such proposals on their planning policy.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to compensate the householders in Bury, South whose properties have been blighted as a result of the premature disclosure of the possible route of the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road.

Mr. Chope: Statutory blight provisions cannot be exercised until a route has been selected for protection against planning development. The Department will, however, consider exercising its discretionary powers of purchase when it publishes proposals for public comment.

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bodies were supplied with confidential details of possible routes for the proposed Greater Manchester northern and western relief road.

Mr. Chope: The Department has consulted 33 organisations on an informal and in confidence basis.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department's proposals for the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road were made with the benefit of *(a)* an environmental impact assessment or *(b)* an economic evaluation of the costs and benefits.

Mr. Chope: Environmental assessments and economic evaluations will be done before proposals are put forward for public comment.

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what effect the completion of the M66 Middleton to Stockport will have upon proposals for the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road.

Mr. Chope: There will be no significant effect.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what terms of reference were given to the consultants advising his Department on the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road.

Mr. Chope: The consultants have been asked to investigate and report on all the options for improving the M62 between junctions 12 and 17 and for the provision of a new route to the west and north of the existing motorway.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement on the

Greater Manchester western and northern relief road and his Department's proposals for a route through the parliamentary constituencies of Bury, North and Bury, South.

Mr. Chope: I have nothing to add at present to the comments which I made in a letter to my hon. Friend on 28 August.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what priority in the planned expenditure on motorways will be given to the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road; and what is the likely starting date of construction work.

Mr. Chope: Priority in the north-west region continues to be given to the completion of the last 10 miles of the Manchester outer ring road between Denton and Middleton and of the associated A6(M) Stockport north-south bypass. I can give no estimate as to when construction might start on the Greater Manchester western and northern relief road.

Road Repairs

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out his proposals for minimising delays caused by road repairs to main trunk roads and motorways.

Mr. Chope: Since we introduced in 1984 the "lane rental" arrangement for major maintenance contracts whereby the contractor gains a bonus for early completion and is charged for lateness, we have saved traffic delay costs estimated at about £50 million. We will continue to make the maximum use of this type of contract.

In addition, we intend to make greater use of night working, when traffic flows are lower, wherever safety and environmental conditions permit. We are also seeking to improve the management of traffic at roadworks sites by investigating the use of additional narrower lanes, tidal flow systems, and better recovery techniques for broken-down vehicles. In this way we hope further to reduce delays to road users.

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what date he proposes to introduce information boards explaining works to major roads which are causing traffic delays and indicating why on occasions no activities appear to be being carried out.

Mr. Chope: Since April this year we have increased the amount of information available to drivers at all major maintenance contracts on motorways and trunk roads. Signs explaining the purpose of the works—for example, "Roads repairs reconstructing worn out roads"—have to be erected. Temporary signs are used to explain why from time to time no work appears to be going on—for example, when road materials are hardening or work has to be suspended because of adverse weather.

We are keeping a close eye on this new initiative to make sure that drivers continue to be kept fully aware of the reasons why road works are taking place and hope that it will help to reduce their understandable frustration at unavoidable delays.

Safety Slogans

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration he has given to providing slogan signs in lights on bridges spanning trunk and motorway routes urging motorists to heed safety advice.

Mr. Chope: Signing on high-speed roads is kept to the minimum consistent with good direction finding and the provision of other information required by drivers on their journeys. Slogans are generally more suited to other forms of publicity such as leaflets and publicity campaigns.

A19

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to improve the A19 throughout the Easington constituency by the provision of a hard standing.

Mr. Chope: Yes. One metre strips will be provided as part of the future road maintenance programme.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when was the last time he made an official journey from Dishforth to the north via the A19; and whether he has any plans to do so in the near future.

Mr. Chope: Since taking up my current ministerial duties I have not made an official journey from Dishforth to the north on the A19, nor have I any plans to do so.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to *(a)* improve lighting, *(b)* improve drainage, *(c)* improve the access road at Cold Hasledon, *(d)* install emergency telephones and, *(e)* provide a footbridge from Peterlee houses to the Peterlee industrial estate on the A19 and throughout the Easington constituency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: For the section of the A19 in the Easington constituency the Department

a. is considering the provision of lighting on a section of the route;
b. will improve drainage as necessary under normal maintenance operations;
c. is considering the need to improve the junction at Cold Hasledon;
d. has no plans to install emergency telephones, or
e. to provide a footbridge at Peterlee.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. McLoughlin: The average time my Department takes to reply to an hon. Member's letter is three weeks. In the last Session of Parliament the *(a)* shortest time was one day and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full was five months. Complex questions or problems inevitably take longer to research and resolve.

Motorway Development, Bury

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department intends to seek the views of the people of Bury, South on any proposed

motorway development in Bury; and what arrangements he will make to consult the public on any plans produced by his Department.

Mr. Chope: We shall consult fully with all those who live and work in the vicinity of any proposed new or improved route. Residents will be notified by means of circular letters and press advertisements, and local exhibitions will be held.

Traffic Disruption (M1 and A1)

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the details of the contract terms involving night and weekend work and speed of completion for road repairs and other works involving disruption of traffic on the M1 and A1.

Mr. Chope: Contracts for the maintenance of the Department's motorways and trunk roads are let under standard terms and conditions. Where practicable, night and weekend working are adopted to reduce traffic disruption, and bonus incentives and charges for late completion are used to ensure that work is completed in the shortest possible time.

M66

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what effect the completion of the M66 Middleton to Stockport will have upon traffic flow forecasts for the M62 over the next 10 years.

Mr. Chope: Completion of the M66 between Denton and Middleton will remove some 10,000 vehicles per day from the section of the M62 east of junction 18. There will be no significant effect on flows west of this junction.

M62

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his Department's estimate of the volume of traffic currently using the M62 motorway within the Bury, South constituency; and by how much this traffic will increase by the year *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2005.

Mr. Chope: The estimate of 1989 average weekday traffic flows on this section of the M62 is as follows:

Motorway link	*Vehicles per day*
J15 (A666)—J17 (A56)	139,000
J17 (A56)—J18 (M66)	111,000
J18 (M66)—J19 (A6046)	107,700

We have not yet prepared detailed local traffic forecasts, but an indication of possible weekday demand can be obtained by applying the Department's national road traffic forecasts to the figures given above:

Link	*1995*		*2000*		*2005*	
	Low	*High*	*Low*	*High*	*Low*	*High*
J15—J17	156,000	169,000	171,000	194,000	185,000	220,000
J17—J18	125,000	135,000	136,000	155,000	148,000	176,000
J18—J19	121,000	131,000	132,000	151,000	144,000	171,000

M11

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the proposal for an extension of the M11 through Lincolnshire to Yorkshire with particular regard to the involvement of the private sector.

Mr. Chope: The extension of the M11 is a proposal by a group of local authorities in eastern England. I understand they have appointed consultants to study their proposals. The local authorities are sharing the cost of the study, with contributions from the private sector and grant from the EC. The study is due to report early in 1991.

Coal Imports

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the tonnage of coal imports into Great Britain over the last three years; and if he will indicate the port of entry and country of origin.

Mr. McLoughlin: The information would take too long to provide in the time available. I will write to the hon. Member.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will show the total public expenditure on transport broken down by standard economic planning region in England for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chope: A breakdown by region is available only for roads expenditure. The information is as follows:

Regional expenditure on roads: 1987-88

£ million

Standard economic planning region	*North*	*Yorkshire and Humberside*	*North West*	*West Midland*	*East Midland*	*East Anglia*	*South West*	*South East*	*Unallocated*	*England*
Motorways and trunk roads total[1]	68·2	71·8	71·4	116·1	62·5	27·1	98·2	357·2	—	873·1
New construction and improvement	44·9	48·0	38·6	71·3	37·3	17·4	83·5	241·1	—	582·1
Maintenance[1,2]										
Structural	19·7	16·8	28·6	36·7	19·6	7·3	10·7	94·5	—	234·0
Routine	1·5	2·8	1·5	3·8	2·2	1·4	2·2	11·5	—	27·0
Winter	1·6	2·7	0·9	1·9	1·7	0·9	1·2	4·7	—	15·7

Standard economic planning region	North	Yorkshire and Humberside	North West	West Midland	East Midland	East Anglia	South West	South East	Unallocated	England
Public lighting[3]	0·5	1·5	1·8	2·4	1·7	0·4	0·6	5·4	—	14·3
Local roads total[1] [4]	114·1	169·7	211·8	166·5	123·3	51·2	165·2	587·6	2·9	1,592·3
New construction and improvement	32·8	54·2	58·1	56·0	41·2	21·9	45·2	213·5	2·9	525·7
Maintenance[1] [2]										
Structural	48·9	70·1	84·5	66·6	51·2	19·3	78·1	216·2	—	634·9
Routine	12·1	17·7	32·0	19·9	13·4	5·3	23·6	94·9	—	219·0
Winter	6·6	9·9	7·1	7·1	5·5	1·4	5·4	14·0	—	56·9
Public lighting[3]	13·5	17·4	29·2	16·2	11·5	2·9	12·7	47·2	—	150·6
All road expenditure[1] [4]	182·3	241·5	283·2	282·6	185·8	78·3	263·4	944·8	2·9	2,465·4

[1] Figures include some estimates, due to incomplete data being received from some authorities.
[2] Structural maintenance: reconstruction, overlay, resurfacing, surface dressing, patching, drainage, footways, bridges, earthworks and fences.
Routine maintenance: verge maintenance, sweeping, gullies, signals, signs and markings.
Winter maintenance: salting, snow clearance and snow fences.
[3] Public lighting: maintenance and energy.
[4] Includes expenditure on technical surveys.

Road Deaths

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the measures and the financial support his Department intends to provide for reducing the numbers of children killed on the roads.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Disabled People (Access)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to ensure that the new extensions to the Jubilee line will be accessible by lift to disabled people.

Mr. Freeman: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

SCOTLAND

Homelessness

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the official homelessness statistics for Scotland in each year since 1978.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information collected by the Scottish Development Department relates only to applications received by local authorities under the homelessness legislation. Not all applicants are assessed by local authorities as being in fact homeless or potentially homeless.

According to returns submitted by local authorities the number of applicant households in Scotland, the number of households assessed by local authorities as homeless, and the number assessed as being threatened with homelessness in each year since 1978-79 are as set out in the table. The figures for 1989-90 are provisional, since returns may still be received from some authorities. In most years, some authorities failed to submit complete returns; part of the increase in the provisional figures for 1989-90 is caused by more comprehensive returns being received from some authorities.

Year of application	Number of applicant households	Households assessed as homeless	Households assessed as being threatened with homelessness
1978-79	16,055	7,437	4,022
1979-80	15,466	7,421	2,758
1980-81	14,861	6,993	2,430
1981-82	15,950	8,272	1,982
1982-83	16,522	8,674	2,079
1983-84	15,542	8,124	2,309
1984-85	20,477	9,913	3,467
1985-86	23,735	11,027	4,615
1986-87	25,184	10,571	5,802
1987-88	24,651	9,588	5,741
1988-89	24,664	9,607	6,111
1989-90[1]	27,083	10,425	6,309

[1] Provisional.

Education Expenditure

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total expenditure on *(a)* books and *(b)* equipment in schools in Scotland in each year since 1978 in real terms.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information available is given in the table, which has been compiled from local authority financial returns. Expenditure on equipment was not separately identified in these returns until 1982-83. There have been some variations from year to year in the recording of expenditure under these two headings. In particular some of the figures for expenditure on library books may include some expenditure on equipment and vice versa.

Expenditure on text and library books and on educational tools, equipment and materials adjusted to 1988-89 prices using the GDP deflator

Year	Books (£ million)	Equipment (£ million)
1978-79	13·401	n.a.
1979-80	13·347	n.a.
1980-81	11·090	n.a.
1981-82	10·605	n.a.
1982-83	10·088	20·888
1983-84	12·285	17·801

Year	Books (£ million)	Equipment (£ million)
1984-85	11·803	19·631
1985-86	10·492	17·892
1986-87	12·120	18·528
1987-88	8·994	22·051
1988-89	10·982	22·522

Note: The figures include expenditure on local authority nursery, primary, secondary and special schools.

Community Care

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what allowance has been made of the level of capital expenditure by local authorities on information technology for community care purposes in the assessment of central Government grants; and what was the estimate of total such expenditure on which this was assessed.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Hospitals

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of *(a)* hospital beds and *(b)* acute beds for each health board and the total for Scotland in each year since 1979, and the percentage change from 1979-89.

Mr. Rifkind: Information on the number of all national health service hospital beds in Scotland and those beds used for acute specialties, for Scotland and for each health board in Scotland for the years ending 31 March 1979 to 1990 are shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 shows information on the average available staffed beds and indicates the number of beds which are staffed and are available for the reception of in-patients and day cases. Borrowed and temporary beds are included.

Table 2 shows information on bed complements and indicates the number of beds approved by the health board for the admission of in-patient and day cases. Beds in day bed units are not included.

The acute specialty group comprises the following main specialty classifications: general surgery, orthopaedic surgery, ENT surgery, ophthalmology, urology, orthodontics and paediatric dentistry, oral surgery and medicine, restorative dentistry, general medicine, dermatology, rehabilitation medicine, respiratory medicine, surgical paediatrics, medical paediatrics, gynaecology, GP acute, acute mixed and other acute.

The acute specialty group does not include those specialty classifications attributed to the supra-area specialty group, that is specialties: neurosurgery, cardiothoracic surgery, plastic surgery, neurology, radiotherapy and spinal paralysis.

Table 1—Average available staffed beds for all and acute specialties; by health board; year ending 31 March 1979-90

	Scotland	Argyll and Clyde	Ayr-shire and Arran	Borders	Dum-fries and Gallo way	Fife	Forth Valley	Grampian	Greater Glasgow	High-land	Lanark-shire	Lothian	Orkney	Shet-land	Tay-side	West-ern Isles
1979																
All specialties	58,788	4,623	2,847	906	1,707	2,966	3,617	5,384	14,078	2,470	5,560	8,432	124	160	5,698	216
Acute specialties	19,005	1,372	981	319	437	801	733	1,752	4,867	810	1,680	3,210	50	62	1,846	85
1980																
All specialties	58,334	4,561	2,822	897	1,626	2,928	3,610	5,398	14,068	2,433	5,515	8,393	120	159	5,588	216
Acute specialties	18,948	1,330	975	311	423	791	708	1,758	4,908	810	1,735	3,200	46	62	1,808	84
1981																
All specialties	58,150	4,499	2,827	910	1,589	2,912	3,614	5,387	14,078	2,424	5,540	8,408	131	160	5,465	207
Acute specialties	18,755	1,263	977	322	428	784	727	1,709	4,859	811	1,728	3,175	58	62	1,771	82
1982																
All specialties	57,928	4,484	2,818	931	1,559	2,971	3,570	5,429	13,919	2,417	5,543	8,419	131	160	5,375	202
Acute specialties	18,649	1,259	970	337	428	791	727	1,711	4,811	809	1,733	3,171	57	62	1,698	83
1983																
All specialties	57,119	4,455	2,795	934	1,538	3,001	3,426	5,447	13,348	2,337	5,518	8,452	131	160	5,367	209
Acute specialties	18,092	1,258	947	345	424	979	688	1,694	4,326	815	1,696	3,142	58	62	1,754	85
1984																
All specialties	57,342	4,433	3,051	925	1,538	3,106	3,465	5,571	13,206	2,288	5,442	8,505	131	159	5,312	208
Acute specialties	18,079	1,255	1,080	325	421	804	690	1,729	4,204	797	1,715	3,124	57	62	1,731	84
1985																
All specialties	56,802	4,437	3,026	927	1,552	3,139	3,401	5,568	13,079	2,279	5,338	8,358	129	159	5,197	210
Acute specialties	17,753	1,248	1,082	333	435	795	678	1,725	4,151	766	1,627	2,999	56	63	1,711	85
1986																
All specialties	55,955	4,386	2,988	933	1,510	3,229	3,418	5,567	12,746	2,131	5,271	8,163	106	160	5,137	211
Acute specialties	17,384	1,245	1,058	339	443	785	683	1,722	4,045	686	1,587	2,910	57	62	1,678	85
1987																
All specialties	55,338	4,312	2,951	944	1,493	3,290	3,410	5,513	12,559	2,165	5,042	8,047	131	158	5,109	216
Acute specialties	17,223	1,236	1,052	348	445	811	682	1,707	3,987	695	1,570	2,840	58	60	1,648	85
1988																
All specialties	54,487	4,307	2,952	939	1,505	3,254	3,151	5,457	12,242	2,142	4,961	8,008	131	159	5,057	221
Acute specialties	17,005	1,233	1,074	347	445	811	643	1,693	3,933	687	1,552	2,761	61	62	1,615	88

	Scotland	Argyll and Clyde	Ayr-shire and Arran	Borders	Dum-fries and Gallo way	Fife	Forth Valley	Grampian	Greater Glasgow	High-land	Lanark-shire	Lothian	Orkney	Shet-land	Tay-side	West-ern Isles
1989																
All specialties	53,448	4,130	2,972	939	1,505	3,105	3,082	5,428	12,115	2,034	4,909	7,921	131	160	4,796	221
Acute specialties	16,595	1,276	1,088	338	438	797	617	1,450	3,862	687	1,535	2,684	61	62	1,614	87
1990																
All specialties	52,121	4,103	2,925	927	1,439	3,062	2,878	5,276	11,918	1,968	4,790	7,578	131	162	4,743	220
Acute specialties	16,270	1,275	1,087	335	417	805	604	1,428	3,854	690	1,529	2,442	61	63	1,593	86
Percentage change 1979-89																
All specialties	−9·1	−10·7	4·4	3·7	−11·9	4·7	−14·8	0·8	−13·9	−17·7	−11·7	−6·1	5·5	0·3	−15·8	2·4
Acute specialties	−12·7	−7·0	10·9	6·0	0·2	−0·5	−15·8	−17·2	−20·6	−15·2	−8·6	−16·4	20·8	0·3	−12·6	2·7

Table 2—Bed complement for all and acute specialties: by health board; as at 31 March 1979-90

	Scotland	Argyll and Clyde	Ayr-shire and Arran	Borders	Dum-fries and Gallo way	Fife	Forth Valley	Grampian	Greater Glasgow	High-land	Lanark-shire	Lothian	Orkney	Shet-land	Tay-side	West-ern Isles
1979																
All specialties	61,577	4,668	2,828	927	1,733	2,960	3,804	5,832	15,138	2,494	5,886	8,976	129	160	5,827	215
Acute specialties	20,335	1,395	998	329	474	802	747	1,795	5,481	812	1,865	3,546	55	62	1,891	83
1980																
All specialties	60,932	4,646	2,813	944	1,739	2,918	3,789	5,474	15,032	2,447	5,872	8,955	131	160	5,800	212
Acute specialties	20,102	1,355	994	337	459	802	737	1,767	5,443	815	1,860	3,468	57	62	1,863	83
1981																
All specialties	60,356	4,678	2,819	943	1,594	2,940	3,631	5,440	15,118	2,436	5,820	8,913	131	160	5,535	198
Acute specialties	19,922	1,393	994	340	459	802	737	1,717	5,422	814	1,858	3,414	57	62	1,769	84
1982																
All specialties	60,339	4,677	2,806	955	1,585	3,012	3,629	5,509	14,971	2,436	5,815	8,968	131	160	5,487	198
Acute specialties	19,969	1,393	981	350	437	814	736	1,738	5,519	814	1,855	3,407	57	62	1,722	84
1983																
All specialties	59,876	4,620	2,889	994	1,584	3,041	3,516	5,464	14,744	2,338	5,729	9,004	131	160	5,464	198
Acute specialties	19,760	1,393	981	365	471	814	728	1,706	5,354	822	1,792	3,350	57	62	1,781	84
1984																
All specialties	59,890	4,603	3,072	938	1,591	3,191	3,516	5,650	14,469	2,324	5,609	8,962	131	160	5,476	198
Acute specialties	18,593	1,253	1,123	339	468	814	689	1,737	4,367	766	1,772	3,284	57	62	1,778	84
1985																
All specialties	59,241	4,577	3,066	936	1,583	3,158	3,478	5,642	14,245	2,316	5,595	8,770	131	160	5,389	199
Acute specialties	18,393	1,253	1,123	341	459	814	721	1,737	4,395	746	1,719	3,151	57	62	1,731	84
1986																
All specialties	58,770	4,460	3,047	952	1,550	3,327	3,500	5,638	13,975	2,193	5,550	8,677	131	160	5,411	199
Acute specialties	18,182	1,253	1,107	357	467	814	748	1,737	4,371	680	1,653	3,031	57	62	1,761	84
1987																
All specialties	58,029	4,461	3,062	954	1,536	3,320	3,441	5,687	13,520	2,212	5,285	8,697	131	160	5,360	203
Acute specialties	17,869	1,209	1,105	357	459	814	748	1,741	4,280	686	1,623	2,907	61	62	1,733	84
1988																
All specialties	57,156	4,477	3,092	937	1,571	3,245	3,185	5,631	13,501	2,171	5,144	8,443	131	160	5,247	221
Acute specialties	17,753	1,326	1,105	357	459	814	660	1,772	4,239	676	1,622	2,832	61	62	1,680	88
1989																
All specialties	55,967	4,248	3,064	955	1,567	3,093	3,123	5,386	13,541	2,091	5,100	8,302	131	160	4,985	221
Acute specialties	17,128	1,287	1,107	344	455	809	654	1,448	4,184	676	1,608	2,660	61	62	1,685	88
1990																
All specialties	54,689	4,235	3,040	947	1,572	3,089	2,987	5,312	13,248	2,013	5,021	7,865	131	157	4,851	221
Acute specialties	17,088	1,287	1,105	352	447	809	649	1,465	4,190	703	1,608	2,583	61	60	1,681	88
Percentage change 1979-89																
All specialties	−9·1	−9·0	8·3	3·0	−9·6	4·5	−17·9	−7·6	−10·5	−16·2	−13·4	−7·5	1·6	0·0	−14·4	2·8
Acute specialties	−15·8	−7·7	10·9	4·6	−4·0	0·9	−12·4	−19·3	−23·7	−16·7	−13·8	−25·0	10·9	0·0	−10·9	6·0

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of *(a)* private hospitals and *(b)* private beds in Scotland in 1979 and in 1990 or the most recent available figures.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is set out in the following table:

	1979	*1990*
Number of private hospitals	7	10
Number of private beds	n/a	417

n/a—Not available.

Prisons

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prisoners who were admitted to Scottish prisons in the latest year for which figures are available were sentenced to periods of *(a)* three months and *(b)* 30 days or less; and what percentage this was of the total number of admissions and prisoners serving sentences in that year.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is for receptions. One reception is counted if one or more warrants arrive for the same person from the same court on the same day. Some receptions relate to warrants arriving at establishments for people already held in custody. Provisional information for 1989 is given in the table:

Sentenced receptions to Scottish penal establishments 1989[1]

	Number	*Per cent. of total receptions*
Prisoners received to serve:		
3 months (or 90 days) or less	15,127	77·6
of which:		
30 days (or 1 month) or less	9,923	50·9
Greater than 30 days (or 1 month) and less than 3 months (or 90 days)	2,606	13·4
3 months (or 90 days)	2,598	13·3

[1] Includes fine and compensation order defaulters.

Housing Support Grant

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of local authority revenue budget has been made up of housing support grant in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: The table expresses housing support grant as a percentage of total housing revenue account income for the years requested.

	Housing revenue account (HRA) income £ million	*Housing support grant £ million*	*Housing support grant as a percentage of HRA income Per cent.*
1981-82	651·0	161·0	24·9
1982-83	675·4	104·6	15·5
1983-84	667·5	72·1	10·8
1984-85	698·8	67·2	9·6
1985-86	700·2	64·2	9·2
1986-87	724·6	44·5	6·1
1987-88	747·9	41·9	5·6
1988-89	[1]806·9	54·6	6·8
1989-90	[1]885·4	65·3	7·4
1990-91	[2]916·6	[2]59·6	6·5

[1] Provisional.
[2] Estimated.

Drugs

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many prosecutions for *(a)* supply and *(b)* possession of controlled drugs have taken place in Scotland in each of the last 10 years; and how many have resulted in conviction.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is given in the table:

Drugs offences in Scotland 1985-89

Year	*Supply*		*Possession*	
	Persons proceeded against	*Charge proved*	*Persons proceeded against*	*Charge proved*
1985	302	234	2,511	2,230
1986	362	269	2,572	2,275
1987	414	320	2,357	2,134
1988	408	314	2,021	1,837
1989[1]	491	370	1,998	1,801

[1] Provisional.
Prior to 1985 figures for the supply and possession of drugs were not separately identifiable within the Scottish Home and Health Department's classification of crimes and offences.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people have appeared in the High Court charged with drug offences for each of the last five years and in the most recent period for which records are available; and what percentages these figures represent of the total number of appearances in the High Court for all offences.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is given in the table:

Persons called to High Court charged with drugs offences 1985-89

Year	*Persons called to court*	*Percentage of all persons called to court whose main crime or offence related to drugs*
1985	281	27
1986	246	23
1987	206	19
1988	154	16
[1]1989	131	14

[1] Provisional

Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 relates to obstructing the police in pursuance of their lawful duty. Persons charged under this section are not separately identifiable within the Scottish Home and Health Department classification of crimes and offences and are not therefore included in the figures.

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act have been dealt with by Glasgow district court in each of the last 10 years, and in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information is given in the table:

Persons called to Glasgow district court for offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Year	Persons called to court
1980	0
1981	0
1982	4
1983	0
1984	1
1985	98
1986	494
1987	377
1988	65
[1]1989	8

[1] Provisional.

Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 relates to obstructing the police in pursuance of their lawful duty. Persons charged under this section are not separately identifiable within the Scottish Home and Health Department classification of crimes and offences, and are therefore not included in the figures.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in respect of each police force area in Scotland for 1979 and 1989 the total number of *(a)* offences notified to the police, *(b)* offences of violence against the person, *(c)* burglaries, *(d)* thefts, *(e)* offences of fraud and forgery and *(f)* offences of criminal damage.

Mr. Rifkind: The available information on crimes and offences in Scotland recorded by the police is given in the tables.

	Central	Dumfries and Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian and Borders	Northern	Strathclyde	Tayside	Scotland
Crimes and offences recorded by the police, Scotland 1979[1 2]									
Total crimes and offences	28,398	17,934	31,779	50,604	116,828	27,104	351,269	50,039	673,955
Total crimes	13,344	4,835	14,257	22,821	62,502	8,711	195,485	24,225	346,680
Violence against the person	223	53	191	407	516	205	4,064	577	6,236
Housebreaking[3]	2,854	975	2,776	3,763	12,826	1,385	48,202	3,954	76,635
Theft	6,853	2,227	7,323	11,597	34,493	4,451	95,344	12,200	174,488
Fraud and forgery	544	334	835	1,080	4,853	529	6,221	1,152	15,548
Criminal damage	2,845	999	2,417	4,624	7,635	1,432	31,253	4,924	56,129
Other crimes	525	247	715	1,350	2,179	809	10,401	1,418	17,644
Total offences	14,554	13,099	17,522	27,783	54,326	18,393	155,784	25,814	322,275
Crimes and offences recorded by the police, Scotland 1989									
Total crimes and offences	44,493	18,514	53,411	76,538	141,039	32,591	465,187	70,258	902,031
Total crimes	21,066	6,733	27,690	34,034	78,301	11,841	275,134	38,586	493,385
Violence against the person	716	210	695	795	3,074	330	7,202	955	13,977
Housebreaking[3]	3,928	1,147	5,826	5,097	13,462	1,375	55,559	7,333	93,727
Theft	9,110	2,784	12,035	15,073	36,079	4,765	136,704	16,269	232,819
Fraud and forgery	1,036	416	1,324	1,804	4,742	813	12,002	1,915	24,052
Criminal damage	4,340	1,424	5,239	7,850	10,658	2,512	40,012	7,017	79,052
Other crimes	1,936	752	2,571	3,415	10,286	2,046	23,655	5,097	49,758
Total offences	23,427	11,781	25,721	42,504	62,738	20,750	190,053	31,672	408,646

[1] The figures in the tables are based on the revised classification of crimes and offences which was introduced at the beginning of 1980.
[2] The 1979 figures include crimes reported to the Procurator Fiscal by agencies other than the police (for example the Department of Health and Social Security) in which a prosecution was taken.
[3] In Scotland, information is collected on "housebreaking", rather than "burglary".

Foxes

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total amount of grant paid to fox destruction clubs in each of the past five years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

	£
1986-87	36,639
1987-88	39,854
1988-89	47,649
1989-90	58,981
1990-91	[1]47,000

[1]Estimated.

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the cost to the Forestry Commission of killing foxes in Scotland, England and Wales for each of the past five years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The costs incurred by the Forestry Commission on killing foxes are not recorded separately from expenditure on controlling other animals, including rabbits and deer. It is therefore not possible to isolate the amount spent on the control of foxes.

Private Medical Insurance

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the *(a)* Scottish population and *(b)* United Kingdom population was covered by private medical insurance cover in 1979 and 1989.

Mr. Rifkind: No information is available regarding the coverage of private medical insurance in Scotland in 1979. Currently around 6 per cent. of the population are covered by private medical insurance. Figures for the United Kingdom as a whole which do not differentiate between regions show that 5 per cent. of the population were covered by private medical insurance in 1979 while 13 per cent. were covered in 1989.

Housing

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what sums have been paid by his Department to support housing associations in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: The information requested is shown in the table:

Year	Housing Association Grant £ million	Revenue Grant £ million
1979-80	35·5	0·8
1980-81	50·6	1·3
1981-82	82·4	1·4
1982-83	104·2	1·2
1983-84	115·7	0·7
1984-85	127·7	0·4
1985-86	104·6	0·5
1986-87	106·6	0·6
1987-88	114·2	0·4
1988-89	150·1	0·5

From 1 April 1989, payment of grants to housing associations are made by Scottish Homes.

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of *(a)* unfit dwellings, *(b)* dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities, *(c)* non-standard dwellings in need of renovations and *(d)* dwellings afflicted by dampness in (i) Greenock and Port Glasgow, (ii) Strathclyde and (iii) Scotland as a whole.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 24 October 1990]:* There is no definition of unfit houses in Scottish housing legislation. Each local authority provides the Scottish Development Department with an annual estimate of the number of houses in its area which fail the tolerable standard for housing, as set out in section 86 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. The Department also collects annually information on local authority houses suffering from dampness and condensation; comparable information for housing in other ownerships is not held centrally. No information is held centrally on dwellings fit but lacking basic amenities or on non-standard dwellings in need of renovations.

The information for the year to 31 March 1989, the most recent available, is set out in the table. Figures for the areas of Greenock and Port Glasgow are not held separately; the details given are for the local authority district of Inverclyde.

	Total number of houses of all types below tolerable standard	Local authority houses with rising and penetrating dampness	Local authority houses with condensation and rising and penetrating dampness
Inverclyde	1,411	Nil	8,091
Strathclyde	25,176	33,374	67,915
Scotland	55,897	48,597	82,827

Electoral Roll

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the number of people on the electoral roll for Scotland in 1988, 1989 and 1990.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to table 1.1 in "Electoral Statistics 1990" published by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys—Series EL No. 17—a copy of which is in the Library.

Scottish Development Agency

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many regional directors have resigned from the Scottish Development Agency in the past two years.

Mr. Rifkind: During the period from 1 October 1988, three regional directors have resigned from the Scottish Development Agency.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* any criteria which he required the Scottish Development Agency to satisfy before taking decisions to invest in area-based projects in Scotland;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the sums invested by the Scottish Development Agency in the Dundee project in each year since the project was initiated; and if he will express these figures both in terms of the actual sums invested and at 1990 prices.

Mr. Lang: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Hunts (Forestry Commission Land)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to ensure that hunts on Forestry Commission land are required not to fill in earths after a failed dig or at any time when an animal might still be in occupation.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have brought this matter to the attention of the Forestry Commission and it will be taken into account when the commission gives permission for hunting to take place on its land.

Govan Initiative

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what resources are available to the Govan initiative to fund the annual revenue costs for staffing and related educational costs in respect of the proposed nursery school at Merrick gardens, Ibrox;

(2) what proportion of the money Govan initiative intends to spend on the construction of a nursery school at Merrick gardens, Ibrox, comes from *(a)* central Government, *(b)* the Scottish Development Agency, *(c)* local government and *(d)* the initiative's own resources.

Mr. Lang: Approval under the urban programme was given on 9 May 1990 for a child care project which was to operate from three locations in the area of the Govan initiative. The approved costs were £279,200 in capital and £247,369 in annual running costs, initially for four years. Central Government grant would meet 75 per cent. of these costs with the balance to be provided by Strathclyde regional council. Merrick gardens was not however one of the proposed locations for this project and the Industry Department for Scotland has not been approached about any proposed change to the approved project.

Sport

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he has any statistics available on teacher participation in extra-curricular sport *(a)* in 1980 and *(b)* in 1990;

(2) when he received the Scottish Sports Council's strategy documents entitled "Sport 2000"; and when he intends to respond;

(3) when he received the Scottish Sports Council's recommendation on school-age sports; and when he intends to reply;

(4) what communication there has been with the chief medical officer over the health-related aspects of the report entitled "Sports 2000", submitted to him by the Scottish Sports Council.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

British Rail

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the meetings which he has had with British Rail to discuss the proposed withdrawal of Speedlink freight services; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend met the chairman of British Rail, Sir Bob Reid, on 31 October 1990 when a number of topics were discussed including BR's present review of its Speedlink services.

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his assessment of the implications for the Scottish economy and environment of the proposed withdrawal of Speedlink freight services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: British Rail is currently studying the options for its Speedlink services. My right hon. and learned Friend will give consideration to the implications for Scotland of any proposals which BR puts to the Government in due course.

Mental Illness and Mental Handicap Hospitals

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what has been the trend in admissions to mental illness hospitals and units in the last decade in the age groups for which statistics are kept;

(2) what has been the trend in admissions for mental handicap hospitals and units in the last decade in the age groups for which statistics are kept.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Foreign Languages Project

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects replies to be sent to the letters on the foreign languages pilot project sent to the Scottish Office by Mr. and Mrs. W. Toal, 77 Rockmount avenue, Giffnock, Mr. and Mrs. J. Crawley, 113 Ayr road, Newton Mearns, Mr. and Mrs. M. Davies, 2 Tobburn avenue, Giffnock and Mr and Mrs. G. Duffy, 85 Barnfield drive, Giffnock.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Replies were sent on 31 October.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the reply of 29 November 1989, *Official Report*, column *280*, if, on the same basis, he will publish how much money was raised in Scotland in prescription charges in 1988-89; and to what specific purposes this money, credited to class XVI, vote 17 subheads A2 and AZ, was put.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The total amount raised from prescription charges in Scotland in 1988-90 was £19·565 million. The majority of prescription charge income was used directly to reduce the costs, borne on subhead A2 of class XVI, vote 17, of the supply of drugs and appliances prescribed or ordered by general practitioners. Other prescription charges, including those collected by dispensing doctors and those for prepayment certificates, were included in subhead AZ of class XVI, vote 17, and were used to offset total expenditure on the vote.

Fish Farming

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the findings of his Department on research into dichlorvos, and its application in fish farming.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Scientists at the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries marine laboratory have carried out a number of studies on the effects of dichlorvos on marine species, in particular, lobster and herring larvae, mussels and invertebrates, and on the fate of dichlorvos in sea water. Reports of these studies were placed in the Library on 22 June 1990 and they have also been made available as Scottish fisheries working papers.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has also carried out surveys of farmed salmon as part of its on-going food surveillance work. Between 1987 and 1989, a total of 92 salmon samples were obtained from farms, processors and markets. No residues of dichlorvos were detected. Details of this work will be published in due course.

Community Care

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will outline the programme he intends to follow in providing additional finance to housing associations *(a)* in the current financial year and *(b)* in the 1991-92 financial year in order to ensure adequate availability of appropriate housing to match the requirements of his programme for the implementation of care in the community.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Responsibility for identifying and planning for community care needs lies with social work authorities. As part of that process, social work authorities will be consulting housing associations and other voluntary housing agencies to ensure these needs are met.

My right hon. and learned Friend, through Scottish Homes, funds the overall provision for housing associations. In 1990-91 the total housing association programme is expected to be £208 million. The total for 1991-92 has not yet been determined.

It is for the housing associations themselves, in consultation with local authorities and Scottish Homes, to determine what proportion of their programme is devoted to community care.

Bottle-nosed Dolphins

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the bottle-nosed dolphins resident in the Moray firth are now considered to be at risk.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

AGR Refuellings

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of refuelling is being carried out on load at each Scottish nuclear advanced gas-cooled reactor.

Mr. Lang: Questions about the operational performance of nuclear power stations in Scotland are for Scottish Nuclear Ltd.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will show the public expenditure in Scotland on *(a)* agriculture, fisheries and food, *(b)* trade and industry, *(c)* employment, *(d)* health, *(e)* educational grants and *(f)* the administration of justice for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Rifkind: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Local Enterprise Companies

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names of the individuals appointed to the boards of each of the local enterprise companies in the Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise areas, indicating for each individual whether they are involved in *(a)* private sector business, *(b)* local authority, *(c)* a trade union, *(d)* other non-private sector or *(e)* other public sector.

Mr. Lang: At least two-thirds of the board members of local enterprise companies are to be drawn from the private sector. Individual appointments are for the local enterprise companies themselves. Board membership will be listed in the published summaries of the companies' business plans.

Self-governing Schools

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the future of Holm school in Orkney; if the parents will be able to vote in a second ballot at an early date if in the first ballot on self-governing status they vote narrowly to reject the option of self-governing status; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Carbon Emissions

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimates have been made by the Forestry Commission of the potential role of woodland in absorbing carbon emissions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Free Television Licences

1. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next expects to meet pensioners' representatives regarding free television licences; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend is not expecting to meet pensioners' representatives about free television licences. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor) told the hon. Member on 6 July, we have no plans to change the present concessionary arrangements.

Sunday Trading

2. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has recently received about Sunday trading.

4. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence he has of progress towards finding a compromise between those who support the liberalisation of Sunday trading and those who oppose it.

31. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to reform the law on Sunday trading.

45. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the Government's policy on reform of the Shops Act 1950; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Since the then Home Office Minister of State, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor), answered a similar question from my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) on 12 July at column *318*, 11,321 written representations broadly in favour of Sunday trading and 18 against have been received.

It is clear that there is common ground between the interested parties on certain issues such as removing opening restrictions from small convenience stores and garden centres. We continue to encourage discussion on such matters to reach agreement in those areas where wide divisions of opinion still exist.

Car Security

3. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what efforts motor manufacturers have made in the last year to improve the quality of car security.

Mr. John Patten: I am aware that some motor manufacturers have taken steps to improve the quality of security in their cars, but much more remains to be done. I am currently awaiting a report from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders on how best progress will be made in Europe towards a new mandatory common standard on car security, what plans manufacturers have for voluntarily building better security into their cars and what manufacturers are doing to encourage car buyers to give a higher priority to car security when buying a car.

Drinking Bans

5. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the experimental ban on drinking in public places.

Mr. John Patten: The results of the byelaw which prohibits the consumption of alcohol in designated areas

have been carefully monitored by the Home Office and the local authorities concerned. I am now satisfied that a byelaw of this kind can contribute to a reduction in the unpleasantness all too often associated with drinking. The effectiveness of the byelaw has been demonstrated sufficiently for it to be made generally available subject to applicant authorities satisfying themselves as to a local need and police capacity to enforce it.

16. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the incidence of drunkenness on the streets.

Mr. John Patten: In addition to existing legislation, my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary recently announced the general availability of the byelaw prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in certain public places to those local authorities that wish to adopt it. The byelaw is currently in operation on an experimental basis in seven selected areas and has shown that it can effectively control the nuisance of public drunkenness without becoming unduly oppressive. We are also fully supportive of the alcohol and crime demonstration projects that have been established in a number of areas.

Pornography

6. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the results of the review into the law relating to pornography.

Mr. John Patten: This study is a review of existing research findings from a number of countries into the behavioural and other effects of pornography. We expect to publish this review in December.

Tottenham Three

7. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is prepared to set up an internal inquiry to look at the safety of the convictions of the Tottenham Three.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend is considering very carefully a number of representations which have been made to him about the safety of the convictions of Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghip and Winston Silcott. We will decide as soon as possible whether intervention in these cases would be justified.

Crime, North Yorkshire

8. **Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the figures for reported crime in North Yorkshire for 1989.

Mr. John Patten: There were 35,774 offences recorded by the police in North Yorkshire during 1989. This was an increase of 3 per cent. over the previous year. Over 90 per cent. of these offences were crimes against property where effective preventive measures in support of the police by the public can help reduce the opportunities for crime.

Courthouses

9. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new courthouses have been opened in England and Wales in each of the last three years.

Mr. John Patten: Eleven new courthouses were opened during the period 1987-89—one in 1988 and 10 in 1989. In addition, four others had major improvements carried out to existing buildings.

Crime, West Yorkshire

10. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet the chief constable of West Yorkshire to discuss crime reduction strategies.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend meets chief officers of police on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policing matters, but he has no present plans for a meeting with the chief constable of West Yorkshire to discuss crime reduction strategies in particular.

Crime Reporting

11. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the number of extra police officers required to keep pace with the increased work load resulting from the rise in the reporting of crimes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There is no simple correlation between levels of reported crime and the need for police posts. We hope to make an announcement shortly on the total number of police officers which police forces can recruit in 1991-92.

Police Shifts

12. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning changes to police shift working patterns.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I am aware of suggestions which have been made from time to time that the present police regulations are unnecessarily rigid and Home Office officials have been in touch with the Association of Chief Police Officers on this matter. We shall consider further how best to make progress on the issue.

UN Drugs Convention

13. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to be in a position to ratify the 1988 United Nations drugs convention.

Mr. John Patten: We hope to ratify the convention early in the new year when all the necessary subordinate legislation under the Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Act 1990 is brought into operation.

"Supervision and Punishment in the Community"

14. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the responses to the proposals as set out in the Green Paper "Supervision and Punishment in the Community".

Mr. John Patten: We received 159 responses which are now being carefully considered. All the main probation organisations responded, as did a number of other groups and individuals. We intend to make an announcement on the way forward before the end of the year.

Right to Silence

15. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about his Department's plans to reform the right to silence.

28. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to change the right of silence rules for suspects interviewed by police officers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We are continuing to consider what changes should be made.

Public Demonstrations

17. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to require those who wish to organise large public demonstrations to *(a)* contribute towards the cost of the necessary police operation and *(b)* take out insurance against the possibility of damage caused by vandalism and public disorder.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Recovering from organisers some or all of the costs of policing demonstrations was considered during the review of public order law which preceded the Public Order Act 1986. We concluded that it would not be possible to devise a general, workable provision. We believe that there would be similar difficulties in requiring organisers to insure against the possibility of damage caused by demonstrators.

Sentencing Policy

18. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about sentencing policy for the guidance of magistrates courts.

Mr. John Patten: We invited comments on the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm.. 965) and received about 200 responses from organisations and individuals, the overwhelming majority of whom welcomed its proposals.

47. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that offenders receive appropriate sentences.

Mr. John Patten: Our proposals for a coherent statutory framework for sentencing, so that the sentence reflects the seriousness of the crime, were set out in the White Paper, "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm. 965). We will introduce legislation to implement those proposals as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Fire Service College

19. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of responses expressed support for his proposal to increase direct charges for officers attending courses at the Fire Service college.

Mr. John Patten: All of the organisations which we consulted naturally wished to see the total cost of courses to continue to be met from central funds. We have gone some way towards meeting their concerns by introducing direct charging in England and Wales over a period of three years. The additional costs which fall to local authorities will be taken into account when decisions are taken about the level of revenue support grant.

Police Deployment

20. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he is having with chief constables about the efficient deployment of their police forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Chief officers, who have operational control over the deployment of their forces, and police authorities, which are statutorily responsible for providing an adequate and efficient force in their area, are well aware of the need to ensure that police resources are deployed to best effect. The search for greater value for money is a continuing theme in all our discussions with chief officers, and of the work of Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary and the Home Office.

Administration of Justice

21. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the estimated cost for the administration of justice in England and Wales for 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The estimated cost of the criminal justice system in England and Wales for 1989-90 is about £7 billion.

Crime, Cheshire

22. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he intends to take to reduce the level of crime in Cheshire.

Mr. John Patten: Decisions about the deployment of police resources in Cheshire are an operational matter for the chief constable. But we can all help to reduce crime by taking sensible preventive measures of the kind set out in the Government's booklet "Practical Ways to Crack Crime", and I am pleased to note that there are now over 4,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in the county, covering more than 120,000 households.

Prisons (Privatisation)

23. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on proposals to privatise prisons.

Mrs. Rumbold: A number of those who responded to the recent discussion paper "Court escorts, Custody and Security" also referred to our plans to introduce competitive tendering for the operation of the remand centre which is under development at Everthorpe, Humberside. Their views are being considered.

Broadcasting Policy

24. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the chairman of the BBC to discuss broadcasting policy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has regular meetings with the chairman of the BBC at which a range of broadcasting issues is discussed. The last meeting was on 25 September.

Football Matches (Policing Charges)

25. **Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department will take to monitor and regulate increases in charges for policing football matches in England and Wales.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: These charges are a matter for police authorities. We are consulting them, among others, on the terms of a Home Office circular but see no need at present for regulation or monitoring.

Women Prisoners

26. **Mrs. Heal:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the number of women sentenced to prison.

Mr. John Patten: The proposals for a coherent statutory framework for sentencing set out in the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm. 965) are intended to ensure that more offenders convicted of less serious, particularly property, offences are punished in the community. The national standards for community service orders, which came into effect on 1 April 1989, asked probation areas to ensure that community service placements are available for women offenders, including those who are pregnant, and offenders with young children. The new edition of "The Sentence of the Court", which reflects the Court of Appeal's guidance that custody should be used only when a court considers it absolutely necessary, refers specifically to women offenders with family responsibilities.

Crime Prevention

27. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to discuss crime prevention measures in the metropolis.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The House will be aware that the commissioner suffered a heart attack on the afternoon of 29 October and is at present in St. Thomas's hospital. All hon. Members will want to wish Sir Peter a speedy recovery and offer their sympathy to Lady Imbert. While Sir Peter is indisposed, the Metropolitan police will be under the command of the deputy commissioner, Sir John Dellow, and my right hon. and learned Friend will be meeting him shortly to discuss a range of matters.

Prison Work Regimes

29. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many of Her Majesty's prisons there is a regime of hard physical outdoors work for younger, healthy inmates; and what plans he has for the extension of such regimes.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information on regime activities in individual establishments is not held centrally but a number of establishments offer opportunities for purposeful and physically demanding outside work. In 1989-90, an average of 1,500 inmates a week were employed on building maintenance and refurbishment, and at 31 March 1990, some 1,900 inmates were employed on farms and gardens activities. It is the policy of the Prison Board to enhance and develop regimes and to ensure that the facilities of prison industries and farms are used to the best effect.

Young Remand Prisoners

30. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representation he has received in respect of 17 and 18-year-olds being held on remand in adult prison.

Mrs. Rumbold: We have not received recent representations specifically in regard to 17 and 18-year-olds, but I am of course aware of general concern in relation to young persons remanded into custody. Our policy is that wherever possible unconvicted and unsentenced male prisoners under the age of 21 years should be held in separate units. The practical possibilities are limited by the needs of the courts and the constraints of the prison estate. The latter are being alleviated by the prison building programme and certain role changes are also under consideration.

Prisoners (Education)

32. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to give all prisoners a right of access to education; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: A substantial proportion of the prison service's resources is devoted to basic education and the service aims to provide a variety of opportunities for prisoners. There was a 14 per cent. increase in student hours between 1988-89 and 1989-90.

In addition the Government are considering the recommendations of the third report from the Education, Science and Arts Committee (HC 482) on this matter, and will also wish to take into account any relevant recommendations of Lord Justice Woolf's inquiry into prison disturbances.

Private Security Companies

33. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the terms and conditions within which private security companies offer their services.

Mr. John Patten: There are no standard terms or conditions within which private security companies offer their services. It is for individuals to decide whether there is a need for additional protection of private property or possessions, to that provided by the police and it is for individual contractees to set the terms and conditions of service required.

Prison Suicides

34. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will next meet Judge Tumim to discuss current levels of suicides in British prisons.

Mrs. Rumbold: Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons, Judge Tumim, has at my right hon. and learned Friend's request been carrying out a review of the prison service's policies and procedures for preventing suicides by prison inmates in England and Wales. I understand that Judge Tumim aims to finalise his report shortly. My right hon. and learned Friend would expect to discuss the report with him.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of Stae from the Home Department if he will list all attempted suicides in 1990 in

prison department establishments, stating the age, sex and status; and whether the inmate was sentenced or on remand at the time of the attempt.

Mrs. Rumbold: By 31 October, reports on 136 attempted suicides in 1990 in prison department establishments had been received at the prison service headquarters. Information on age, sex and status and whether the inmate was sentenced or on remand at the time of the attempt is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Dispersal Prisons

35. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on staffing levels in dispersal prisons.

Mrs. Rumbold: Staffing levels in each of the dispersal prisons are set to take account of the nature of the inmate population and the work to be carried out in the particular establishment. On 1 October 1990 there were 2,566 officers (including principal officers and senior officers) serving in dispersal prisons. On the same date the number of inmates in the dispersal prisons was 2,814, that is an average of 1·1 for every officer in post. The ratio of officers to inmates varies significantly between the prisons reflecting differences in their design, scale and the particular facilities which they contain.

Nationality Applications

36. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the time taken to process an application for British nationality at the present time.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: In September 1990, the average time taken to complete an application for British citizenship was 23 months for registration and 32 months for naturalisation.

The Tote

37. **Mr. Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to publish the conclusions of the Lloyds report on the privatisation of the Tote; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: As I stated in my reply to my hon. Friend on 12 July at column *328*, the report by Lloyds merchant bank will not be published because it was made in confidence and contains commercially and managerially sensitive information. The report is still under consideration and the Government's conclusions will be made known in due course.

Electoral Registration

38. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the additional costs which have been incurred in regard to the registration of electors in 1990; and to what reason he attributes this additional cost.

Mrs. Rumbold: The level of central Government grant to local authorities in respect of electoral registration increases each year to take account of inflation. There has been no other increase in the level of grant for the compilation of the 1991-92 electoral register; nor are we aware that any significant additional expenditure has been incurred by electoral registration officers this year.

Police Efficiency

39. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is being taken to improve police efficiency.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Under the Police Act 1964 each police authority is responsible for providing an adequate and efficient police force, while my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has a general duty to promote efficiency in the service. In partnership with chief officers and police authorities, therefore, the Home Office is taking and encouraging action aimed at improving police efficiency, including:

1) encouraging civilianisation, which has released some 4,000 officers for operational duties in provincial forces since 1983-84, with a further 800 posts expected to be civilianised this year;
2) inspection of forces by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary and the identification and promulgation of "good practice";
3) a programme of efficiency scrutinies in forces, with 24 scrutinies in provincial forces completed or under-way to date;
4) action to follow up Audit Commission published reports on aspects of police work, and on local audits; and
5) a long-term research programme to improve methods of manpower allocation and develop better measures of police efficiency and effectiveness.

Ethnic Monitoring

40. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to introduce ethnic monitoring of police, probation and court decisions as a general practice.

Mr. John Patten: Ethnic monitoring of both staff and case-load in the probation service will begin in 1991. I hope that the development of monitoring, where this is feasible and useful, together with our wide-ranging programme of research studies will provide coherent information about the treatment of members of ethnic minorities within the criminal justice system.

Strangeways Prison

41. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what lessons have been learned and what actions are proposed as a result of the Strangeways prison riot.

Mrs. Rumbold: We shall, of course, consider carefully the recommendations of Lord Justice Woolf's inquiry, when they are received.

A new offence of prison mutiny is to be introduced. Physical security improvements have been identified with a view to denying inmates access to roof areas and facilitating staff access and control. Arrangements for the management of incidents under the reorganised senior structure of the prison service also take account of the lessons from the April disturbances in Strangeways and elsewhere. Also those experiences are being taken into account in the development of strategies for staff training, contingency planning, the protection of vulnerable prisoners and the management of disruptive prisoners.

50. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the dispersal of prisoners as a consequence of events in Strangeways gaol in April.

Mrs. Rumbold: Immediately before the disturbances, Her Majesty's prison Manchester held some 1,639 prisoners. It was not possible to accommodate so large a number in other prisons, and as a result substantial recourse had to be had to the use of police cells. Strenuous efforts are being made to resolve the industrial relations difficulties at a number of prisons which have since added to the problems.

As at 30 October 1990, 748 prisoners are being held in police cells who, but for the loss of prison service accommodation in Manchester, would be held in prison custody there. Twenty-one constabularies are currently involved in this operation and I am most grateful for their assistance.

Domestic Servants

42. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the number of domestic servants from overseas who, in the last 12 months, have entered the United Kingdom in company with their employers and without work permits.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: It is not possible to prepare a reliable estimate.

Refugees

43. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning Her Majesty's Government's policy on refugees.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: We frequently receive representations on aspects of our policy towards refugees and asylum seekers from hon. Members, interested organisations and the public. That policy is rooted in our obligations under the 1951 United Nations convention relating to the status of refugees and our general determination to maintain firm and fair immigration control.

Electro-static Detection Analysis

44. **Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether electro-static detection analysis testing is made available as a matter of routine to the defence in all cases on indictment where the Crown relies on a written statement by the accused.

Mr. John Patten: Such analysis is not conducted routinely. The defence in preparing its case may obtain expert evidence and may seek assistance from the forensic science service. Each party is bound, under the Crown court (advance notice of expert evidence) rules 1987, to disclose to the other any expert evidence which it proposes to adduce in proceedings. In addition, under guidelines issued by the Attorney-General in 1981, the prosecution makes available to the defence any unused material if it has some bearing on the offence charged and the surrounding circumstances of the case.

Violent Crime

46. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assistance is available to help local police forces suddenly faced with a sharp upsurge of violent crimes.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Government support for the police is provided in a number of ways, including an increase in expenditure on the police of almost 59 per cent. in real terms since 1979, an increase in the number of police officers of over 15,300 and specific grant of 51 per cent. on police expenditure. It is the responsibility of chief officers to deploy these resources in response to violent crime or any other priority. It is clear that this is being done to good effect so that there are high clear-up rates for violent crime of which there is a lesser incidence in England and Wales than in most European countries, the United States, Canada and Australia.

Drug Seizures

48. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the numbers of drug seizures in Britain in 1990.

Mr. John Patten: In the period 1 January to 23 October 1990, Customs reported a provisional total of 6,471 seizures of controlled drugs in Great Britain. The latest information in relation to seizures made by the police is for 1989, figures for which are published, along with those for seizures by Customs, in table 2.3 of the Home Office statistical bulletin issue 24/90, "Statistics of the Misuse of Drugs: Seizures and Offenders dealt with, United Kingdom 1989", a copy of which is in the Library.

Community Service Orders

49. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress being made with community service orders.

Mr. John Patten: National standards to achieve greater consistency in the application of community service programmes were introduced on 1 April 1989; the results of the first year of operation are being analysed and should be available soon. The White Paper, "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public", published earlier this year, outlined new proposals for community penalties, including making community service orders available with probation orders.

Border Controls

51. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about border control between Britain and other European Community countries.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I have nothing to add at present to the statement which my right hon. and learned Friend gave to the House on 27 June 1990 at columns *220-21*, following the last meeting of Trevi and European Community Immigration Ministers in Dublin in June.

Sexual Offences

52. **Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will remove the corroboration rules which exist in relation to the evidence of the victims of an alleged sexual offence; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The Law Commission is reviewing the law concerning the corroboration of evidence in criminal proceedings including sexual offences. We shall consider the Law Commission's final report and any recommendations to change the law as and when they are made.

Remand

53. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the numbers of people remanded in custody.

Mr. John Patten: We are promoting a range of practical measures to reduce the numbers of people remanded in custody. These include the development of more bail information schemes and an increase in the number of bail hostel places; encouragement to the courts to take measures to reduce delays; the continuing extension of custody time limits and the development of mode of trial guidelines for magistrates. We have also recently issued a circular on mentally disordered offenders which should help reduce the numbers of such people who are remanded in custody.

Custody (Boys)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many 15 and 16-year-old boys in England and Wales were *(a)* remanded into penal custody and *(b)* sentenced to custody in 1989 and during the first six months of 1990.

Mrs. Rumbold: The readily available information is given in the table. Data for 1989 are derived from tables 2.6 and 3.10 of "Prison statistics England and Wales" (Cm. 1221), copies of which are in the Library.

Receptions[1] of male juveniles into prison service establishments in England and Wales: by type of reception

Type of reception	*1989*	*1 January-30 June 1990*
All remand, of which	[2]1,470	[2]670
Untried	[2]1,382	[2]630
Convicted unsentenced	[2]416	[2]167
Sentenced[3]	2,131	[2]738

[1]Excludes non-criminal prisoners. Some of the persons received in each category of prisoner were also received in another category.
[2]Provisional figures.
[3]Includes juveniles aged 14.

Prisoners (Police Cells)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* sentenced and *(b)* remand prisoners were being held in police cells in England and Wales on the latest date available.

Mrs. Rumbold: On 31 October a total of 1,027 prisoners were held in police cells. It is not possible to provide a breakdown between remand and other classes of prisoners because at present these figures are not collected centrally for all police areas.

Crown Court Trials

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he holds on the number of cases in which defendants initially plead that they are not guilty and elect for their trials to go before a Crown court and subsequently have their cases transferred to a magistrates court; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Defendants do not enter a plea before electing Crown court trial and cases committed for trial there are not referred back to be tried at a magistrates court.

Prisoners (Deaths)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all deaths during 1990 of persons detained in prison department establishments, stating in each case the age and sex of the inmate, the cause of the death, the inquest verdict, the establishment where the inmate was held, whether the death occurred in the prison or in an outside hospital, whether the inmate was sentenced or on remand and whether the inmate was occupying a single cell, multi-occupied cell, on the punishment block or in the prison hospital.

Mrs. Rumbold: Almost all the information requested was given in the reply that I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) on 29 October 1990 at columns *351-54*. Information about whether the inmate was occupying a single or shared cell at the time of death was not included in that reply, and is not readily available in a number of cases. I shall include this information when I write to the hon. Member for Huddersfield and send a copy of that letter to the hon. Member.

Prisoners (Local Authority Care)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of male and female prisoners in England and Wales had previously been in local authority care.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested is not recorded centrally.

Income Support Claimants

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for the latest available year the number of income support claimants sent to prison for failure to pay a court fine.

Mrs. Rumbold: While no statistics on the financial status of prisoners are recorded centrally, such information as is available suggests that perhaps three-quarters of those detained for failure to pay a court fine were in receipt of income support.

Electronic Monitoring Trials

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average total cost of monitoring the 50 defendants placed under surveillance during the recent electronic monitoring trials in Tyneside, Nottingham and London.

Mr. John Patten: The total cost of the electronic monitoring trials was about £700,000 for 50 defendants. But the former figure includes the cost of setting up three different schemes on an experimental basis and the special production of the equipment needed. It would not be sensible to take the figure yielded by dividing the latter figure into the former as a realistic average cost for the use of electronic monitoring on a larger scale.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the 50 participants in the electronic monitoring trials in England and Wales reached their trials without being brought to court for an alleged violation, breaching, being additionally charged with an offence, subsequently bailed or absconding during the monitoring period.

Mr. John Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Electoral Statistics

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, of 25 October, *Official Report*, column *258*, how many names will appear on the provisional electoral register for the Finchley parliamentary constituency which is due to be published in November 1990; and how many of these are expatriate registrations.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested will not become available until the publication of the draft electoral register on 28 November.

Prisons (Medical Care)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints from inmates about medical care in prisons in England and Wales have been received during the last five years.

Mrs. Rumbold: Records of the type requested are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However the prison service working group on grievance procedures, which published its report in July last year, produced an estimate of the proportion of complaints received at prison service headquarters which related to medical matters. That estimate produces a figure of around 1,100 medical complaints received in the last year of the old grievance procedures, which were replaced on 25 September this year.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the findings of the research conducted by Professor Gunn into the incidence of mentally disordered inmates in the prison system in England and Wales.

Mrs. Rumbold: Professor Gunn, Institute of Psychiatry, university of London, was commissioned to produce over a three-year period a definitive statement of the dimensions of the problem of sentenced mentally disturbed offenders in the prison system in England and Wales. This is an important study which will provide a sound basis on which the Department is able to consider the further development of its policies.

The report is expected soon. Following normal practice we intend that once it has then been considered arrangements will be made for its wide dissemination.

Places of Entertainment (Access)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that fire officers are aware of regulations on access to and egress from places of entertainment for people with disabilities.

Mr. John Patten: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date he last published regulations and guidelines concerning access to places of entertainment for people with disabilities.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement concerning the neighbourhood watch schemes in the Easington district; and whether he will make extra funds available to extend the schemes.

Mr. John Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Remand Prisoners, Durham

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of prisoners on remand in Durham prisons in the year 1988-89, and the average length of time of such remands.

Mrs. Rumbold: I will write to the hon. Member.

Arrests

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 25 July, if he will break down the numbers of people arrested in England and Wales in 1986, 1988 and 1989 by police force areas.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I will write to the hon. Member.

Work Permits

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what action he intends to take against the BBC for employing Mr. Patrick Shai on the production of "Land of Dreams" without a work permit having been issued; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many summonses have been issued against employers employing persons without work permits in each of the last three financial years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I will write to the hon. Member.

Police Officers, Peterlee

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the compliment of police officers in the Peterlee subdivision for the last three years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Peterlee subdivision was merged with the Seaham subdivision on 1 January 1989 to form the Easington subdivision. The table shows only that part of the establishment and strength of the Easington subdivision which covers Peterlee.

Peterlee subdivision

31 December	*Establishment*	*Strength*
1988	119	115
1989	114	114
[1]1990	117	118

[1] 31 October.

Special Constables

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables has South Yorkshire *(a)* proportionate to the population and *(b)* proportionate to other counties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: South Yorkshire has an estimated population of 1,293,000 of whom 316 are members of the

special constabulary. Appendix 7 of the report of Her Majesty's chief inspector of constabulary lists the number of special constables and the population of force areas for each police force in England and Wales, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Labour Party Conference

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the total policing costs arising from the Labour party conference in Blackpool; and what proportion of the cost will be met by local authorities.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the chief constable of Lancashire that the additional costs of policing the Labour party conference in Blackpool were £97,545. The additional costs of policing will be met by Lancashire police authority. Under the normal police funding arrangements, the Government contribute both directly through police grant—which is at 51 per cent.—and indirectly through revenue support grant.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Waddington: I will write to the hon. Member.

Le Vay Report

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on plans to implement the Le Vay report.

Mr. John Patten: We have now received and published the report of consultants appointed to prepare an assessment of the costs of implementing the main organisational recommendations in the report of the magistrates courts scrutiny 1989 and of an alternative organisational model. We are giving further thought to the scrutiny recommendations in the light of the consultants' advice and of any comments on their work by interested bodies.

Mr. Arthur Scargill

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to what permission has been sought by the company fraud department to interview Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. The police do not require permission to conduct interviews during the course of their inquiries.

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to his most up-to-date estimate of the likely completion date of the company fraud department, Metropolitan police, inquiries into the activities of Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the Metropolitan police expect their initial inquiries into the allegations against members of the NUM to be completed shortly.

London Prisons

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if staff for new prisons are to be transferred from other London prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: To enable Belmarsh prison to open in April 1991, a total of 353 new prison officers will be recruited. In addition, it is proposed to redeploy to Belmarsh 202 officer posts from a number of other prisons in the London area as a consequence of the transfer of work there from those establishments. The reductions in staffing levels at existing establishments will be effected by means of wastage and voluntary transfers to other establishments.

Public Interest Immunity Certificates

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when and for what reasons public interest immunity certificates are issued; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: A certificate claiming public interest immunity may, exceptionally, be issued by the Secretary of State when information is sought by a party to legal proceedings relating to matters within his responsibility. It is not practicable to give a detailed description of the circumstances where such a claim would be made, but I would issue a certificate only if I was satisfied that it was necessary in the public interest to prevent disclosure of the information.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by date, and by location, the number of occasions in the past 10 years when public interest immunity certificates have been issued in the three counties of Yorkshire and Humberside concerning matters before coroners and other courts preventing members of the police forces and others within the remit of his Department from attending such courts, and to prevent such courts from hearing details of operations, indicating which operations were involved and how many individuals were covered by such certificates.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 17 October at column *820*.

Royal Family

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by date and location for the last five years to date the number of intruders who have been discovered on premises *(a)* owned by members of the royal family and *(b)* where members of the royal family have been in attendance; and if he will show, in his answer, the sentences imposed by the courts.

Mr. John Patten: The information is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Rape

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the minimum sentence, the maximum sentence and the average length of sentence given in cases of rape between 1984 and 1990; and what was the average sentence served by rapists.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 19 October 1990]:* The information is not available in precisely the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Available statistics do not distinguish between rape, and aiding and abetting rape. The average determinate sentence for offences of rape, and aiding and abetting rape between 1984 and 1988 was as follows:

Year	*Average sentence length (months)*
1984	44·1
1985	54·2
1986	65·5
1987	74·5
1988	74·5

In both 1984 and 1988, the maximum sentence given for rape was life imprisonment.

EMPLOYMENT

Earnings

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the increase since *(a)* April 1979 and *(b)* April 1989 in real average weekly earnings for (i) full-time adult male and (ii) full-time adult female workers, including overtime but excluding absence in the case of *(w)* manual workers in manufacturing, *(x)* other manuals, *(y)* non-manuals and *(z)* journalists; and if he will provide similar figures for the period April 1974 to April 1979.

Mr. Jackson: Information on the average gross weekly earnings of full-time adult employees at April of the years in question is published in part A of the annual new earnings survey reports with the exception of manuals in non-manufacturing in the last two years, for which the figures are as follows:

	Males £	*Females* £
1989	207·5	131·4
1990	227·1	143·4

The available information for journalists can be found in table 8 of the reports for 1979, 1989 and 1990. Information on the retail prices index—all items—to convert the figures to 1990 prices is published in table 6.4 of *Employment Gazette* for April 1989 and 1990, and in table 26 of the annual supplement to *Economic Trends* for April of earlier years. Copies of the publications are available in the Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase between 1988 and 1989 in the average earnings of full-time adult male manual workers in manufacturing, including overtime and excluding absences, and the corresponding increases for *(a)* the whole economy and *(b)* non-manuals in (i) banking, finance, insurance and business services, (ii) banking and finance and (iii) education and health; and whether he will add figures for manuals employed in *(c)* mechanical engineering and *(d)* clothing, footwear and textiles.

Mr. Jackson: Information for 1988 and 1989 is published in parts A and C of the respective annual new earnings survey reports, copies of which are available in the Library.

Employment Training

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of accidents on employment training, fatal, major and minor, for each quarter since June 1989; and how many employer or project-based work placements were closed or rejected in those periods on health and safety grounds.

Mr. Jackson: Information on accidents on employment training is given in the table. Between 1 June 1989 and 30 September 1990, 11 employer or project-based work placements were closed on health and safety grounds.

Quarter	*Fatal*	*Major (b)*	*Minor*
1989			
1 July to 30 September	Nil	52	286
1 October to 31 December	Nil	67	246
1990			
1 January to 31 March	1	40	208
1 April to 30 June	Nil	50	269
1 July to 30 September	2	44	214

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for each region and for Great Britain as a whole the number of ET trainees who have been recruited under the skill shortage category, in numbers and as a proportion of all ET recruits, for each quarter since ET began; and if he will outline what criteria were used when locally defining what is a skill shortage area of training.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested about the number and proportions of skill shortage entrants to employment can be provided only at disproportionate cost. It would not be appropriate to set national criteria for defining local skill shortage occupations.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) for each region and for Great Britain as a whole, for each quarter since June 1989, what was the number of trainees on employment training who were on placements with employers or on placements in projects;

(2) if he will give for each region and for Great Britain as a whole for the latest available period the characteristics of entrants to ET showing *(a)* the number of male and female entrants, *(b)* their ethnic origins, *(c)* their duration of unemployment and *(d)* whether they had a disability.

Mr. Jackson: In view of the detailed information requested, I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible with the information.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the best estimate he has for the numbers and amounts of ET overpayments which have taken place since the start of the programme, including *(a)* overpayment of individual ET training allowances, numbers and amounts, *(b)* overpayment of grants to training agents and *(c)* overpayment of grants to training managers; how much has been recovered; how much has been written off; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: I will write to the hon. Member.

Youth Training

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for each region and for Great Britain as a whole, the number of all YTS-youth training trainees in training by gender, and the numbers of each sex who had contracts of employment, for each quarter since March 1988.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give for each region and for Great Britain as a whole for each month since April 1987 the *(a)* number of planned entrants for YTS/YT, *(b)* the actual number of entrants to YTS/YT and *(c)* the total in training in each month on YTS/YT.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested is voluminous. I will arrange for the tables to be placed in the Library.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole, how many YTS youth training providers there are; how many YTS/youth training providers have lost or failed to obtain approved training organisation status in each year since 1988; why ATO status has been refused or withdrawn in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the allocated budget of each of the training and enterprise councils which have become operational, showing the amount contracted for *(a)* youth training, *(b)* employment training and *(c)* enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Jackson: The allocated budgets for each of the operational training and enterprise councils (TECs) are as follows:

	Total allocated budget £ million	*YT £ million*	*ET £ million*	*EAS £ million*
South East				
Isle of Wight	1·50	0·65	0·34	0·15
Hertfordshire	10·10	4·44	1·96	1·34
Heart of England	4·25	2·24	0·81	0·33
Hampshire	13·18	7·72	3·0	0·89
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	2·80	1·52	0·59	0·18
Kent	8·54	5·36	2·66	0·74
Essex	14·47	9·90	5·41	1·65
Thames Valley	10·50	5·04	2·02	1·12
South West				
Somerset	6·88	3·69	1·24	0·70
Dorset	10·74	5·9	2·15	1·38
Devon/Cornwall	39·94	21·05	10·98	5·20
West Midlands				
Walsall	4·24	2·09	1·43	0·28
Coventry and Warwickshire	12·94	7·08	3·14	1·00
Staffordshire	16·71	10·02	3·43	0·92
East Midlands				
North Notts	12·02	6·70	2·56	0·95
Yorkshire and Humberside				
Calderdale/Kirklees	17·58	9·40	5·13	1·55

	Total allocated budget £ million	YT £ million	ET £ million	EAS £ million
North Yorkshire	10·02	4·71	2·78	1·16
Rotherham	6·99	2·97	2·58	0·59
Sheffield	11·59	5·23	3·85	0·84
Leeds	8·59	3·77	2·48	0·94
North West				
South and East Cheshire	6·67	3·77	0·92	0·74
East Lancashire	12·56	6·71	2·95	1·16
METROTEC (Wigan)	6·12	3·42	1·83	0·64
Cumbria	13·94	7·77	2·92	1·07
Rochdale	5·60	2·64	1·61	0·56
Bolton and Bury	4·50	2·58	0·79	0·64
Oldham	7·40	4·36	1·40	0·58
Stockport and High Peak	4·76	2·55	1·11	0·66
Northern				
County Durham	15·91	8·64	5·15	0·21
Tyneside	31·23	17·1	7·6	2·60
Wearside	17·39	8·5	6·4	0·88
Teesside	28·68	14·8	11·8	1·94
Northumberland	7·04	3·49	1·77	0·78
Wales				
West Wales	17·74	7·15	6·11	2·53
North East Wales	5·48	3·05	1·28	0·53
Mid Glamorgan	11·83	6·70	4·28	0·98

Individual budget figures relate to the period from the date when the TEC became operational to the end of the 1990-91 financial year.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many operational training and enterprise council chairmen and individual board members have had to resign; which training enterprise councils they have left; what reasons they gave for their resignations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: No operational training and enterprise council (TEC) chairmen have resigned. Nineteen board members have resigned for a variety of reasons, as follows:

TEC	Number	Reason
Bolton and Bury	2	Extra pressure on time
Devon and Cornwall	1	Extra pressure on time
East Lancashire	2	One—company closed down; one—extra pressure on time
Hertfordshire	2	Job changes
North Yorkshire	2	Job changes
Oldham	1	Job change
Rotherham	1	Moved out of area
Somerset	2	Extra pressure on time
Teesside	2	One—retired; one—moved out of area
Wearside	1	Company closed down
West Wales	1	Firm gone into liquidation
Wigan	2	One—ill health; one—job change

Well over 1,200 key business leaders are involved with TECs and the initiative is some two years ahead of schedule.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which Government and training and enterprise councils training schemes he has designated as approved training for the purposes of the Social Security Act 1975; which of these schemes will recruit trainees over the age of 18 years; if it remains the Government's policy that employment training will remain a voluntary scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Only youth training is currently designated as approved training for the purposes of the Social Security Act 1975. Youth training is primarily for under-18s, but some over-18s may also enter. There are no plans to designate employment training. Both youth training and employment training remain voluntary.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give a list of those training and enterprise councils which have become operational, the number of board members on each of them and those training enterprise councils which are in the development phase, indicating when he expects each of them to become operational.

Mr. Jackson: Thirty-six TECs are operational and these are listed, with the number of board members for each TEC:

	Board Members
South East	
Essex	15
Hampshire	11
Heart of England	12
Hertfordshire	11
Isle of Wight	14
Kent	15
Milton Keynes and North Bucks	15
Thames Valley Enterprise	13
South West	
Devon and Cornwall	15
Dorset	15
Somerset	14
West Midlands	
Coventry/Warwickshire	12
Staffordshire	15
Walsall	14
East Midlands and Anglia	
North Nottinghamshire	13
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Calderdale and Kirklees	15
Leeds	15
North Yorkshire	14
Rotherham	11
Sheffield	15
North West	
Bolton/Bury	15
Cumbria	12
S and E Cheshire	9
ELTEC	13
METROTEC	14
Oldham	14
Rochdale	14
Stockport and High Peak	11
Northern	
County Durham	15
Northumberland	13
Teesside	14
Tyneside	14
Wearside	13
Wales	
Mid Glamorgan	15
North East Wales	12
West Wales	15

Forty-six TECs are in their development phase, and I confidently expect that they will be operational by summer 1991.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many board members are currently serving on operational training and enterprise councils; how many of them are women or are from an ethnic minority; how many of the training and enterprise councils have a woman or person from an ethnic minority as chairman; which sectors the board members came from, showing those from *(a)* the private sector, *(b)* local authorities, *(c)* trade unions, *(d)* local education authorities, *(e)* voluntary organisations and *(f)* health authorities; and how many training and enterprise councils' chief executives are also board members.

Mr. Jackson: There are currently 487 board members serving on the 36 operational training and enterprise councils (TECs). Of these, 49 are women. None of the TECs operational to date has appointed a woman as chairman.

Information is not kept on the ethnic origin of TEC board members.

The number of board members originating from the sectors identified are as follows:

	Number
Private sector	339
Local authorities	47
Trade unions	26
Local education authorities	16
Voluntary organisations	14
Health authorities	11

There are currently 22 chief executives who are also TEC board members.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish up-to-date figures for Great Britain and each region for each month since September 1989 showing the cumulative number of *(a)* referrals to ET from the Employment Service to training agents, *(b)* agreed ET action plans at training agents, *(c)* starts with ET training managers, *(d)* the number in training on ET each month and *(e)* the number of people who left ET each month.

Mr. Jackson: The information on referrals is given in table 1. Information for the period to March 1990 on action plans, starts, in training and leavers is given in tables 2, 3, 4 and 5. Information on action plans is not collected from April 1990. Information from April 1990 about the number of starts with training managers and leavers is not available. In training figures are not available for regions from April 1990. Estimated in training figures from April for Great Britain are given at table 6.

Table 1
Employment service referrals to employment training: October 1989 to September 1990

	London and South East	*South West*	*West Midlands*	*East Midlands and Eastern*	*Yorkshire and Humberside*	*North West*	*Northern*	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Great Britain*
1989										
October	15,300	4,000	7,700	5,000	7,300	11,900	6,600	5,100	12,400	75,200
November	31,100	7,700	15,100	10,900	15,100	23,500	13,000	10,200	24,400	150,900
December	44,100	10,700	20,900	15,500	21,500	32,100	17,600	14,000	33,500	209,900
1990										
January	61,100	15,000	29,600	21,500	29,900	44,700	24,200	19,400	45,000	290,600
February	78,400	19,500	39,600	27,700	38,900	57,800	30,600	24,800	57,900	375,100
March	98,300	24,800	49,900	34,800	49,000	73,300	37,700	30,700	72,000	470,400
April	107,700	27,200	55,300	39,500	54,800	81,200	41,400	34,300	79,500	520,900
May	119,300	29,800	61,000	43,600	60,600	89,700	45,700	38,100	87,900	575,700
June	131,600	33,200	67,000	48,600	67,200	99,600	50,400	42,100	98,300	638,100
July	142,200	36,200	72,100	53,100	73,100	107,900	54,600	45,500	105,200	689,900
August	155,700	40,600	77,500	57,900	79,800	117,900	59,400	49,700	115,400	754,000
September	167,700	44,400	83,400	62,600	85,900	127,000	64,600	53,700	122,800	812,000

Table 2
Employment training
Action plans agreed at training agents: October 1989 to March 1990

Training agency region	*1989*			*1990*		
	October	*November*	*December*	*January*	*February*	*March*
South East	3,100	5,700	8,200	11,200	15,100	19,500
London	4,600	9,300	13,200	17,200	21,800	27,500
South West	2,200	4,600	6,400	8,500	11,000	14,200
West Midlands	4,200	8,600	12,100	16,200	21,800	28,000
East Midlands and Eastern	2,700	5,700	8,200	10,700	14,200	18,400
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,900	9,800	14,400	19,200	24,800	31,600
North West	6,300	12,300	16,700	22,000	28,700	37,100
Northern	4,400	8,700	12,300	16,500	21,200	26,100
Wales	2,800	4,500	6,300	8,900	12,500	16,300
Scotland	5,800	12,000	16,300	20,800	26,300	33,300
Great Britain	41,000	81,400	114,000	151,000	197,200	252,100

Table 3
Cumulative starts at employment training managers: October 1989 to March 1990

Training agency region	1989 October	November	December	1990 January	February	March
South East	2,500	4,900	6,400	9,200	11,700	15,100
London	3,400	6,900	9,500	13,400	17,500	22,000
South West	1,900	3,600	4,900	7,100	9,000	11,400
West Midlands	3,700	7,500	10,400	14,000	18,500	23,800
East Midlands and Eastern	2,800	5,500	7,600	10,100	13,300	17,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,600	9,400	13,100	17,400	22,500	28,600
North West	5,200	10,900	14,600	19,900	25,800	33,000
Northern	3,700	6,700	9,600	12,900	17,000	21,900
Wales	2,900	5,300	7,200	9,700	12,900	16,300
Scotland	4,800	9,700	13,200	17,100	22,400	28,700
Great Britain[1]	35,500	71,800	98,000	132,500	172,500	219,800

[1] Includes starts at Residential Training Colleges and Large Contractor Trainees not included in regional totals.

Table 4
Employment Training Filled Places: October 1989 to March 1990

Training Agency Region	1989 October	November	December	1990 January	February	March
South East	14,900	14,800	14,300	14,700	14,900	15,100
London	20,700	21,100	21,000	21,800	22,300	22,700
South West	12,300	12,200	11,900	12,100	11,800	11,900
West Midlands	23,200	23,200	22,500	21,900	22,400	22,600
East Midlands and Eastern	16,800	16,800	16,600	16,400	16,400	16,100
Yorkshire and Humberside	25,200	25,200	25,100	24,700	25,000	25,600
North West	28,800	29,800	28,800	28,900	29,000	29,600
Northern	24,300	24,400	24,200	23,700	23,300	23,100
Wales	16,600	16,600	16,100	15,900	16,100	15,900
Scotland	25,700	26,400	26,100	25,900	26,300	26,400
Great Britain[1]	209,000	212,000	208,000	207,000	209,000	210,000

[1] Great Britain total includes small number of trainees at Residential Training Colleges and Large Contractors not included in regional figures.

Table 5
Employment Training Leavers: October 1989 to March 1990

Training Agency Region	1989 October	November	December	1990 January	February	March
South East	2,400	4,900	6,900	9,300	11,600	14,800
London	2,900	6,000	8,700	11,800	15,400	19,500
South West	1,600	3,400	5,000	7,000	9,300	11,500
West Midlands	3,800	7,800	11,300	15,500	19,500	24,600
East Midlands and Eastern	2,900	5,600	7,900	10,600	13,700	17,800
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,600	9,400	13,200	17,900	22,700	28,200
North West	5,500	10,200	14,900	20,100	25,900	32,500
Northern	4,400	7,200	10,400	14,200	18,600	23,700
Wales	2,800	5,200	7,500	10,300	13,200	16,800
Scotland	4,100	8,400	12,200	16,300	21,200	27,400
Great Britain[1]	34,400	68,200	98,300	133,300	171,800	217,600

[1] Includes leavers at Residential Training Colleges and Large Contractor trainees not included in regional totals.

Table 6
Employment training filled places April 1990-October 1990: (Estimated)

Month	
April 1990	210,000
May	208,000
June	199,000
July	191,000
August	185,000
September	184,000
October	190,000

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the output-related targets for employment training-youth training for each of the training and enterprise councils which have become operational; what proportion of each of the training and enterprise councils' budgets will be paid only if they achieve these targets; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Output-related targets for employment training and youth training are negotiated with individual training and enterprise councils and reflect local circumstances. Generally, the agreed target has been 10 per cent. of the total TEC budget; this payment is made for the attainment of relevant vocational qualifications under youth training and jobs secured under employment training.

Back-to-Work Grant

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give details of the back-to-work grant being piloted by his Department and outline what other forms of assistance are available to unemployed people who are just about to start work; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Department of Employment is not piloting a back-to-work grant. Unemployed people can take advantage of the advice and help available from employment service staff. They can give information on the benefits available to people in work. These include family credit, child benefit, housing benefit and community charge benefit.

YTS Accidents

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the numbers of accidents on YTS —fatal, major and minor—for the periods January to March, April to June and July to September; and how many YTS placements were closed or not accepted in these periods.

Mr. Jackson: Table A gives the YTS accident figures.

Table A[1]

Quarter	*Fatal*	*Major*[2]	*Minor*
1 January 1990 to 31 March 1990	1	133	527
1 April 1990 to 30 June 1990	Nil	163	604
1 July 1990 to 30 September 1990	Nil	87	440

[1] Training Agency figures have been compiled on a similar basis to those prepared by the Health and Safety Executive on employed persons. However, the Training Agency's figures will include a number of accidents to trainees in educational establishments and road traffic accidents which may not have been reportable to the Health and Safety Executive had the individual been employed.

[2] Major injuries are classified according to the severity criteria laid down in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985.

Separate figures for closures and rejections for employer-based and project-based work placements are not kept. Table B gives the reported figures of closures and rejections on health and safety grounds from 1 January 1990 to 30 September 1990.

Table B

Quarter	*Closed*	*Rejected*
1 January 1990 to 31 March 1990	Nil	Nil
1 April 1990 to 30 June 1990	Nil	Nil
1 July 1990 to 30 September 1990	1	2

Unemployed Claimants

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the latest information showing from 9 October 1989 for each region and for Great Britain as a whole the number of unemployed claimants who have *(a)* been issued with warning letters for not actively seeking work, *(b)* had their claims referred to an adjudication officer for not actively seeking work, *(c)* had their claims (i) allowed or (ii) disallowed and *(d)* been referred to an adjudication officer for refusing suitable employment; and what is the number of those in *(d)* who have had their benefit disqualified.

Mr. Jackson: Questions on operational matters in the Employment Service executive agency are the responsibility of Mike Fogden, the agency's chief executive, to whom I have referred this question for reply.

Sellafield and British Nuclear Fuels

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what studies have been commissioned by the Health and Safety Executive into radiation risks at Sellafield using the epidemiological case control method; (2) what studies have been commissioned by Her Majesty's Government recently into the health and work records of employees of British Nuclear Fuels plc.

Mr. Forth: Following publication of the Gardner report on childhood leukaemia and lymphoma in west Cumbria, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has commissioned studies to examine other factors which may be relevant to Professor Gardner's findings since there appeared to be a statistical association between the incidence of childhood leukaemia and lymphoma and paternal employment at the Sellafield reprocessing plant. These studies will comprise three parts:

(a) an investigation to see if the case fathers' doses were exceptional compared with the Sellafield work force as a whole;

(b) an investigation into the occupational histories of the case fathers to see if there are any common factors; and

(c) an epidemiological case control study looking at workplace exposure and occupational histories.

The studies will proceed subject to the acceptance by the medical ethical committees of the United Kingdom of the HSE's proposals.

Employment (Over-60s)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* statistics on the employment of over 60s in Britain; and if he will introduce legislation to protect those aged over 60 years who wish to work against prejudice from both public and private employers.

Mr. Jackson: The 1989 labour force survey found that in spring 1989 the number of people aged 60 or over in employment in Great Britain was 1,437,000. We have no plans to introduce legislation on age discrimination, since we believe that it would be difficult to apply and uncertain in its effect. Our policy is to persuade employers to consider all applicants on merit, without imposing arbitrary age limits on recruitment.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average time his Department takes in reply to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Howard: The average time taken in reply to an hon. Member's letter is 20·2 days.

Information on the shortest time and the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Part-time and Temporary Work

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will place in the Library copies of the responses received from organisations to his Department's consultation document on the European Commission's proposals on part-time and temporary work.

Mr. Forth: No. It is for the organisations which responded to decide whether to publish their views.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, pursuant to his answer on 22 October,

Official Report, column *2*, he will place in the Library a list of organisations that responded to the consultation document on part-time and temporary work.

Mr. Forth: I have arranged for the list to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Patrick Shai

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when his Department was notified by British Actors Equity Association that the BBC was employing Mr. Patrick Shai without a work permit; and what action was taken.

Mr. Forth: British Actors Equity Association wrote to my overseas labour section in this Department on 14 February 1990 saying that Mr. Patrick Shai was working. In accordance with standing instructions, this letter was forwarded on 21 February to the Home Office, which is responsible for investigating any possible breach of the Immigration Act.

Health and Safety Offences

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the offences which may be committed by companies concerning the health and safety of employees, in each case specifying the notices which may be served on companies which fail to comply with statutory provisions.

Mr. Forth: The offences for which the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and its agents are responsible are listed in sections 33(1), 36 and 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974—the HSW Act—and breaches of the relevant statutory provisions, listed in schedule 1 of the HSW Act, and regulations made under them. If an inspector is of the opinion that an offence has been committed under any of this legislation, he may issue a prohibition or improvement notice in accordance with sections 21 and 22 of the HSW Act.

DEFENCE

Atlantic Conveyor

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what financial contribution was made by his Department for the replacement of the Atlantic Conveyor in the Falklands war; for what purpose; and why it was not chartered to assist in the transporting of arms and forces to the Gulf military operation.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The financial contribution made by the MOD is commercially confidential. As described in Cmnd 8758, "The Falklands Campaign: The Lessons", militarily useful features were incorporated in the vessel, involving principally a prefabricated helicopter flight deck. The vessel has not however been offered in response to our bids for sealift for the Gulf operation as other vessels more suited to the particular requirements were available for charter.

Gulf Crisis

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cost to date of chartering Merchant Navy vessels to assist in Gulf military operations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not the Department's policy to make public how much it has paid for the charter of merchant vessels.

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many merchant ships have been chartered by his Department to assist in the Gulf military operation; and what are the names of the ships, sizes and flags of registration.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Forty-three merchant vessels have been chartered to date. Details are as follows:

Name of vessel	*Size (DWT)*	*Flag*
Dana Cimbria	6,897	Denmark
Scheldemond	3,309	St. Vincent
Jolly Turchese	19,420	Italy
Mercandian Queen II	7,200	Denmark
Alsyta Smits	6,110	Netherlands
Tor Caledonia	9,882	Denmark
Roseanne	4,106	Cyprus
Seabird	4,270	Denmark
Arcade Falcon	6,575	Norway
Nordic Pride	5,350	Sweden
Cala Atlantica	12,628	Panama
Baltic Eider	12,830	United Kingdom
Nornews Service	4,000	Norway
Atlantica	3,502	Cyprus
Roro Runner	4,720	Panama
Guyanne	8,771	Cyprus
Mungo	15,599	Bahamas
Bakengracht	3,445	Netherlands
Cecilia 1	6,000	Netherlands
Brabo	3,600	Cyprus
Admiralengracht	11,300	Netherlands
Baltic Eagle	9,450	United Kingdom
Mirach	4,800	Cyprus
Barentzgracht	3,445	Netherlands
Kasmariane	6,881	Norway
Snoekgracht	3,300	Netherlands
Swan	4,792	Netherlands
Stig Gorthon	8,873	Sweden
Arroyofrio Dos	4,600	Spain
Conro Trader	4,350	Antigua
Nomadic Patria	17,160	Norway
Sea Pearl	3,880	Bahamas
Conti Britannia	7,443	Germany
Slotegracht	6,195	Netherlands
Aetos	4,751	Greece
Geroro	4,350	Norway
Sat Mars	15,518	Bahamas
Askania	3,560	Antigua
Sylt	3,000	Germany
Makiri	3,000	Cyprus
Beaulieu	4,800	Cyprus
Margaretha	3,676	Cyprus
Godewind	3,693	Germany

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the rate of casualties if military action were to commence in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The number of casualties which might result from any military action could vary considerably depending on a wide range of factors. It is not the practice to comment on details of contingency plans.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply of 26 October, *Official Report*, column *340*, what other forms of support are being provided to United Kingdom forces by host nations in the Gulf; what other countries apart from the host nations have provided assistance; what form this assistance has taken; what are the further ways in which United

Kingdom allies might assist our forces in the Gulf; and what is the exact amount of financial assistance that has been provided by foreign Governments to date for the support of United Kingdom forces in the Gulf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 30 October at column 856. In addition, as agreed by Ministers at their meeting in Paris on 18 September, the WEU nations continue to provide mutual assistance in the deployment of forces. We are also continuing to negotiate a range of further assistance with our allies. Details of these negotiations are confidential.

HMS Vulcan

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are *(a)* the establishment and *(b)* the operational criteria of HMS Vulcan.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Vulcan naval reactor test establishment is owned and operated by the Ministry of Defence with the assistance of contractors. Its purpose is to test and develop naval nuclear reactors. The operational criteria for the establishment are classified.

Tornado

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what laser target designation capability is currently carried by Royal Air Force Tornado aircraft.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None.

RAF Squadrons

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken to scale back the readiness of front-line Royal Air Force squadrons in line with the commitment given in paragraph 14 of the communiqué from the London NATO summit on 6 July.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A review of readiness and availability requirements for NATO forces, including those of the RAF, is progressing and a number of measures have been agreed. Details are classified.

Nancekuke Chemical Defence Establishment

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has arranged for a control of substances hazardous to health assessment to be made at the former chemical defence establishment at Nancekuke.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: We do not see a need for such an assessment. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 17 October 1990 at column *855*.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the information given by his Department to the National Rivers Authority on potential leakages of toxic chemicals from the former chemical warfare establishment at Nancekuke;

(2) if he will publish a full list of all chemical wastes and hazardous substances disposed at or near the former chemical defence establishment at Nancekuke.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 17 October 1990 at column *855*.

Aircraft Noise

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the actions being taken by his Department in pursuit of the conclusions and recommendations of the NATO Committee on Challenges in a Modern Society report on aircraft noise.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) on 17 May 1990 at columns *517-18*.

Low Flying

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the names, dates and locations of all low-flying exercises conducted over the United Kingdom since 19 May 1989, advance notice of which was given to hon. Members in affected constituencies.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I will write to the hon. Member.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration is being given to the creation of new areas in the United Kingdom, additional to the Highlands restricted area, where low flying in instrument meteorological conditions is permitted.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom low-flying system is kept under review but there are no plans to create additional areas where low-flying training using terrain following radar can be carried out in instrument meteorological conditions.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards deployment of new United States air force aircraft in the United Kingdom which have a greater requirement for night and bad weather low-flying training facilities.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Any proposal from the United States of America to deploy new United States air force aircraft in the United Kingdom is carefully assessed, taking into account the environmental implications arising from the likely training requirements of the new aircraft.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the stipulated minimum period of advance notice required by his Department for requests to use the United Kingdom low-flying system by United States air force units not based in the United Kingdom; and what records are kept of such requests and his Department's responses thereto.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: United States air force units not based in the United Kingdom that wish to use the United Kingdom low-flying system are required to give at least 30 days' notice. Detailed statistics are not however kept of such requests which are infrequent and dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-level sorties were undertaken by British military aircraft from Goose Bay, Canada, in 1989; and if he will provide a breakdown of the figure by aircraft type.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The information is as follows:

	Sorties
C—130	9
Jaguar	321
Tornado GR1	1,415

	Sorties
Tornado F3	4
	1,749

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nature and cause of the damage sustained by the Buccaneer aircraft, tail number XT276, of No. 16 squadron Royal Air Force, during exercise "Red Flag" in October-November 1981.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The nature of the damage sustained by Buccaneer XT276 in October 1981 was a bent lug in the locking mechanism of one of the wings. The cause of the damage is unknown, but it is likely to have occurred when the outer wing section was folded while the aircraft was on the ground.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many days in each year since 1985 instrument low-flying training operations were authorised in the Highlands restricted area on the same day as operational low-flying training was authorised in the northern Scotland tactical training area.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I regret that the information requested is not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost and effort. When, however, low flying using terrain following radar in instrument meteorological conditions is taking place in the Highlands restricted area, other aircraft are excluded.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the changes to procedures in the United Kingdom low-flying system introduced as a result of the air staff review of low-flying procedures in early 1989.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom low-flying system is under continuous review but periodically, a wider and comprehensive study of low-flying procedures is carried out by the air staff. The most recent such study, which was completed in early 1989 confirmed the broad validity of procedures currently in force but introduced minor adjustments to the United Kingdom night low-flying system.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if toss or dive attacks are permitted during low-level simulated air attacks on active civilian airfields;

(2) what is the stipulated minimum period of advance notice required by his Department for requests to carry out low-level mock attacks on civil airfields in the United Kingdom; and what records are kept of such requests and his Department's responses thereto;

(3) what are the operational training advantages of low-level simulated air attacks by combat aircraft being carried out against active civilian airfields, as opposed to disused airfields or active military airfields;

(4) what is the stipulated minimum period of advance notice required by his Department for requests to carry out low-level mock attacks on military airfields in the United Kingdom; and what records are kept of such requests and his Department's responses thereto.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I will write to the hon. Member shortly.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the reason for the omission from his Department's evidence to the House Defence Committee inquiry on low flying of the accident involving a Dutch air force F-16 in the North sea off England on 13 June 1986.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the lateral radius by which military jet pilots flying below 250 ft are instructed to avoid the village of Dalmellington, Ayrshire.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: It is not our practice to release detailed information on flying restrictions in individual areas.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many inert 1,000 lb bombs were dropped by Royal Air Force aircraft during low-level training operations from Canadian forces base Goose Bay in 1989.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The answer is 293.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the dates and locations of the RAF navigation and bombing competition, the Salmond trophy, since 1987; how many low-level sorties were flown in each competition, and by which aircraft types; and what advance notification was given to the press and hon. Members of these events.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force aircraft, and of which types, have been deployed to Canadian forces base Goose Bay for low-level training in 1990; and what were the dates of each deployment.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The information requested is as follows:

Aircraft Type	Number	Deployment dates
Tornado	9	19 April—31 August
	6	31 May—28 June
Harrier	2	4 September—14 September

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of booked low-flying hours in the United Kingdom in 1989.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The total number of flying hours booked at low level in the United Kingdom in 1989 was 111,037.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the reasons why the United Kingdom military low flying handbook is a classified document.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The United Kingdom military low flying handbook provides information the unauthorised disclosure of which would be undesirable in the interests of the nation.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many detachments of aircraft from RAF Germany have been made to RAF Machrihanish, for the purpose of low-level training, in 1990; and how many low-level sorties were flown during these detachments.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: None.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the radius of the avoidance area for low flying established around Lockerbie immediately following the Pan Am 103 disaster in December 1988; what is the radius of the avoidance area currently in force; and what was the date of any changes to the size of the area.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I have nothing to add to the reply that my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) gave the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 15 May 1989 at column *63*.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-flying movements were authorised at less than 250 ft in each of the three tactical training areas in 1989; and on how many days during 1989 such flying was authorised in each of the tactical training areas.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that he received from my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) on 13 June 1990 at column *240*.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the maximum speed permitted in Royal Air Force regulations for Tornado aircraft on low-flying training sorties from Canadian forces base Goose Bay.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: RAF low-flying training sorties from Canadian forces base Goose Bay are subject to Canadian regulations which require aircraft to remain at subsonic speeds in the low-level training areas.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the stipulated minimum period of advance notice required by his Department for requests to conduct low flying over the United Kingdom at weekends or on public holidays; and what records are kept of such requests and his Department's responses thereto.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: No particular period of notice is laid down for requests to conduct low-flying training over the United Kingdom at weekends or public holidays but any such flying is kept to a minimum, and is generally in support of the territorial forces or units that are not available at other times. Detailed statistics are not maintained of such requests which are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the locations within the United Kingdom of *(a)* the Jaguar wire strike incident on 15 June 1979 and *(b)* the Harrier tree-strike incident on 8 July 1988.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Jaguar wire-strike occurred one nautical mile north of Shipton-on-Stour. The tree strike to the Harrier was not discovered until after the aircraft had landed, and therefore it is not known where the incident occurred.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the proportion of total low-flying movements in the United Kingdom which occurred in each low-flying area in *(a)* 1988 and *(b)* 1989, in the manner provided for earlier years in his Department's evidence to the Defence Committee (HC 120, p. 159).

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: As the Defence Committee indicated in its report (HC 120, paragraph 34), raw movement statistics are of limited utility in assessing the relative impact of low-flying in different areas and it is not the general practice to publish information relating to individual low-flying areas. The distribution of low flying movements in the United Kingdom is, however, dependent on deployment and training patterns which do not vary greatly from year to year and the information requested for 1989 and 1988 would be broadly similar to that for 1987.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-flying sorties were carried out over the United Kingdom in each month from January to the latest available date.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The number of low-flying sorties flown in the United Kingdom in each month over the period 1 January 1990 to 31 August 1990 is as follows:

Month	*Sorties*
1990	
January	11,263
February	10,152
March	16,362
April	10,871
May	13,329
June	11,709
July	13,704
August	11,309

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force aircraft, and of which types, are currently deployed for low-level training at Goose Bay, Canada; and how many low-level sorties the Royal Air Force is expected to carry out there during 1990.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: None. The number of low-level sorties carried out by the RAF in 1990 is expected to be about 900.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the change, in percentage terms, in the number of Royal Air Force fast jet pilots qualified to fly at 100 ft between 1979 and 1989.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Lanyard Exercises

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the nature and purpose of the Red Lanyard exercise series; what types of aircraft are involved; and what plans exist for further exercises in this series.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Lanyard exercises are parachute exercises designed to keep 5 Airborne Brigade properly trained for its role. There are approximately six exercises per year at various training areas in the United Kingdom. The next exercise is planned to take place in March 1991 at Salisbury plain. A maximum of 15 Hercules aircraft are employed. The colour of the exercise denotes the battalion of the Parachute Regiment taking part; in this case, the first battalion.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the nature and purpose of the Green Lanyard exercise series; what type of aircraft are involved; and what plans exist for further exercises in this series.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The Lanyard exercises are parachute exercises designed to keep 5 Airborne Brigade

properly trained for their role. There are approximately six exercises per year at various training areas in United Kingdom. The next exercise is planned to take place in March 1991 at Salisbury Plain. A maximum of 15 Hercules aircraft are employed. The colour of the exercise denotes the battalion of the Parachute Regiment taking part; in this case, the third battalion.

Cannock Chase

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the nature and purpose of the activity around Cannock Chase for which a new temporary danger area, D299, has been created.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I understand that a temporary danger area D299 was established around Cannock Chase between 24 September and 12 October, following a request from the Staffordshire police in connection with terrorist investigations in their force area.

Morocco

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many visits or deployments have been made by Royal Air Force aircraft to Morocco in each of the last five years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Detailed records of all visits or deployments by RAF aircraft to Morocco in each of the last five years are not available. In the last two years however, there have been four visits by RAF fast jet aircraft to Morocco in addition to which RAF transport aircraft have occasionally staged through Moroccan airfields on routine flights.

Arms Sales

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received for offsetting agreements involving the British Army purchasing Abrams M1A2 battle tanks and the United States army purchasing VSEL's AS90 self-propelled howitzers.

Mr. Alan Clark: None.

Iraq

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the present status of the British service men removed from Kuwait to Iraq; and what representations have been made on their behalf.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The members of the British liaison team who have been moved to Iraq are being illegally detained. We continue to press for the immediate release of all hostages being held by Iraq, in accordance with international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Air Misses

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list details of the dates, locations, aircraft involved and circumstances of each of the category A air misses between civil and military aircraft over the United Kingdom in 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1989, including the height at which each incident occurred.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I will write to the hon. Member.

Foreign Military Aircraft

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on inadvertent releases of weapons outside weapons range danger areas in the United Kingdom by foreign military aircraft since 1979; what is his Department's policy on the collection and monitoring of such information; and if his Department holds copies of the reports of inquiries into such incidents.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: We have received only one report from a foreign air force about the inadvertent release of a practice bomb in the United Kingdom since 1979; full details of the circumstances were passed to the Ministry of Defence. The Department requires to be informed of any such incidents.

Departmental Reorganisation

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what organisations and sections within his Department presently being housed in London are being considered for dispersal to provincial areas.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: We are currently examining a number of relocation possibilities, including the transfer of further work from London to Harrogate. Details of which organisations and sections of the Department are involved will be announced once final decisions have been taken. Of course, all proposals must be justified on both economic and operational grounds.

Shackleton Aircraft

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what are the circumstances in which an aircrew would be entitled to fly at will for a period in a Shackleton or Shackleton-type aircraft during military exercises;

(2) which officers of which Air Force rank have the authority to instruct the crew of a Shackleton or Shackleton-type aircraft to fly at will on a course and height which had not been previously planned in the course of a military exercise;

(3) what is the recognised procedure for Shackleton or Shackleton-type aircraft in circumstances during military exercises where the aircraft are not needed for the purposes of the exercise for a short period in the middle of the timetable for the exercise; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Appropriate RAF officers may authorise the aircrew of RAF aircraft such as the Shackleton to fly on a flight path and at a height of their own choosing during a military exercise, provided always that the aircrew can do so safely, and observe the rules of the air, including low-flying regulations where appropriate. RAF aircrew would be entitled to fly their aircraft in this way provided they had the appropriate authorisation, reported their intentions to any appropriate ground authorities, such as air traffic controllers, and flew safely and within the rules.

Because of their slow speed, when RAF Shackleton aircraft are on exercise at some distance from their home base, RAF Lossiemouth, it is normal practice for the aircraft to remain airborne during any short break in the exercise, rather than return to RAF Lossiemouth, land and take off again soon after. It is more cost-effective for

the aircrew to remain in the air to conduct continuation training, including practising some of their secondary roles, such as search and rescue.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what are the circumstances in which a Shackleton or Shackleton-type aircraft can be authorised to engage in low flying below 1,000 ft during military exercises;

(2) whether there are any RAF plans to introduce low-flying training involving Shackleton or Shackleton-type aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: Appropriately trained and authorised RAF aircrew are already permitted to fly low (that is, below a height of 2,000 ft) in RAF Shackleton aircraft, provided always that they can do so safely, and observe the regulations governing low flying. If these conditions are met, there is no reason in principle why RAF Shackleton aircraft should not fly below 1,000 ft during military exercises.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish the board of inquiry report into the cause of the RAF Shackleton aircraft crash which occurred on the Isle of Harris in the Western Isles earlier this year; if he will list in the *Official Report* any changes in flying procedures for Shackletons or Shackleton-type aircraft which have been issued since the crash; what is the normal operational role of Shackleton or Shackleton-type aircraft in military exercises; and if it has changed in any way since the crash on the Isle of Harris.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We expect to publish the military aircraft accident summary concerning this tragic accident in the new year.

The primary operational role of RAF Shackleton aircraft in military exercises is to provide airborne early warning, but the aircraft may also be used in a secondary role of search and rescue, to drop smoke flares. There have been no changes in these roles since the accident. The RAF has not promulgated any specific changes in flying procedures for RAF Shackleton aircraft since the accident.

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what rents are being paid to landlords in Saudi Arabia for land and buildings occupied by units of the Army, Air Force and Navy.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Many of the facilities used by British forces in Saudi Arabia are being made available by the Saudi Government. Where commercial arrangements are necessary, accommodation and land is being rented at current market rates.

Submarines (Decommissioning)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian on 29 October, *Official Report*, column *314*, if he will list the submarines that are to be decommissioned; and if he will make a statement on the expenditure already incurred on the current refitting of any of the submarines on that list.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: The nuclear-powered submarines which my right hon. Friend has so far decided should be decommissioned following his 25 July announcement are: HMS Churchill, HMS Conqueror and HMS Warspite.

Of these, HMS Churchill and HMS Warspite were in refit. The cost of their refits—including cancellation charges—is still being discussed with the contractors; such costs are in any case commercially confidential.

RAF Bentwaters

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has on the reason for the construction of 293 new homes at RAF Bentwaters by the United States Government; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I understand that in 1985 the United States air force contracted for the provision of new married quarters at RAF Bentwaters to correct a critical shortage of accommodation in the local area. Work on these houses started in April 1990 and is due to be completed in late 1991.

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

Chieftain Tank

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it remains his intention to make a decision on the tank to replace the Chieftain tank by the end of this year.

Mr. Tom King: I had hoped to announce a decision on equipment for our future main battle tank fleet by the end of this year. It is now clear that, owing to the uncertainties created by recent events, I will be unable to do so. I expect to be able to announce a decision in the early spring of 1991.

Surplus Toxic Materials

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement concerning his Department's policy in auctioning to the highest bidder surplus toxic materials in respect of ensuring that such materials are disposed of in a safe and acceptable manner in agreement with waste disposal authorities.

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle: I will write to the hon. Member.

Conservative Conference

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what costs were incurred by his Department in connection with the Conservative party conference in Bournemouth.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding reply 26 October 1990]:* In response to a routine request from the Dorset police, small numbers of specialist military personnel were

deployed to assist the police in searching the conference area for explosive devices and on standby for potential bomb disposal tasks. No readily identifiable additional costs to Defence votes arose from this operation.

In addition, two members of my right hon. Friend's private office staff accompanied him to Bournemouth in order to deal with departmental work. Travel, subsistence and communications costs were incurred on Defence votes.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Company Records

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give a breakdown of how the latest charge for microfiche records of individual registered companies supplied by the postal sales service was arrived at and what that charge is now.

Mr. Redwood: The charge for the postal sales service was arrived at after taking into account costs for: staff; equipment; accommodation and overheads. The present charge for a microfiche record by post is £5.

Companies House

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much it cost to set up each of the Companies House offices in Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds.

Mr. Redwood: The figure for setting up each office is in the region of £30,000. Items covered include advertising, furniture, computer equipment and microfiche viewing and copying equipment.

	£
Equipment	18,750
Computer installation and Equipment	11,500
Advertising	1,500

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was *(a)* the date on which each of the Companies House offices was opened in Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds and *(b)* for each of these for the last complete month of business, the cost of the facility, the revenue received, and the period covered by the answer for each of these offices.

Mr. Redwood: The dates on which each office opened are as follows:

Manchester	7 December 1989
Birmingham	24 January 1990
Leeds	9 April 1990

The last complete month of business was September 1990. The cost of providing the office facility in each was:

	£
Manchester	3,556
Birmingham	2,371
Leeds	4,132

The revenue received in each office was:

	£
Manchester	12,538
Birmingham	12,749
Leeds	4,640

Correspondence

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the average time his Department takes in replying to an hon. Member's letter; and what is *(a)* the shortest time and *(b)* the longest time it has taken to reply in full to an hon. Member's letter in the last Session of Parliament.

Mr. Lilley: On average my Department replies to letters from hon. Members within about 13 working days. The shortest time to reply to a letter in the last Session of Parliament was one day. The question about the longest time to reply to a letter can be answered only at a disproportionate cost.

Environmental Protection

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether he intends to have discussions with environmental and third-world groups about environmental aspects of the Uruguay round;

(2) if Her Majesty's Government will enter into discussions with environmental and third-world groups about the possibility of adopting environmental approaches to the negotiations in the Uruguay round.

Mr. Redwood: The Government have always welcomed the views of interested parties, including those with environmental concerns, on the issues involved in the Uruguay round; and have taken these into account in contributing to the formulation of Community policy positions. But the round is now entering the final weeks of a four-year negotiation, and it would not be practical to seek to introduce any major new initiatives at this stage.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will take steps to ensure that the Bergen objectives with regard to *(a)* ensuring trade does not harm the environment and *(b)* using trade to promote sustainable development are fulfilled;

(2) what action his Department has taken to carry out the commitment given by Her Majesty's Government at the Bergen conference in May, to accelerate within the general agreement on tariffs and trade the dialogue on linkage between environmental and trade policies; how his Department has pursued the Bergen objectives of ensuring that trade does not harm the environment and of using trade to promote sustainable development; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: The Government have, through the European Community, participated actively in negotiations aimed at clarifying GATT rules related to the export of goods banned and severely controlled domestically for reasons including environmental protection. We will continue to play an active part, in GATT and elsewhere, in the developing international dialogue on the links between trade and the environment.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what action his Department has taken to ensure that the Bergen objectives are incorporated in all general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations;

(2) if he will make it his policy to seek to ensure that the principles agreed at the Bergen conference are incorporated in all general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: The Government have taken steps to persuade the Commission that the Uruguay round negotiations, for example, those on agriculture and technical barriers to trade, take due account of environmental objectives. We will apply this principle where future GATT negotiations have significant environmental implications.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what is the Government's policy on incorporating environmental conditionality into GATT;

(2) what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the principle of environmental conditionality within the general agreement on tariffs and trade and towards the case for blanket exception to general agreement on tariffs and trade rules where the enforcement of those rules would prevent genuine trade-neutral environmental protection.

Mr. Redwood: The implementation of genuinely trade-neutral environmental protection is unlikely to involve breaches of GATT rules. However, in cases where such breaches occur, article XX(b) of the general agreement provides a general exemption to enable measures

"necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health".

This exemption would, in our view, cover measures taken with suitable environmental objectives in mind.

Data Processing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his review of United Kingdom production and trade in data processing machinery and so on is now complete; and when he expects to publish a report on his findings.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The report of a study into the broad balance of trade of major companies in the electronics and information technology sector will be laid in the House of Commons Library within a few weeks.

Industry Council

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the discussion on state aids which took place at the last European Community Industry Council on 15 October and the position put forward by the United Kingdom Government.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Council discussed a proposal from the presidency that the Commission should be requested to bring forward to the Council a proposal for a regulation under article 94 of the EC treaty determining the rules for the application of state aid policy by the Commission. A majority of member states including the United Kingdom and the Commission itself took the view that such a regulation would unduly fetter the discretion of the Commission in this important area. The Commission committed itself instead to a number of measures designed to involve member states more closely in state aids policy and to introduce greater transparency and legal certainty.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the discussion on the steel industry which took place at the last European Community Industry Council on 15 October and the position put forward by the United Kingdom Government.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Industry Council discussed briefly a United States proposal for a multilateral agreement to strengthen disciplines over steel trade and steel subsidies. Informal contacts with the United States on this issue are continuing. An important point to consider is the need to avoid cutting across the current Uruguay round discussions which will include disciplines on all sectors of industry.

Brewers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what effect the Grand Metropolitan/Elders IXL pubs-breweries swap will have on the regional brewers with relation to the MMC report.

Mr. Redwood: The Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on Elders IXL Ltd. and Grand Metropolitan plc was published on 16 October—Cm. 1227. The MMC found that the proposed arrangements would be against the public interest unless modified, but none of its conclusions relates specifically to the position of the regional brewers.

Monopolies and Mergers Commission

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the average time which has elapsed between the receipt by his Department and the publication of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report since 1979.

Mr. Redwood: We aim to publish reports of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as soon as possible after receipt and generally within four to five weeks of their submission by the commission to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The time taken on individual reports varies in relation to the policy issues which arise, and the number of excisions which may be requested by the commercial parties from the published report. Statistics analysing the period since 1979 are not available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any changes have been made to Monopolies and Mergers Commission reports between their receipt by his Department and publication.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon Friend the Secretary of State has powers to exclude certain material from a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report, as laid before Parliament and as published, under the provisions of section 83(3) and (3A) of the Fair Trading Act 1973 and under section 17(4) and (5) of the Competition Act 1980. He has no powers to edit or amend such a report. Notes in the text of the relevant reports indicate where such exclusions have been made.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the longest period and shortest period, respectively, which has elapsed between the receipt by his Department and the publication of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report since 1979.

Mr. Redwood: We aim to publish reports of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as soon as possible after receipt and generally within four to five weeks of their submission by the Commission to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The time taken on individual reports varies in relation to the policy issues which arise, and the

number of excisions which may be requested by the commercial parties from the published report. Statistics analysing the period since 1979 are not available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department was consulted by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on its report on the British Coal Corporation prior to its submission.

Mr. Redwood: The Monopolies and Mergers Commission did not consult the Department about the content of this report prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what were the reasons for the delay between the submission of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the British Coal Corporation and its publication.

Mr. Redwood: Monopolies and Mergers Commission reports are published as promptly as possible but some delay inevitably arises, first from the process of publication itself and second from the statutory requirement for the Secretary of State to consider whether the publication of any matter in the report would be against the public interest.

Brno Exhibition

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department gave financial or technical assistance to any British company to facilitate participation in the Brno environmental exhibition held from 23 to 25 October.

Mr. Redwood: My Department provides financial and technical support for 6,000 to 7,000 companies at more than 300 overseas trade fairs each year. The programme of support for 1990-91 announced last November, included the major engineering fair at Brno, in which environmental-related products were included, but not the environmental fair.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if any Minister or official from his Department attended the environmental exhibition in Brno, Czechoslovakia, held on 23 to 25 October; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* No Minister or official from my Department visited the exhibition. United Kingdom firms were, of course, free to attend if they chose. However, the Department hoped to support a group of some 60 companies at the Brno engineering fair, which took place in September; 55 companies attended with DTI support. Some of the companies in the British group exhibited equipment which had application in the field of environmental protection. At the request of my Department, Dr. N. S. Wooding, chairman of the East European Trade Council, visited this trade fair, where he met all the British companies present, including those exhibiting independently of DTI support.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many British companies attended the environmental exhibition in Brno, Czechoslovakia, held from 23 to 25 October; what proportion this represented of the total; and what information he has on the corresponding figures from West Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and Austria.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* According to information supplied by the organisers of the exhibition, five British companies attended. This was 2 per cent. of the total participation of 250 companies. Figures also provided by the organisers give the following participation level for the countries listed in the question:

Country	*Number of companies*	*Per cent.*
West Germany	24	9·6
France	1	0·4
Italy	3	1·2
Sweden	No participation	
Austria	61	24·4

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will show the total public expenditure on trade and industry broken down by standard region for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most up-to-date figures showing public expenditure on trade and industry broken down by region can be found in the Industrial Development Act annual report for the year ended 31 March 1990. Copies of this report are available in the House of Commons Library.

Bicycles

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the sources of all pedal bicycles sold in the United Kingdom by country of manufacture for the years 1980-89 or the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The available information is in the table.

Sources of United Kingdom sales of bicycles—1980—1990

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
Australia	•	•	—	•	—	—	—	—	—	•
Austria	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Bahamas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•
Belgium-Luxembourg	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Brazil	•	•	—	—	—	—	•	•	•	—
Canada	•	•	•	—	—	•	—	•	•	•
Chile	—	—	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—
China	•	•	•	—	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cyprus	—	—	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—
Czechoslovakia	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Denmark	—	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Federal Republic of Germany	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Finland	•	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—	—
France	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
German Democratic Republic	—	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—	—
Gibraltar	—	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hong Kong	•	•	—	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hungary	•	•	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Iceland	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	—	—	—
India	•	•	•	—	•	•	•	•	•	•
Indonesia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	•	•
Irish Republic	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Israel	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	—
Italy	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Japan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Kampuchea	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•
Kenya	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaysia	—	•	•	—	•	•	—	—	—	•
Mexico	•	•	—	—	—	—	•	•	•	—
Netherlands	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
New Zealand	—	—	—	—	•	•	—	—	—	•
Nicaragua	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	—
Nigeria	•	—	•	—	—	—	—	—	•	•
Norway	•	—	•	—	—	•	•	•	—	•
Pakistan	—	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Portugal	•	•	—	—	•	—	—	•	—	—
Singapore	—	•	—	—	•	•	—	—	•	•
South Africa	—	—	—	—	•	•	—	•	—	•
South Korea	•	•	•	•	•	—	—	•	•	•
Soviet Union	•	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spain	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sri Lanka	—	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—	—
Sweden	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Switzerland	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Taiwan	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Thailand	•	•	—	—	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tunisia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	•	—	—
United Kingdom	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
United States of America	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Vietnam	—	—	—	—	—	•	—	—	—	—
Yugoslavia	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Source: Customs and Excise
Classification: SITC 785.2. Bicycles and other cycles (including delivery tricycles), not motorised.
Key: • Imports of bicycles from this country in specified year.
— zero imports.
Note: It is presumed that at least some of the bicycles imported from a particular country in a specified year are sold in the United Kingdom in that year.

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of United Kingdom sales of pedal bicycles were imported models; and what percentage were United Kingdom manufactured in each of the years 1980 to 1989 or the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Sainsbury: The available information is as follows:

Pedal cycles and parts (SIC 3634)

	Proportion of United Kingdom market[1] Per cent.	
	Imports[2]	*Home production[3]*
1980	43	57
1981	46	54
1982	48	52
1983	49	51
1984	57	43
1985	51	49
1986	58	42
1987	65	35
1988	60	40
12 months to March 1989	60	40

[1] The United Kingdom market is defined here as United Kingdom manufacturers plus imports less exports.
[2] Import Penetration. Source: Industrial Economic database (DTI). Figures for the rest of 1989 available.
[3] Estimated as 100 per cent. less import penetration. All percentages are calculated in terms of value.

Consumer Protection

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the offences which may be committed by companies relating to the protection of consumers or the general public, in each case specifying the notices which may be served on companies which fail to comply with statutory provisions.

Mr. Redwood: A large number of Acts impose obligations on companies and others for the protection of consumer or the general public. The information is not readily available in the form requested and could not be provided without disproportionate expense.

Junk Mail

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures can be taken by members of the public to prevent the delivery of junk mail.

Mr. Redwood: They can register with the Mailing Preference Service which was set up, with the support of

the Post Office, by the main trade associations representing the direct marketing industry. It enables individuals' names to be deleted from the mailing lists held by member organisations. The service claims to cover 80 per cent. of mailing lists.

An application form can be obtained from the service's freepost address.

Postage Stamps

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has had any meetings with his ministerial counterparts from the other member states of the Universal Postal Union to promote co-operation and in particular to ensure mutual acceptability of postage stamps and obviate the need for air mail stickers.

Mr. Redwood: No, although my officials together with representatives of the Post Office regularly attend meetings with other member countries of the Universal Postal Union to discuss matters of mutual interest. However, the issue of postage stamps and the manner in which mail is exchanged internationally is an operational matter for the Post Office itself.

Business and the Environment

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list all conferences *(a)* to which his Department was or has been invited to contribute and *(b)* where his Department accepted an invitation to contribute, on "Business And The Environment in 1990".

Mr. Redwood: Records of all such invitations received are not held centrally. Nor are acceptances, but research in the time available indicates the Department will have contributed to around 70 such events by the end of 1990.

In addition the Department will itself have organised and participated in over 30 seminars during 1990 on subjects such as waste minimisation, environmental technology and environmental labelling.

Recordings

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give the average price at cost *(a)* wholesale and *(b)* retail of compact discs, long-playing records, and pre-recorded cassettes; and if he can give an estimate of profit margin at each of these stages.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is not available from Government sources. The hon. Member may however wish to consult the 1989-90 year book of the British Phonographic Industry which contains some of the information he requests on the basis of data collected by the industry itself.

Single European Market

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the 95 single market measures not yet agreed.

Mr. Sainsbury: Part B of my Department's checklist on progress on the Commission's white paper, a copy of which is deposited in the Library of the House lists 109 measures which require Council adoption. Of these 109, seven have common positions agreed, five are partially adopted and two are political agreements, leaving 95 measures which have not yet been agreed.

Financial Services Tribunal

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to how many cases have been dealt with by the financial services tribunal.

Mr. Redwood: I understand that to date seven cases have been referred to the financial services tribunal. Reports on two cases have been completed, three cases have been withdrawn and two cases are still before the tribunal.

Credit Cards

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will lay orders implementing the recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on credit card services in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Redwood: I made the Credit Card (Price Discrimination) Order and the Credit Card (Merchant Acquisition) Order yesterday and have laid them today.

On 13 March this year I announced that we had decided to proceed to statutory consultation preliminary to the making of orders under section 56 of the Fair Trading Act.

That consultation is complete and I am today laying the orders to implement our decisions on the MMC report on credit card services. Traders will no longer have to charge cash customers the same price as those paying by credit card. This should lead to a fairer deal for the majority of shoppers. The orders should also allow more banks and financial institutions to come into the credit card business and thereby enhance competition.

The MMC in its report made two recommendations applicable to credit card services:

—the "no discrimination" rule, under which traders are required to charge the same price for purchases made with credit cards as those paid for by cash or other means, should not apply within the UK;

—certain rules restricting the freedom of issuers of Visa and Mastercard cards to act as merchant acquirers, should not apply within the UK.

The Credit Cards (Price Discrimination) Order requires that the credit card companies' "no discrimination" rules be abolished before 7 March 1991 and allows traders to price differentially by that date, if the trader so wishes, on purchases made with credit cards or certain cards not readily distinguishable from credit cards.

Credit card companies will be free if they feel it appropriate to limit traders' price differentials to a maximum of the charge levied on the trader by the merchant acquirer for credit card use—this is currently less than 2 per cent. on average.

The Credit Cards (Merchant Acquisition) Order makes it unlawful, subject to certain exceptions, for payment card organisations to prevent any person authorised by them to carry on business as a payment card issuer from acting as a merchant acquirer for that organisation's cards once the person commences to carry on business as a credit card issuer. Payment card organisations may not require payment cards to be issued before an authorised person may act as an acquirer.

In addition to these orders, we are preparing regulations to be made under the Consumer Protection Act 1987, and for petrol, an order under the Prices Act 1974 to ensure that any differential pricing is clearly indicated to the consumer. It is intended that these will

come into force at the same time as the order requiring the abolition of the "no discrimination" rules on 28 February 1991, subject to consideration of comments made in the course of consultation.

In the expectation that these orders will further open the credit card market and bring the benefits anticipated by the MMC from increased competition I have decided not at this time to bring forward a further order to require mechant acquirers to publish certain information on their charges and to submit information to the Director General of Fair Trading. We will watch with the DGFT developments in competition in the credit card market, particularly in the light of the two orders I am laying today, and will consider the position again if necessary.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from citizens advice bureaux regarding the impact of community charge capping on the level of services provided by citizens advice bureaux; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: My Department has received a few representations on this subject. Whether and how much a local authority supports a local citizens advice bureau is a matter for that authority. This is the case whether or not the authority is community charge-capped.

Company Legislation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, whether he will seek to introduce legislation to give individual shareholders access to information which the directors have used for decision-making.

Mr. Redwood: No. The imposition of such a requirement would give rise to considerable difficulties for companies given the range of information used by directors and the fact that it is frequently confidential and price sensitive in nature.

Fibreboard Packaging

Mr. Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to fibreboard packaging into the 1990s to be diplayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Redwood: Arrangements have been made for an exhibition to take place in the Upper Waiting Hall in the week beginning Monday 19 November. Lord Hesketh, Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry, will be formally opening the exhibition at 3 pm on Tuesday 20 November.

Fireworks

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures his Department is taking to promote safety at fireworks events and at private bonfire parties; what was the number of injuries involving fireworks for each of the past five years; how much his Department will spend on publicity to promote firework safety this year; and how much was spent on publicity to promote firework safety for each of the past five years.

Mr. Redwood: The Government have phased out the more hazardous types of firework, approved the British standard for the performance and labelling of fireworks, strengthened the legislation against the abuse of fireworks and mount an annual firework safety campaign to persuade the public to treat fireworks with care. Figures for injuries were published in the *Official Report* on 21 March 1990, at columns *614-16*. Each year we spend some £75,000 on publicity and the industry spends a similar amount.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's budget for the current firework safety campaign; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* My Department is spending some £75,000 on this year's firework safety campaign, but we hope that this will attract as it did last year, several hundred thousand pounds' worth of media time as a result.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will review the law on fireworks, with a view to restricting disturbance to individuals and terror to pets over several weeks prior to 5 November.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 30 October 1990]:* My Department keeps the law on fireworks under review. The present policy of restricting their sale to three weeks before 5 November and one week after, together with the rigorous enforcement of the law preventing the sale of fireworks to the under 16-year-olds and the throwing of fireworks about in the street and other public places, is designed to minimise disturbance to individuals and pets.

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to seek to amend legislation relating to the use of fireworks to cover fireworks and fireworks displays other than in the period around 5 November.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 31 October 1990]:* There is a voluntary agreement to restrict the sale of fireworks for the four weeks around 5 November, a law against selling fireworks to under-16s and against letting them off in the street. This provides a framework of protection, but my Department is always prepared to look at suggestions for improving firework safety.

Telecommunications

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action has been taken following the work of COST 219 to improve the access of people with disabilities to telecommunication and teleinformation facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The COST programme provides a framework in which European organisations can carry out long-term research on a collaborative basis. The COST 219 project is not due to be completed until 1991. The Royal National Institute for the Deaf and British Telecom are both participating in the project from the United Kingdom.

Net Book Agreement

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will ask the Director General of Fair Trading to re-examine the workings of the net book agreement.

Mr. Redwood: In both 1962 and 1968 the restrictive practices court found the operation of the net book agreement not to be contrary to the public interest. The Director General of Fair Trading carried out a substantial investigation into the operation and effects of the net book agreement in 1989 to see whether circumstances had changed. He concluded that there was an insufficiently strong basis to justify his making an application to the restrictive practices court for a re-examination of the issues. The possibility of making such an application in the future is kept under review by the director general.

"Waste Doesn't Pay" Seminars

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contribution was made by his Department to the "Waste Doesn't Pay" seminars organised by the Confederation of British Industry.

Mr. Redwood: My Department and the CBI planned the seminars jointly and shared the work of finding speakers. Local organisation was provided by the CBI for 10 seminars and by my Department for 2. My Department also provided publicity material for the whole series of seminars. The seminars have been attended by over 700 people in total.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newport, West, *Official Report*, 22 October, column *55*, he will set out the reasons why his Department decided to respond to the request to participate in the "Panorama" programme on Iraq by supplying written replies.

Mr. Sainsbury *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* The terms of the agreement eventually reached with "Panorama" on the participation of my Department in the programme on Iraq were that the programme would provide written questions to which my Department would supply written answers. Some of the answers were used in the programme.

Company Directors (Disqualification)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was, for each of the last five years *(a)* the number of representations received from liquidators with a view to the institution of proceedings for the disqualification of company directors and *(b)* the number of prosecutions actually made.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 29 October 1990]:* Insolvency practitioners were first required to submit statutory returns and reports on the conduct of the directors of insolvent companies under the Insolvency Act 1985 from 28 April 1986. On 29 December 1986 the relevant provisions of this Act, together with the director disqualification provision of the Companies Act 1985, were re-enacted in the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

Insolvency practitioners are required to make returns where they find no unfitted conduct and reports when they believe there has been unfitted conduct.

The statistical information the hon. Member requires on the submissions of reports and returns by insolvency practitioners and the disqualification of company directors in England, Wales and Scotland, covering the period from 28 April 1986 to 30 September 1990, is as follows:

	Conduct reports received[1]	*Returns received*[2]
1986	232	1,754
1987	2,104	9,148
1988	2,987	6,878
1989	2,037	4,500
1990	2,051	7,373

[1] Unfitted conduct.
[2] No unfitted conduct.

Many of these unfitted reports related to minor, one-off cases of bad conduct. These would not usually result in court proceedings because a court would not consider it sufficient to warrant disqualification. Disqualification proceedings have been commenced in all those cases of multiple bad conduct or where its gravity means disqualification is likely.

	Companies	*Directors*
1986	—	—
1987	30	41
1988	144	219
1989	163	267
1990	145	224

As some voluntary liquidation and receivership cases subsequently involve court winding-up orders, I set out in the table details of disqualification proceedings commenced in official receivers' cases in the same period:

	Companies	*Directors*
1986	20	22
1987	110	139
1988	157	202
1989	137	173
1990	83	109

Disqualification proceedings brought against an individual director may include allegations of unfitness emanating from more than one insolvent company.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 178**

SESSION 1990-91

22nd October—1st November 1990

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes and cannot therefore, be used in connection with the daily part or weekly Hansard. For these versions use the Fortnightly Index.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

A1
340w, 709w
Road safety 61w
Road traffic 60-1w, 705w
Road works 705w

A4
459-60w

A6(M)
Public inquiries 460w

A7
Road works 212w
Scotland 212w

A19
Ministers' domestic visits 708w
Road works 708w

A45
Road works 189w

A74
240-2w

A470
547w
Road works 546w

A487
Public participation in planning 547w
Road works 546-7w

A595
249w
Road works 461w

Abbott, Ms Diane
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 569
European Council (30:10:90) 884
Iraq, Hostages (24:10:90) 476-8, 481
Local government finance (31:10:90) 998-9
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 740-1
Questions
Regional arts associations, Public appointments 397w
Underground railways, Hackney 9

Aberystwyth
547w

Abortion
319w
South East Thames Regional Health Authority 402-4w

Abortion Act 1967
Questions
319w

Absent parents
(29:10:90) 729-49

Access funds
178-9, 185
Mature students 162w
Student loans 157w
Students 167w

Access to buildings
Educational institutions 162w
Handicapped 671w, 739w
Local authorities 343w
Planning authorities 343-4w

Accidents
Severn bridge 512w

Accidents Investigation Branch
Air accidents 704w

Accountants
Company accounts 129w
Company investigations 200w, 328w
Dept of Trade inquiries 199-200w, 328w
Disciplinary proceedings 428-9w
Disclosure of information 379-80w, 429w
Electricity supply industry 270w
European Commission 619w
Press 201w
Privatisation 640w

Accountants—continued
Professional organisations 200-1w, 327-8w

Accounting
201w
Ministry of Defence 89w
Professional qualifications 433w

Accounting Standards Board
Standards specifications 429w

Acids
Land pollution 45w

Action for community employment
Finance 453w
Northern Ireland 453w

"Action on Dogs Consultation Paper"
257-60w

Active citizenship
Curriculum 2-3w

Actors
Work permits 755w

Acute beds
Scottish health boards 713-6w

Adelphi Estate Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 707-8

Adjournment debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 622-3

Adjudication officers
76w, 481w, 753w

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 529
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 770-1, 794
Noise control (31:10:90) 1025, 1028-9
Questions
Industry, ERM 614w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 97-8w
Israel, Armed forces deployment 321
Lebanon, Hostages 58w
Official engagements 422w
Railway network, Investment 4

Administration of justice
Audit 201w
Costs 730w

Administrative costs
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 120w

Administrative delays
Attendance allowance 284w
British nationality 733w
County courts 276-8w
Departmental correspondence 654w
Export licensing 599-600w
Immigration 260-2w
Immigration applications 452w
Members' correspondence 128w, 304w
Social security appeals 669w
War pensions 367-8w

Adoption
Children in care 523w
Entry clearances 16w
Foreigners (29:10:90) 842-50
Romania 32w, 56w

Adoption Law Interdepartmental Review
32w

ADT
354-5w

Adult education
Unemployed 674w

Advanced gas-cooled reactors
Nuclear fuel cycle 657w
Scotland 725w

Advertising
Electricity supply industry 364w, 441w, 519w
Environment protection 182-3w

Advertising Standards Authority
182-3w

Advisory Board for the Research Councils
375-6w
Public appointments 375-6w
Science & technology 159w

Advisory bodies
Agriculture 394-5w

Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay & Conditions
see Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
185w

Advisory services
Debts 598w, 971-2
Financial institutions 971-2
Hazardous wastes 51w
Mortgage defaulters 487
Self-employed 426w
Small businesses 426w
Take-up of employment 752-3w

Aerials
Planning permission 692-3w
Satellite broadcasting 692-3w

Afghanistan
Diplomatic relations 565w

Age discrimination
754w

Age of consent
Homosexuality 555w

Agency nurses
Nottingham Health Authority 29w
Prison hospitals 555w

Aggregate external finance
44w, 549w, (31:10:90) 987-1017

Agricultural & Food Research Council
280w, 372-6w, 676w

Agricultural chemicals
Prices 424w

Agricultural land
Lime 424w

Agricultural marketing
EC internal trade 304w
Exports 304-5w

Agricultural Mortgage Corporation
312w

Agricultural policy
EC countries 395w

Agricultural research
Civil service manpower 280w, 676w
Dichlorvos 724w
Near market research 308w
Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food 423-4w
Research finance 308-9w
Scientists 280w, 675-6w
Transmissible encephalopathies 392w

Agricultural safety
Haystacks 633-4w

Agricultural subsidies
711-2
Hill farming 499-501
Marginal land 393w
Small farms 712

Agricultural surpluses
European Council 421w

Agriculture
Advisory bodies 394-5w
Climate 648-9w

Agriculture—continued
EC budget 392w
European Communities 82-3w
Expenditure 82-3w
Manpower 425w
Northern Ireland 559w
Wales 357w

Agriculture Select Committee
632w

Aid financed trade
195w
Companies political contributions 197w
Contracts 196w, 203-4w
Corruption 196w
Developing countries 195w
Hydroelectric power 198w
Malaysia 24-5w, 198w
Profits 195-6w

AIDS
Haemophilia 29w
Health education 322-3
Heterosexuality 323
Medical Research Council 161w
Police records 19-20w
Romania 56w
Scotland 177w
World Health Organisation 323

Aids for handicapped
Disabled workers 427w
Inventions 403w
Medical rehabilitation 545-6w
Rookwood Hospital 663-4w
Social services 403-4w
Waiting lists 524w

Air accidents
Accidents Investigation Branch 704w
Coventry Airport 244w
Low flying 759-61w
Military aircraft 623-4w
Shackleton aircraft 765w

Air ambulance services
30w

Air force
Armed forces deployment 757w
Morocco 763w

Air force bases
Property Services Agency 346w

Air pollution
Printing industry 323-4w

Air pollution control
181w
Renfrew 477-8w

Air routes
Diego Garcia 54w

Air safety
Seating 70w

Air traffic
Regional airports 67-8w

Air traffic control
Edinburgh Airport 95w
Investment 64w

Air transport
EC action 68w

Aircraft
Fishery protection 176w

Aircraft noise
758w

"Aircraft Noise in Modern Society"
758w

Aircrew
Low flying 762w

Airlines
East Germany 979

Airmisses
763w
Complaints 244w

Airmisses—continued
Coventry Airport 244w
Information 244w
Newcastle Airport 248-9w

Airport & Airspace Capacity Working Group
510w

Airports
*Armed forces training 759w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 559-61
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 472-3
European Council (30:10:90) 883-4
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 378
Questions
Romania, Human rights 322

Albania
EC external relations 216w
Foreign policy 561w

Alcoholic drinks
Public order offences 445-6w, 726-7w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Questions
Air traffic control, Investment 64w
Tote Bookmakers, Privatisation 733w

Algae
National Rivers Authority 344w

***Alison, Rt Hon Michael*, Second Church Estates Commissioner**
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 597-8

Allen, Mr Graham
Questions
Agency nurses, Nottingham Health Authority 29w
Building societies, Repossession orders 7w
Christmas bonus, Costs 75w
Civil service unions 391w
Civil service unions, Cultural heritage 398w
Community charge, Electoral register 228w
Electoral register 120-2w, 185w
Greenall Whitley, Factory closures 129w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England, Government grants 236w
Mortgage interest rates 187w
Mortgages 106w
Mortgages, Economic regions 106-7w
Nottingham City Council, Government grants to local authorities 465w
Post Office 329w
Public Accounts Commission 15
Royal Mail 329w
Shareholders 295-6w
Trade unions, Cultural heritage 421w

Alternative energy
EC grants & loans 271w
Electricity generation 520w
Government assistance 271w
Non-fossil fuel obligation 74-5w, 441-2w
Research finance 441w
Scotland 74-5w

Alternative medicine
NHS 30w

Alternatives to prison
Sentencing 557w
Women 731w

Alton, Mr David
Questions
Driving offences, Traffic lights 461w
Homelessness, British residents abroad 468w
Housing improvement, Liverpool City Council 469w
Local government social services, Personal records 444w

Alton, Mr David—continued
Road Traffic Law Review Committee 461w
Social security benefits, Hostages 481w

Alzheimer's disease
Personal social services 524w
Scotland 173-4w

Ambulance services
Kidney patients 399w

Ambulances
407w

Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 203, 252-3

Amess, Mr David
Questions
Cosmetics, Exports 609w
Courts, Buildings 727-8w
Grant maintained schools 137w

Ammunition
Defence procurement 505w

Amnesty International
263w, 699-700w

Amos, Mr Alan
Questions
Bulgaria, Know-how Fund 222w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 763w

Animal feed
Exports 395w
Orders & regulations 311w

Animal husbandry
Wales 711

Animal quarantine
Birds 633w

Animal welfare
Export of live animals 133-4w
Transport of animals (23:10:90) 192-4

Animals
Waste disposal 306w

Animals (Welfare in Transit) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (23:10:90) 192-4

"Another Blood Libel or Ritual Murder"
Criminal investigation 19w

Antarctic
Environment protection 565w, 692w
International conferences 696-7w
Mineral resources 264w, 457w
Public petitions (26:10:90) 630

Antarctic Treaty
692w

Antisemitism
Criminal proceedings 354w
Prosecutions 354w

Apartheid
South Africa 110w

Appeals
Community charge 180w, 187-8w
Domestic rates 187-8w
Rateable value 472w
Uniform business rate 693w

Apprentices
Scotland 169w

Arab boycott
Israel 320-1, 329-30w

Arachnoiditis
Medical research 401w

Arbuthnot, Mr James
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 740
Questions
Residuary bodies, Annual reports 537w

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Questions
Iraq, Human rights 217w
Work permits, Domestic service 735w

Archery
472-3w
EC law 472-3w

Area protection grant
465w

Argentina
Human rights 263w

Armed conflict
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 287w

Armed forces
Community charge 414-6w, 853-4
Disciplinary proceedings 410w
Hostages 337w, 503w, 763w
Life insurance 859

Armed forces casualties
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 526w, 686w, 756w, 856-7, 863-4
NHS 526w, 686w

Armed forces deployment
Air force 757w
Berlin 222w
Costs 90w, 496w
Finance 496w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 90w, 97-8w, 210w, 336w, 338w, 362-3w, 495-6w, 765w, 858
Israel 321
NATO 504w
Nuclear safety 86-7w
Operating costs 338w, 496w
Rents 765w
Saudi Arabia 287w
USA 496-7w

Armed forces housing
Community charge 92w
Property transfer 506w
Shoeburyness 504w

Armed forces married quarters
Housing construction 766w
USA 766w

Armed forces medical services
Hospitals 98-9w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 626w

Armed forces officers
90w
Community charge 501w

Armed forces pay
853
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 494-5w, 859-60

Armed forces retirement
Educational qualifications 91w
Training 101w

Armed forces strength
Royal Marine Reserve 338w

Armed forces training
93-4w
Airports 759w
Belize 92w
Cambodia 100w
Dartmoor National Park 503w
Disclosure of information 92w
Firing ranges 764w
Khmer Rouge 333, 864
Licensing 503w
Low flying 89-90w
Official secrets 21-2w, 58w
RAF Spadeadam 625w
Thailand 90w, 286w
UK companies abroad 457w

Armoured fighting vehicles
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 421w
Motor vehicle parts 88-9w, 421w

Arms control
NATO ministerial meetings 498w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 57w

Arms control negotiations
Chemical weapons 453-4w
Strategic nuclear weapons 89w

Arms exports
494w, 501w
Astra Holdings 88w
Compensation 506w
Iraq 86-8w, 412w, 983
Saudi Arabia 88w, 204w
Trade fairs 87-8w
United Arab Emirates 86w

Arms trade
Conferences 411w
Iraq 48w, 239-40w, 606w, 615-6w, 779w
Saudi Arabia 100w
Television programmes 48w, 779w
Video recordings 412w

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 994, 1009
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 496-7w
Balance of trade, Information technology 239w
Cambodia, Peace negotiations 214w
Educational finance 178
Financial services, Investor protection 131-2w
Grant maintained schools, Costs 417w
Grant maintained schools, Educational finance 417w
Health service staff, Early retirement 682-3w
Industrial investment 497-8
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, Health service staff 683-4w
Northern Arts, Public appointments 397w
Nursery schools, Primary education 417-9w

Army
494w

Army stores
Chemical weapons 262-3w
Riot control weapons 261-2w

Arnold, Mr Jacques
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 884
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 212
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1015
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 739
Questions
Community service orders 736w
Docklands light railway, Capital investment 61w
Environment, Treaties 700w
Ethiopia 326
Foreign investment in UK 494
Industry, Environment protection 981-2

Arnold, Sir Thomas
Questions
A6(M), Public inquiries 460w
Diplomatic relations 385w
Environment, Treaties 454w
Standard spending assessments, Metropolitan districts 691w

Arrests
740w
Football 128w
MV Gur Mariner 70-1w

Art works
Objects in lieu of tax 573w
Parliamentary building maintenance & repair 536w

Arts
398w
Greater London 396w

Arts Council
652w
Finance 396w

Arts Council of Northern Ireland
652w

Arts finance
398w, 720
Expenditure 652w
Opera 719-20
Regional arts associations 5w, 396-7w
Royal Shakespeare Company 650w
Theatre 720-2

Asbestos
Palace of Westminster 45w

Ashby, Mr David
Questions
Foreign companies in UK, West Germany 979
Midland main railway line, Railway electrification 68w

Ashcroft, Michael
Serious Fraud Office 354-5w

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 874
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 202
Questions
European currency unit 187

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 880
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 359
Questions
Arachnoiditis, Medical research 401w
Children, Departmental coordination 274-5w
Children, Departmental responsibilities 274-5w
Complaints against central government, Attorney General 278w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Education & Science 279-80w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Employment 281-2w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Health 266w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Social Security 283-4w
Complaints against central government, Dept of the Environment 267w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Trade & Industry 382w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Transport 245-6w
Complaints against central government, Home Office 255-6w
Complaints against central government, Northern Ireland Office 365w
Complaints against central government, Scottish Office 242-3w
Complaints against central government, Welsh Office 290w
Disabled workers, Aids for handicapped 427w
Disabled workers, Multiply handicapped 427w
Handicapped students, Higher education 377w
John Groom's Housing Association, Housing & handicapped 39w
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues 273-4w
Special education, Multiply handicapped 377w
Spinal injuries 400w
Spinal injuries, Preventive medicine 400w
Wheelchair housing, Housing construction 233-4w

Assisted places scheme
14
Disclosure of information 13
Pupil records 194w

Association of British Chambers of Commerce
Economic situation 502

Association of Community Health Councils of England & Wales
102w

Association of London Authorities
323w

Astra Holdings
Arms exports 88w
Cambodia 88w
Dept of Trade inquiries 349w

Astra Training Services
Freehold land 629-30w
Redundancy 629-30w

Athletics
Police powers 256-7w

***Atkins, Mr Robert**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)*
Questions
Archery 472-3w
Archery, EC law 472-3w
Interim development orders 42w
Land acquisition, Schools 267w
Local authority powers, Planning permission 346w, 536w
Methane, Waste disposal 181w
Minerals Act 1981 41w
Opencast mining, Coal mining 342w
Opencast mining, Planning permission 530w
Planning permission 536w
Planning permission, Demolition 687w
Planning permission, Farm buildings 229w
Planning permission, Property development 691-2w
Sunday trading, Markets 527w

Atkinson, Mr David
Questions
Alternative medicine, NHS 30w
Coastal protection, Nature conservation 38w
Community charge, Beach huts 234w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 385w
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency, Police 251w
Electoral register, Post codes 449w
European Security Conference, International conferences 328
Handicap benefits, Social security reform 575-6w
Iraq, Export controls 385w
National savings 292w
Nepal, Religious freedom 385w
Revenue support grant, Bournemouth 38w
Sweets, Food hygiene 631w

Atomic Weapons Research Establishment
87w
Recruitment 286w

Attendance allowance
Administrative delays 284w
Computer applications 77w
Medical examinations 224-5w
Mentally ill 224w
Social security appeals 77-8w, 285-6w

Attendance Allowance Board
77-8w

Attorney General
Complaints against central government 278w

Audio recordings
Police interrogation 450w
Prices 775w

Audit
Administration of justice 201w
Company accounts 328w
Conflict of interests 381w, 429w
Dept of Trade inquiries 201w
Disclosure of information 429w
District health authorities 192w
Insolvency 328w
Investor protection 328w
Licensing 380-1w, 428w
Minet Holdings 201w
Public bodies 199-200w
Public companies 379-80w

Audit—continued
Shareholders 329w
Solicitors 201w

Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England & Wales
185-6w, 192w, 501-2

Auditing Practices Committee
201w, 328w
Departmental correspondence 429w

Australia
Import duties 199w

Automatic ticketing systems
Severn bridge 512w

Availability for work
Income support 575w, 663-6w
Unemployment benefits 753w

Average earnings
743-4w
Scotland 211-2w, 361w
South East region 361w
Take-home pay 299w

Avon Light Rail Transit Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Avon Light Rail Transit (Bristol City Centre) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

AWE Aldermaston
Contractorisation 497w
Contracts for services 497-8w
Security 497w

AWE Cardiff
Emergency planning 502w

B4029
189w

Baby milks
Midwives 31w
Procurement 31w

Bailiffs
Pay 278w

***Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*
Questions
Assisted places scheme 14
Assisted places scheme, Disclosure of information 13
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official cars 13-4
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Written questions 16
Community charge, Duchy of Lancaster 11w
Local government constituencies, Bolton 13
Magistrates, Public appointments 14-5

Balance of payments
294w, 296w, 981
UK trade with EC 653w

Balance of trade
297w, 569-70w, 597w
Europe 597w
Information technology 239w, 605w, 984-5
Japan 597w
Manufactured goods 975-6
OECD countries 603w
UK trade with EC 239w, 602w

***Baldry, Mr Tony**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Alternative energy, Non-fossil fuel obligation 441-2w
Alternative energy, Research finance 441w
British Coal Corporation, Vibration white finger 657w

***Baldry, Mr Tony**—continued*
British Electricity International, Economic sanctions 338w, 441w
Coal fired power stations, Research finance 363w
Coal mining, Occupational deafness 115w
Combined heat & power 658w
Electricity generation, Alternative energy 520w
Electricity generation, OECD countries 520w
Electricity supply industry, Accountants 270w
Electricity supply industry, Advertising 364w, 441w, 519w
Electricity supply industry, Electricity tariffs 655w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 363w
Energy conservation, Harmonisation of standards 270-1w
Energy conservation, Information services 272w
Energy Efficiency Ministerial Committee 519w
Energy Efficiency Office 519w
Flue gas desulphurisation 116w
Gas fired power stations, Construction 656w
National Power, Coal 364-5w
National Power, Overseas trade 441w
Nuclear power, Conferences 12w
Nuclear reactors, Repairs & maintenance 518w
Nuclear safeguards, Treaties 14w, 655w
Plutonium, Exports 658w
Radioactive fallout, Health physics 15w
Sellafield, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 365w

Balfour Beatty Engineering
24-5w, 199w, 511-2w

Baltic republics of USSR
216w

Bank for Reconstruction & Development of Europe
see European Development Bank

Bank of England
21w, 493-4
Exchange rates 9-10w
Iraq 8w

Bankruptcy
Interest rates 494
Retail trade 207-8w

Banks
Directors 107w

Banks, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 800
Local government finance (31:10:90) 996
Questions
A1, Road traffic 705w
A1, Road works 705w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Employment 627w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of the Environment 530-1w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 423w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Defence 764w
Civil service dispersal, Treasury 655w
Historic buildings, Local government expenditure 323w
M1, Road works 709w
M11, Road construction 709w
Road accidents, Children 711w
Road safety, Road signs 708w
Road works, Contracts 707w
Road works, Information 707w
Standard spending assessments, Harrogate Borough Council 692w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
British Council (26:10:90) 698-701, 704
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 546, 548-51, 554, 618

***Banks, Mr Tony**—continued*
Local government finance (31:10:90) 997
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 744, 747-8
Questions
Arrests, Football 128w
BBC External Services, Languages education 391w
Bicycles, Members' allowances 16
Business statements 515
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official cars 13-4
Dolphins, Death 268w
Eastern Europe, English education 391w
Eastern Europe, Visas 58-9w
Exports, Furs 132w
Eye tests, Newham 35w
Foxes, Farms 134-5w
Furs, Farms 134-5w
Hong Kong, Ivory 567-8w
Hong Kong, Prosecutions 566w
Import of live animals, Birds 613w
Income support, Transitional arrangements 668w
Intervention stocks, Greater London 81w
London boroughs, Capital investment 322-3w
London Residuary Body, Annual reports 323w
London Residuary Body, Public appointments 323w
London Transport, Central line 11
Ministerial policy advisors 726
Ministerial statements, Government departments 642w
Official hospitality, Dept of the Environment 46w
Official hospitality, Dept of Trade & Industry 51w
Official hospitality, Dept of Transport 72w
Official hospitality, Office of Arts & Libraries 103w
Official hospitality, 10 Downing Street 639w
Official hospitality, Treasury 106w
Palace of Westminster, Operating costs 688w
Party conferences, Security 316w, 766-7w
Seals, North sea 542-3w
Social Fund, Newham 574w, 668-9w
Social Fund, Social security benefits reductions 222w
Theatres, Finance 396w
Wild animals, Cornwall 323w
Work permits 740w
Work permits, Actors 755w
Work permits, Sheri, Patrick 317-8w
Written questions, Costs 641w

Barbican Centre
720-1

Barnes, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Adoption, Aliens (29:10:90) 845
Cambodia (26:10:90) 651, 681, 690
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 475
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 345
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1007
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 403-17
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 107, 126, 129, 143
Questions
Accidents Investigation Branch, Air accidents 704w
Adoption, Romania 32w
Balance of trade, UK trade with EC 239w
Bombings, Birmingham 255w
Bus permits, Retirement age 71w
Business statements 516
CFE talks, Civil service manpower 499w
Channel tunnel, Transport of radioactive materials 60w
Council of Ministers, Voting methods 561w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 563w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 408w

***Barnes, Mr Harry**—continued*
Electoral register, Finchley 16-7w, 256w, 739w
Energy Efficiency Office 519w
Entry clearances, Adoption 16w
Espionage, Families 561w
France, Nuclear weapons 518w
Hammersmith Hospital, Fires 525w
Incontinence aids, NHS charges 32w
Industrial safety, Transport of hazardous materials 629w
Intergovernmental conference, EC integration 564w
Iraq, Nuclear physics 563w
Iraq, Nuclear power 563w
Iraq, Nuclear reactors 563-4w
Iraq, Technology transfer 563w
Iraq, Uranium 564w
Israel, Ministers' visits abroad 563w
Kenya, Political prisoners 263w
Malawi Act 1981 41w
NHS Income Generation Unit 685-6w
Nuclear non proliferation, International cooperation 561-2w
Ordnance Technology, Iraq 609w
Prescription charges exemptions, Low incomes 682w
River Rother, River pollution 687-8w
Robbery, Inquiries 559w
Romania, Adoption 56w
Romania, Television channels 56w
Sharpe Pritchard, Private Bills 642-4w
Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985, Occupational deafness 668w
Teacher training, Northern Ireland 559-60w
Transport of hazardous materials, Safety measures 509-10w
Trials, Crown courts 737w
Trident, Defence expenditure 624w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Convictions 559w
UN Institute for Disarmament Research 564w

Barnes, Mrs Rosie
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1000
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 742

Barnsley Health Authority
Doctors' list of patients 681w

Barron, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1001
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 409, 413
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 496-7w
Financial services, Investor protection 607-8w
Interim development orders 42w
Primary education, Educational assessment 161w
Tax avoidance 185

Basildon
Rents to mortgages scheme 183-4w, 466w

Basildon District Council
184w, 466w

Batho Committee
see Noise Laws Review Group

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1003

Battle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 741
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 360
Questions
Balance of trade, Europe 597w
British Rail, Emergency planning 341w
Cambodia, Peace negotiations 561w

***Battle, Mr John**—continued*
Child benefit, Low incomes 282w
Community charge exemptions 230-1w
Disposable income, Leeds 366w
Homelessness, Codes of practice 343w
Homelessness, Leeds 46-7w
Income support, Availability for work 575w
Prisoners, Suicide 126w
St James' Hospital Leeds, Self-governing hospitals 192w
School administration, Special education 155-6w, 513w
Social Fund, Social security claims 117w
Water meters, Water charges 468w
Yorkshire Arts Association, Public appointments 396w

Battle of Britain
85w

BBC
398w, 555-6w, 730w, 740w, 755w
Income 555w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 556w

BBC External Services
456w
Languages education 391w

Beach huts
Community charge 234w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 55-6
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 752, 758-60
European Council (30:10:90) 890
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 257
Local government finance (31:10:90) 999-1000
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 100, 102-3
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Interest rates 292w
Manufacturing industries, Pay 487

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Questions
Inflation 496

Bedfordshire Police
256-7w

Beef
Intervention stocks 133w

Beef premiums
Markets 306w

Bees
Import controls 631w

Beggs, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1027, 1030
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 373-4
Questions
Concessionary television licences, Pensioners 347w
Dyslexia, School population 559w
Dyslexia, Teacher training 636w
European Security Conference, National territory 699w
NATO, Republic of Ireland 855
Public expenditure, Housing 654w
USA, Republic of Ireland 330-1

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 206, 219-22
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 111-2, 116, 131-4
Questions
A1, Road traffic 60-1w
Civil service agencies 574w, 724
Dept of the Environment, Expenditure 691w

Beith, Mr A J—continued
Economic & monetary union 297w
Education, Public expenditure 677w
Greenwich Hospital Estates, Salmon 622w
Health services, Public expenditure 681w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial training 486-7
Multifibre arrangement 611w
Newcastle Airport, Airmisses 248-9w
Public expenditure, Economic regions 571-2w
Public expenditure, Scotland 725w
Public expenditure, Wales 660w
School administration, Budgeting 152w
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority, Public appointments 248w
Trade, Public expenditure 772w
Transport, Public expenditure 710-2w
Trust ports 458w

Belfast
Robbery 559w

Belgium
Low flying 502w

Belize
Armed forces training 92w

Bell, Mr Stuart
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 885
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 107-8, 126, 134-47
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 329w
Unit trusts, EC internal trade 611w
Water supply industry, Northern Ireland 636-7w

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 247-9
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 372
Questions
Prisoners on remand, Young people 732w
Romania, Economic policy 213w

Bellotti, David
Members' oath & affirmation (23:10:90) 190

Bellotti, Mr David
Debates etc.
Members' oath & affirmation, Bellotti, David (23:10:90) 190

Belmarsh Prison Woolwich
742w
Prison medical services 447-8w
Prison staff 447w

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 417, 421, 425

Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 881-2
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces casualties 863-4

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 790-1, 793, 796, 831, 834
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 745
Questions
M66, Road construction 3
NATO ministerial meetings, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 501w
Peace negotiations, Foreign aid 326
War pensions, Administrative delays 367-8w
Warships, USA 97w

Bennett, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 546
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 211
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 743
Questions
Agricultural subsidies 711
Beef premiums, Markets 306w
Food imports, Eastern Europe 307-8w
Income tax, Tax yields 295w
Inflation 496
Livestock, Incinerators 306w
Local education authorities, Budgeting 181
Over-the-horizon radar, International cooperation 286w
Police 734w
Residential care, Personal savings 319w
Sheep premiums 306-7w
Slaughterhouses, Government grants 312w
Slaughterhouses, Licensing 311-2w
Teacher training 161w

Beringer Committee
see Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee

Berlin
Armed forces deployment 222w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Questions
Custodial treatment, Young people 737w
Fireworks, Safety 778w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 456w
Mentally disturbed offenders, Research 739w
Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, Trains 461w
MV Derbyshire, Inquiries 96w
Offenders, Electronic surveillance 738-9w
Passenger transport executives, Contracts for services 461w
Prison medical services, Complaints 739w
Prisoners, Children in care 738w
Prisoners, Death 738w
Prisoners, Police custody 737w
Publishing, Restrictive trade practices 433w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Debates etc.
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 71-6, 88, 89, 90, 94

BICC
195w, 382w

Bicycles
Imports 772-4w
Market share 773-4w
Members' allowances 16-7
New Forest 645w

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
Timesharing, Misleading advertising 598w

Biffen, Rt Hon John
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 229-31

Big Ben
Repairs & maintenance 268w

Bigrigg
Pedestrian crossings 249w

Birds
Animal quarantine 633w
Import of live animals 613w
Nature conservation 467w, 533w

Birmingham
767w
Bombings 19-20w, 255w
Public inquiries 257w

Birmingham City Council (No 2) Bill 1988/89
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned debate on consideration read (25:10:90) 485

Birmingham relief road
Contracts 62w

Blackburn, Dr John G
Debates etc.
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 432-4
Questions
Arts finance 720
Pay settlements, Productivity 867

Blackpool
741w
Industrial diseases benefits 78-9w

Blair, Mr Tony
Questions
Part-time employment, EC action 2w, 754-5w

Blind
Deaf 403-6w
Mental hospitals 404w

Blood sports
Defence land 504w
Forestry Commission 722w
Licensing 646w
New Forest 645-6w

Blunkett, Mr David
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1015-6
Questions
Attendance allowance, Medical examinations 224-5w
Attendance allowance, Mentally ill 224w
Community charge 181w
Community charge benefits, Government grants to local authorities 43w
Community charge exemptions 231-2w
Community charge exemptions, Departmental publications 232w
Community charge exemptions, Mentally disadvantaged 231w
Drug abuse, Chemicals 185w
Government grants to local authorities, Community charge benefits 43w
Housing benefits, Government grants to local authorities 76-7w
Local authorities, Competition 469w, 691w
Local authorities, Contracts 470w
Local authorities, Contracts for services 541-2w
Local government expenditure, Magistrates' courts 471-2w
Local government finance, Transitional relief 465w
Non-domestic rates, Local government revenue 43-4w, 180w
Sheffield Development Corporation 267w
Sheffield Development Corporation, Inquiries 227-8w, 469w
Standard community charge 231w
Uniform business rate 43w

Boateng, Mr Paul
Questions
Balance of trade 597w
Child benefit 489

Body, Sir Richard
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 880
Questions
Pigmeat, Germany 631w

Bolton
Local government constituencies 13

Bomb disposal
Germany 504w

Bombings
Birmingham 19-20w, 255w
IRA 560w

Bombs
Low flying 760w

Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 406, 408, 410-1, 412, 423

Books
Public libraries 573w

Bootle
868

Borders region
211-2w
Low flying 623w, 626w

Borders Regional Council
212w

Bottomley, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords afnendts (25:10:90) 558-9, 600-1
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 788-9, 797, 806, 808-11
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 742
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 361-2
Questions
Child benefit 79-80w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia, Minister of State, Department of Health
Debates etc.
Adoption, Aliens (29:10:90) 846-50
Questions
Abortion 319w
Adoption, Romania 32w
Agency nurses, Nottingham Health Authority 29w
Baby milks, Midwives 31w
Baby milks, Procurement 31w
Child abuse, Satanism 400w
Child protection registers, Children 523w
Child protection registers, Codes of practice 522-3w
Child workers, Bradford City Council 686w
Childbirth 33w
Childbirth, Home births 108w
Childbirth, Medical malpractice 108w
Children in care 523w
Children in care, Adoption 523w
Community care 318w
Community care, Government grants to local authorities 318w
Doctors' list of patients, Barnsley Health Authority 681w
Doncaster Health Authority 525w
Doncaster Health Authority, Public appointments 525-6w
Eye tests, Newham 35w
Family doctors, Patients 34w
Family doctors, Property transfer 34w
Fertility, Medical treatments 32-3w
Haemophilia, AIDS 29w
Health service staff, Personnel management 399w
Heart diseases, Medical treatments 34w
HIV infection, Pregnant women 443w
Home births, Nurses' training 108-9w
Hospital consultants, Merit awards 526w
Hospital patients, Children 398-9w
Hospital waiting lists, Leicestershire 442-3w
Hostels, Finance 35w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces casualties 526w, 686w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 31w
Lung diseases, Medical equipment 267w
Mentally ill, Prescription charges exemptions 443w
NHS, Marketing 408-9w
NHS finance, VAT repayment 444w
NHS hospital trusts 192w
NHS hospital trusts, Finance 408w
Ondansetron, Cancer 409w
Optical charges exemptions, Deaf 406w
Osteoporosis, Screening 318w
Paracetamol, Health warnings 108w
Physiotherapists, Student numbers 30w
Prescription charges exemptions, Low incomes 682w
Psychiatry 523w
Regional health authorities, Community health councils 524-5w
Registered homes, Local government social services 31w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia*—*continued
Residential care, Elderly 681w
Residential care, Local government social services 30-1w
Residential care, Personal savings 319w
Royal Liverpool Hospital, NHS trusts 526w
St James' Hospital Leeds, Self-governing hospitals 192w
Secure accommodation 31-2w
Unruly children, Local government social services 687w
Wakefield Health Authority, Public appointments 33-4w
Whittington Hospital, NHS hospital trusts 406w

Boundary Commission for England
European Parliament constituencies 260w

Bournemouth
316w, 766-7w
Revenue support grant 38w

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
81-2w, 209w, 644w
EC countries 632w
Select Committee reports 632w
Wastes 136-7w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Dog registration scheme, Public petitions (26:10:90) 629
Questions
Mentally ill, Prescription charges exemptions 443w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Questions
Private Bills, Transport 2-3
Railway stations, Greater London 61w

Bowis, Mr John
Debates etc.
Cambodia (26:10:90) 647, 677-8, 682-5
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 457
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 27-8
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 442
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 737
Questions
Adult education, Unemployed 674w
Albania, EC external relations 216w
Bicycles, Imports 772-4w
Bicycles, Market share 773-4w
Business statements 506
Cambodia, Overseas aid 333-4
Greater London Arts 396w
Military aid, Cambodia 864
NATO ministerial meetings 500w
Road accidents, Greater London 6
Special schools, Budgeting 377w

Boyes, Mr Roland
Questions
Nuclear weapons tests, Exservicemen 862
Regional planning & development 603w
School administration, Special education 155w

Bradford
685w
City technology colleges 139w
Property development 235w, 535w
Redundancy 629w
School buildings 151w

Bradford City Council
Child workers 686w
Government grants to local authorities 535w

Bradford North
868

Bradley, Mr Keith
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 600w
Headteachers, Men 376w

Bradley, Mr Keith*—*continued
Headteachers, Resignations 376-7w
NHS hospital trusts, Finance 408w
Ondansetron, Cancer 409w

Braithwaite, Mark
727w

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Questions
Raleigh Industries, Manufactured imports 975
Take-home pay, Average earnings 299w

Bray, Dr Jeremy
Questions
Advisory Board for the Research Councils, Public appointments 375-6w
Central Statistical Office, Budgeting 488-9w
Central Statistical Office, Civil servants' secondment 489w
EC Statistical Office, Statistics 488w
Education & industry, Government assistance to industry 435-6w
Enterprise initiative 434w
Family expenditure survey, Statistics 484w
Government assistance to industry, EC action 434w
Industrial research, Government assistance to industry 434-5w
Lowermoor Incident Health Advisory Group, Evidence 405w
Research councils, Public appointments 372-6w
Science & technology research, Overseas students 184w
Statistics 488w
Statistics, Civil service manpower 490w
Statistics, Codes of practice 486w
Statistics, Computer applications 491w
Statistics, Departmental coordination 486w, 491w
Statistics, Disclosure of information 489w
Statistics, Economic situation 483-4w, 486-7w
Statistics, Efficiency scrutinies 490w
Statistics, Government departments 484-5w
Statistics, Government information services 486w
Statistics, Ministerial policy advisors 489-90w
Statistics, National income 484-5w
Statistics, Procurement 490w
Statistics, Public expenditure 487w
Statistics, Public opinion 487w
Statistics, Publishing 489w
Statistics, Quality control 485w
Statistics, Research 488w
Statistics, Surveys 487w
Water pollution, Research finance 405w

Brazier, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 747
Questions
Inflation, Interest rates 497
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 297w

Brazil
British Aerospace 204w
Development aid 568w
Iraq 564w
Rain forests 24w

Breathalysers
Licensed premises 179w
Scotland 179w

Brecon
275w

"Breeding & Movement of Cattle Consultation Paper"
650w

Brewing industry
Competition 430w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 602w

Bridges
Road accidents 96w
Shard bridge 460w

Bristol
Railway transport 11

Bristol Channel
Water pollution 690-1w

British Aerospace
Brazil 204w
Export licensing 204w
USA 504w

British Airways
979

British citizenship
Fees & charges 556-7w
Hong Kong (23:10:90) 292-306

British Coal Corporation
585-6w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 771w
Vibration white finger 657w

British Council
41w, 265w, 391w, (26:10:90) 695-706

British Council of Churches
342w

British Electricity International
Economic sanctions 338w, 441w

British nationality
Administrative delays 733w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 455-6w

British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(23:10:90) 292-306

British Nuclear Fuels
42w, 753-4w

British Overseas Trade Board
Public appointments 330-1w

British Ports Association
72w

British Rail
63w, 178w, 191w, 341w, 378w, 461-4w, 509w, 704-5w, 723w
Departmental responsibilities 316-7w
Emergency planning 341w
Investment 69w
Performance indicators 65w

British Railways (No 3) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

British residents abroad
Electoral register 408w, 446w
Homelessness 468w
Iraq 468w, 667w
Social Fund 667w

British Shipbuilders
51w
Property transfer 595-6w

"British Shipbuilders Annual Report & Accounts, 1989/90"
51w

British Society for Horticultural Research
280w

British Steel Corporation
596w, 970-1
Company disclosure of information 971

British Telecom
203w, 389-90w, 604w
Export licensing 203w

British Telecommunications Act 1981
Questions
251w

British Tourist Authority
Japan 1-2w

British Urban Development
Swansea 291w

Brixton Prison
Suicide 252w

Broadcasting
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 456w

Broadcasting Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087
Ways & means res* & Lords amendts (25:10:90) 518-619
Questions
Housing associations 449w
Lords amendments 315w

Broadcasting Etc Select Committee
(25:10:90) 619

Broadwater Farm Estate
727w

Brooke, Rt Hon Peter, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Ministerial statements (24:10:90) 367-74
Questions
Agriculture, Northern Ireland 559w
EC free food scheme, Pensioners 53w
Giant hogweed, Weed control 332w
Northern Ireland government 52w
Salmon, Fish farming 52w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 452w
Trout, Fish conservation 52w
Water supply industry, Northern Ireland 636-7w

Brookwood Hospital
Land use 228-9w

Brown, Mr Gordon
Questions
Government assistance to industry, Expenditure 973-4
Iron & steel industry, Factory closures 971

Brown, Mr Michael
Questions
Investment, Consumption 300w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 498
Local government constituencies, Humberside 182w

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Community charge, Households 689w
Exchange rates 10-1w
Income tax assessment, Departmental forms 654w
School buildings, Capital investment 150w
Tax burden, Households 651-2w
Textile industry, EC industrial policy 605w
USA, EC external relations 330

Brown, Mr Ron
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 886
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1006
Questions
Administration of justice, Costs 730w
Balance of payments, UK trade with EC 653w
Exports, Middle East 615w
Information technology 129w

Browne, Mr John
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 68-70, 150
European Council (30:10:90) 886
Questions
Armed forces, Community charge 853

Bruce, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Adoption, Aliens (29:10:90) 848
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 762, 807, 810, 812, 817, 823
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 345
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1014
Questions
Education & industry 156w

Bruce, Mr Ian—continued
Hard core unemployed, Employment services 630-1w
Highway code 64w
House prices 488
Profitability, Manufacturing industries 568w
Small businesses, Industrial production 980

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 792-3
Questions
Inflation, ERM 293w
Polychlorinated biphenyl, Waste disposal 180w
Railway electrification, Scotland 65w

Buccaneer aircraft
Red Flag Exercises 759w

Buchan, Norman
Members' deaths (23:10:90) 173

Buck, Sir Antony
Questions
Theatre, Arts finance 721-2

Buckley, Mr George J
Questions
Curriculum 162w
Financial services, Investor protection 608w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 494-5w

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 212, 217, 218, 235, 256-8

Budget March 1990
292w

Budgeting
Central Statistical Office 488-9w
Cumbria Education Authority 673w
Housing Corporation 532-3w
Local education authorities 140-50w, 152-4w, 181
London Docklands Development Corporation 529-30w
Prisons 448w
School administration 151-2w, 673w
Special schools 377w

Budgeting loans
575w

Building industry
Environment protection 46w
Skillcentres 532w

Building industry safety
EC law 628w

Building repairs
Historic buildings 360w
Local government expenditure 533-4w
NHS 358w
Public sector housing 533-4w

Building Research Establishment
229w

Building societies
Repossession orders 7w

Building Societies Association
Interest rates 496-7

Buildings
Courts 727-8w
Solar power 229w

Bulgaria
Know-how Fund 222w

Burns, Mr Simon
Questions
Companies 609w
Explosions, Peterborough 339w
Income tax, Tax reform 294-5w

Burns, Mr Simon—continued
NHS finance, VAT repayment 444w
Planning permission, Aerials 692-3w

Burt, Mr Alistair
Questions
Environmental Protection Bill 1989/90, Orders & regulations 233w
Exhibitions, Upper Waiting Hall 777w
Greater Manchester relief road, M66 706w
Greater Manchester relief road, Public participation in planning 705w
Greater Manchester relief road, Road construction 705-6w
Listed buildings, Computer applications 470w
M66, Road construction 709-10w
Social security benefits, Handicapped students 579-80w
Social security benefits, Students 579w
Student loans, Student numbers 180

Bury
705-6w
Planning blight 706w
Road construction 706-9w
Unitary development plans 706w

Bus fares
68w
Railway fares 703w

Bus lanes
Greater London 246w

Bus permits
Retirement age 71w

Bus services
Greater London 64w
Railway travel 703w
Scotland 173w
Wales 187w

Bases
Motor industry 173w
Parking 66-7w
Traffic lights 246w

Business
Prisoners 553w

Business motions
(24:10:90) 426, (31:10:90) 1022

Business questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 517

Business statements
503-18

Business Statistics Office
490-1w

Butcher, Mr John
Questions
India, Human rights 699-700w
India, Punjab 699w

Butler, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1015
Questions
Brewing industry, Competition 430w
Business statements 510
Crime prevention, Cheshire 730w
Education, Haringey 160-1w
Falkland Islands, Petroleum exploration 454w
HIV infection, Pregnant women 443w
House of Commons stationery 12w
Members' staff, Overtime 644w
Regional arts associations, Arts finance 5w
Roads, North Wales 358w

Butterfill, Mr John
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 813-5
Questions
Economic growth, Overseas trade 495

By elections
868

Bye laws
Greenham Common 500w

Bypasses
Consultants 458w
Road construction 68w
Road works 547w

CAB International
International conferences 23-4w

Caborn, Mr Richard
Questions
High technology, Government assistance to industry 976
Income tax, Tax burden 489-90

Caesarean sections
27w, 33w

Caird Development
Company investigations 428w

Calcutt Inquiry
see Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry

Caldey Island Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Caledonian MacBrayne
Energy costs 473-4w

Calling of members
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:10:90) 339, 347, 366, 374, 404, 405, 406, 413, 414, 417, 422, (29:10:90) 744, 755, 756, (30:10:90) 890, 891, 892, (31:10:90) 1011, 1016-7, 1018-9

Cambodia
(26:10:90) 640-94
Armed forces training 100w
Astra Holdings 88w
China 333
Defence equipment 109w
EC external relations 695w
Explosives 88w
Exservicemen 414w
Foreign policy 214w
Military aid 864
Ministers 263-4w
Overseas aid 22-3w, 333-4
Overseas trade 969
Peace negotiations 214w, 561w
Pol Pot 333
Technical assistance 23w
UN Security Council 214w
United Nations 333

Camden
Local government functions 40-1w, 542w

Cameras
Driving offences 461w

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
57-8w

Campbell, Mr Menzies
Questions
Arms control, NATO ministerial meetings 498w
Computers, Procurement 89w
Inflation 293w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 390w
Ministry of Defence, Accounting 89w
Strategic nuclear weapons, Arms control negotiations 89w
Tanks, Defence procurement 87-8w

Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 126
Questions
Contracts, Iraq 982-3

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 196
Landlord & Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 42-3

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N—continued
Questions
Armed forces, Disciplinary proceedings 410w
Banks, Directors 107w
Business statements 511-2
China, Foreign relations 215w
Churchill, Odette, Disclosure of information 419-20w
Companies House Users' Group 130-1w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Fees & charges 767w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Offices 767w
Company registration, Information 131w
Company registration, Microforms 131w
Exchange rates, Disclosure of information 21w, 50-1w
F111 aircraft, USA 505w
Income tax, Community charge 653w
Income tax, Local government finance 652w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 867
Select Committees, Disclosure of information 15
Tornado aircraft 505-6w

Campylobacter
Food poisoning 685w
Health hazards 688w

Canada
Low flying 758-62w

Canary Wharf
Skillcentres 532w

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Questions
Business statements 513
Driving offences, Death 71-2w
Income 300w
Primary education, Denny 178-9w
South Africa, Foreign policy 331
Student loans 157w

Cancer
Ondansetron 409w
Tower Hamlets 108w

Cancer hazards
Printing industry 111w

Cannock Chase
763w

Capital
NHS finance 444w

Capitalism
Eastern Europe 300w

Car allowances
Wales 288w

Car bombs
Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 367-74

Car industry
Sunderland 866

Carbon
Forestry 725w
Scotland 725w

Career structure
Civil service 360w
Nurses 25-6w
Police 254-6w

Carers
710
Wales 710

Carers' premium
(24:10:90) 348-66

Carlile, Mr Alex
Questions
Cot deaths, Wales 28-9w
Curriculum, Rural areas 160w
Development Board for Rural Wales 717
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 357w
Inflation, ERM 293w

Carlile, Mr Alex—continued
Low flying, Armed forces training 89-90w
Retail trade, Bankruptcy 207-8w
Retail trade, Company liquidations 205-6w
Retail trade, Economic situation 330w

Carlisle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1030, 1031, 1034, 1045, 1051-3
Questions
South Africa, Foreign policy 220w
South Africa, Sports boycotts 332

Carlisle, Mr Kenneth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces
Questions
Aircraft noise 758w
Airmisses 763w
Armed forces training, Firing ranges 764w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Recruitment 286w
AWE Aldermaston, Contractorisation 497w
AWE Aldermaston, Contracts for services 497-8w
AWE Cardiff, Emergency planning 502w
Cannock Chase 763w
Chatham dockyard, Nuclear submarines 862
Chemical weapons, Hazardous wastes 757w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Defence 764w
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988, Consultants 86w
Defence industries, Security 501w
Defence land, Pollution control 414w
Devonport dockyard, Defence contracts 502-3w
Exercise Green Lanyard, Military aircraft 762-3w
Exercise Red Lanyard, Military aircraft 762w
F111 aircraft, USA 505w
Hazardous wastes, Competition 766w
HMS Churchill 411w
HMS Renown, Health physics 411w
HMS Vulcan, Nuclear reactors 757w
Low flying, Air accidents 759-61w
Low flying, Aircrew 762w
Low flying, Armed forces training 89-90w
Low flying, Bombs 760w
Low flying, Borders region 623w, 626w
Low flying, Canada 758-9w, 761-2w
Low flying, Dalmellington 760w
Low flying, Defence equipment 625w
Low flying, Handbooks 760w
Low flying, Lockerbie 761w
Low flying, Military aircraft 622-3w, 626w, 759-62w
Low flying, Military exercises 758w
Low flying, Noise control 501-2w, 625w
Low flying, Northern region 624-5w
Low flying, Public holidays 761w
Low flying, Radar 758-9w
Low flying, RAF Machrihanish 760w
Low flying, RAF Spadeadam 625w
Low flying, Shackleton aircraft 765w
Low flying, Urban areas 623w
Low flying, USA 758w
Low flying, West Germany 502w, 622w
Military aircraft, Air accidents 623-4w
Military aircraft, Defence equipment 625w
Military exercises, Defence equipment 624w
Ministry of Defence, Educational qualifications 91w
Ministry of Defence, Health physics 500w
Navy, Defence review 287w
Nuclear safety, Metal industries 87w
Nuclear safety, Metals 86-7w
Nuclear safety, USSR 86w
Nuclear submarines, Decommissioning 765-6w
Nuclear submarines, Health physics 411w, 508w
Nuclear weapons, Chemicals 87w
Nuclear weapons tests, Exservicemen 862
Nuclear weapons tests, Radiation hazards 413w

Carlisle, Mr Kenneth—continued
Radiation hazards 861-2
RAF Spadeadam, Armed forces training 625w
Red Flag Exercises, Buccaneer aircraft 759w
Royal ordnance factories, Explosions 411w
Shackleton aircraft, Military exercises 764-5w
Tornado aircraft 505-6w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering, Defence contracts 503w

Carpets
Palace of Westminster 41w

Carrington, Mr Matthew
Questions
Channel tunnel, Railway network 245w
Financial markets 611-2w
London Transport, Investment 62w
Public expenditure, Local government expenditure 492

Cars
EC internal trade 986
Exhaust emission controls 65w
Japan 604w, 986
Local authorities 288w
Security 726w

Cartwright, Mr John
Questions
Armed forces medical services, Hospitals 98-9w
Leasehold housing, Greater London 467w
Local education authority training grant scheme, Trade unions 167w
NATO, Europe 854-5
Networker trains 9
Nurses, Greenwich Health Authority 405w
Private education, Child care 178w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Hospital beds 99-100w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Hospital patients 100w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Manpower 98w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, NHS 98w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Operating costs 98-9w

Case assessment
524w

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc.
British Council (26:10:90) 699
European Council (30:10:90) 888-9
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 233-5, 273
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 388
Questions
Business statements 513
Duty free allowances 70w
Duty free allowances, EC internal trade 7w, 103-4w
Duty free shops 1w
EC Finance Council 299w
Economic & monetary union, EC integration 694w
USA, Middle East 331

Castlereagh
Development plans 638w
Roads 250w

Catalytic converters
245w

Catering
Roads 190w

Cattle
Orders & regulations 650w

Census of population
Sleeping rough 230w

Central America
EC external relations 336w

Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency
655w

Central line
London Transport 11
London Underground 10-1

Central Statistical Office
484-91w
Budgeting 488-9w
Civil servants' secondment 489w
Civil servants' visits abroad 489w
Civil service manpower 488-9w

Certification
Slaughterhouses 306w

CFE talks
499w
Civil service manpower 499w
Defence review 862-3

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda, Minister for Overseas Development
Questions
Aid financed trade 195w
Aid financed trade, Companies political contributions 197w
Aid financed trade, Contracts 196w
Aid financed trade, Corruption 196w
Aid financed trade, Profits 195-6w
Brazil, Rain forests 24w
CAB International, International conferences 23-4w
Cambodia, Overseas aid 22-3w
Cambodia, Technical assistance 23w
Developing countries, Aid financed trade 195w
Developing countries, International conferences 358-9w
Eastern Europe, Know-how Fund 194-5w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 109w
EC countries, Development aid 671w
European Development Bank 22w, 359w
European Development Bank, Kirklees Borough Council 359w
European Development Bank, Manpower 359w
Hong Kong, Civil service pensions 672w
India, Development aid 568w
Malaysia, Aid financed trade 24-5w, 198w
Malaysia, Contracts 199w
Malaysia, Hydroelectric power 671-2w
Malaysia, Official visits 195w
Malaysia, Road construction 672w
Malaysia, Turbines 672w
Overseas aid 109w
South America 24w
Sudan, Food 650w

Challenger
94w, 507w

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Official cars 13-4
Written questions 16

Channel Four
86w

Channel Three
(25:10:90) 518-619

Channel tunnel
Fires 426w
Industrial accidents 627-8w
Industrial health & safety 426w
North West region 59w
Prosecutions 627-8w
Railway freight transport 59w
Railway network 245w
Scotland 4-5, 59-60w
Trains 191w
Transport of radioactive materials 60w
Transport policy 60w

Channel Tunnel Safety Authority
510w

Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 880

Charities
VAT 299w
VAT zero rated goods 8-9w

Chatham dockyard
Nuclear submarines 862

Chedgzoy, Tom
(30:10:90) 948-59

Chemical industries
Industrial health & safety 50w

Chemical weapons
Arms control negotiations 453-4w
Army stores 262-3w
Cornwall 757w
Hazardous wastes 757w
Sea pollution 82w

Chemicals
Drug abuse 185w
Nuclear weapons 87w

Cheshire
Crime prevention 730w
Homelessness 343w

Chieftain tanks
87-8w, 507-8w, 766w

Child abuse
Cleveland 680-1w
Satanism 400w

Child benefit
79-80w, 186-7, 189-90, 489, 576w
Low incomes 282w, 488-9
Trades Union Congress 296w

Child care
Private education 178w
Refugees 469w

Child health
Romania 20w

Child Poverty Action Group
295w, 488-9

Child protection registers
Children 523w
Codes of practice 522-3w

Child support
Expenditure 670-1w

Child Support Agency
(29:10:90) 729-49

Child tax allowance
79-80w

Child workers
Bradford City Council 686w

Childbirth
33w
Home births 108w
Medical malpractice 108w
Wales 27w

Children
Child protection registers 523w
Departmental coordination 274-5w
Departmental responsibilities 274-5w
Hospital patients 398-9w
Immigrants 446w
Income support 576w
Maintenance (29:10:90) 729-49
Railway property 460-1w
Road accidents 711w

Children Act 1989
Questions
Orders & regulations 681-2w

"Children Come First White Paper"
(29:10:90) 729-49

Children in care
523w
Adoption 523w
Foster care 523w
Mentally ill 265-6w

Children in care*—*continued
Prisoners 738w

Chile
Iraq 56w

Chilver Committee
see Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay

China
Cambodia 333
Foreign relations 215w
Hong Kong 219w
Iraq 55w, 389w
Tibet 54w

Chlorofluorocarbons
(29:10:90) 752-841

***Chope, Mr Christopher**, Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Questions
A1, Road safety 61w
A1, Road traffic 60-1w, 705w
A1, Road works 705w
A6(M), Public inquiries 460w
A19, Ministers' domestic visits 708w
A19, Road works 708w
A45, Road works 189w
A595, Road works 461w
Bus lanes, Greater London 246w
Bypasses, Consultants 458w
Bypasses, Road construction 68w
Cycleways, Greater London 65w
Cycling, Road traffic offences 509w
Driving instruction 66w
Driving offences, Death 71-2w
Driving offences, Traffic lights 461w
Egremont bypass, Road construction 249w
Exhaust emission controls, Cars 65w
Exhaust emission controls, Law enforcement 512-3w
Exhaust emission controls, Motor vehicle registration 462w
Explosions, Peterborough 339w
Ferries, Road signs 72w
Freight transport, Small businesses 460w
Greater Manchester relief road, Environmental impact assessment 706w
Greater Manchester relief road, M66 706w
Greater Manchester relief road, Public participation in planning 705w
Greater Manchester relief road, Road construction 705-7w
Greater Manchester relief road, Road works 705w
Highway code 64w
Lorries, Spot checks 458w
M1, Road accidents 511w
M1, Road traffic 189w
M1, Road traffic control 462-4w
M1, Road works 709w
M4, Consultants 459-60w
M11, Road construction 709w
M20, Road construction 71w
M40, Road construction 189w
M62, Road traffic 710w
M66, Road construction 3, 709-10w
Motor vehicle registration 510w
Motor vehicle registration, Pollution control 462w
Motor vehicle testing 64w
Motor vehicle testing, Exhaust emissions 245w
Motorways, Driving 188w
Motorways, Road construction 68w
Motorways, Road traffic control 512w
Pedestrian crossings, Bigrigg 249w
Road accidents, Bridges 96w
Road accidents, Children 711w
Road accidents, Greater London 6
Road accidents, Macclesfield 247w
Road accidents, Pedestrian crossings 6-7
Road accidents, Research 189w
Road accidents, Road traffic control 246-7w
Road accidents, Roundabouts 66w
Road accidents, Young people 188-9w
Road construction 65-6w
Road construction, Bury 708-9w

Chope, Mr Christopher*—*continued
Road construction, Cost benefit analysis 189-90w
Road freight transport, Spain 191w
Road safety, Horse riding 63w
Road safety, Publicity 245w
Road safety, Road signs 708w
Road signs, Rural areas 63w
Road traffic, Greater London 64w
Road traffic, Urban areas 97w
Road traffic control, Greater London 340w
Road traffic control, Paris 340-1w
Road Traffic Law Review Committee 461w
Road works, Contracts 707w
Road works, Information 707w
Road works, Public utilities 71w, 95w, 317w
Roads, Catering 190w
Roads, Thursby 459w
"Safety on the Move" 66w
Severn bridge, Accidents 512w
Severn bridge, Automatic ticketing systems 512w
Severn bridge, Repairs & maintenance 511-2w
Severn bridge, Road accidents 512w
Severn bridge, Road traffic 248w
Shard bridge, Bridges 460w
Shard bridge, Road traffic 460w
Speed limits, Motorways 69w
Toll bridges 190w
Traffic Director for London 341w
Transport, Public expenditure 710-2w
Transport of hazardous materials, Safety measures 509-10w
Transport of radioactive materials, Emergency planning 96w
Wheel clamps 190w

Christmas bonus
Costs 75w

Church buildings
Repair grants 346-7w

Church of England
(30:10:90) 891

Church schools
School transport 149w
Wales 660w

Churchill, Odette
Disclosure of information 419-20w

Churchill, Mr Winston
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 882

Citizens' Advice Bureaux
Community charge 599w
Community charge capping 545w, 777w
Finance 972

Citizenship of the British dependent territories
Hong Kong 695w

City grants
3D 235w

City of Dundee District Council Order Confirmation Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep* (23:10:90) 173
3R* (24:10:90) 317
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

City technology colleges
156w
Bradford 139w
Contracts 675w
Government grants 515-6w
Haberdashers' Aske's School 516-7w
Pupil-teacher ratios 516w
School admission 514-5w
School population 516w
Schools & parents 156w
Southwark 514-5w
Sponsorship 514w

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
Questions
176w

Civil Aviation Authority
64w, 95w, 244w, 248-9w, 704w

Civil defence
County councils in Wales 120w
Local authorities 120w
Wales 120w

Civil proceedings
Minimum wage 627w

Civil rights
Kenya 215w

Civil servants
EC institutions 723
Educational qualifications 91w
Languages 723-4
Scottish Office 379w

Civil servants' business appointments
Dept of Trade & Industry 382w

Civil servants' secondment
Central Statistical Office 489w
EC institutions 724

Civil servants' visits abroad
Central Statistical Office 489w

Civil service
Career structure 360w
South West region 391w
Wales 360w

Civil service agencies
574w, 724
Parliamentary questions 581-2w

Civil Service Appeal Board
506w

Civil service dispersal
Dept of Employment 627w
Dept of the Environment 530-1w
Government departments 301-3w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 423w
Ministry of Defence 725-6, 764w
Treasury 655w

Civil service manpower
Agricultural research 280w, 676w
Central Statistical Office 488-9w
CFE talks 499w
Dept of Transport 247-8w
Government Statistical Service 571w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate 383w
Statistics 490w, 571w
Transport 241-2w
Welsh Office 289-90w

Civil service pensions
Hong Kong 672w

Civil service recruitment
Dept of Transport 339w
Pay 5w

Civil service unions
391w, 725
Cultural heritage 398w

***Clark, Mr Alan**, Minister of State for Defence Procurement*
Questions
Ammunition, Defence procurement 505w
Arms exports 494w, 501w
Arms exports, Compensation 506w
Arms exports, Iraq 86w, 412w
Arms exports, Saudi Arabia 88w
Arms exports, Trade fairs 87-8w
Arms exports, United Arab Emirates 86w
Arms trade, Conferences 411w
Arms trade, Saudi Arabia 100w
Arms trade, Video recordings 412w
Astra Holdings, Arms exports 88w
British Aerospace, USA 504w
Computers, Procurement 89w
Defence contracts, Fees & charges 506w
Defence contracts, Information technology 506w
Defence Export Services Organisation 496w

***Clark, Mr Alan**—continued*
Defence industries, Unemployment 498w
Defence procurement 94w, 507-8w
Defence procurement, Offset arrangements 763w
European fighter aircraft 410w
Guided weapons, Defence contracts 97w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence industries 85-6w
Ministry of Defence, Accounting 89w
Nuclear weapons deployment 857
Nuclear weapons deployment, Iraq 857
Over-the-horizon radar, International cooperation 286w, 622w
Royal Ordnance, Defence contracts 99-100w
Tanks, Defence procurement 87-8w
Trident 498-9w
Trident, Defence expenditure 624w
Trident missiles, Defence procurement 857
Warrior, Defence procurement 95-6w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Agricultural research, Civil service manpower 676w
Agricultural research, Near market research 308w
Agricultural research, Research finance 308-9w
Agricultural research, Scientists 280w, 675-6w
Agriculture, Advisory bodies 394-5w
Agriculture, Manpower 425w
Animal feed, Exports 395w
Animal feed, Orders & regulations 311w
Animals, Waste disposal 306w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 81-2w
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund, Tobacco 305w
Food additives, Surveys 393w
Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Copper or Other Metal Poisoning) (England) Order 1990 305w
Food Safety & Applied Nutrition Research Committee, Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food 424w
Intervention stocks 310w, 634w
Intervention stocks, Exports 310w, 423w
Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food, Agricultural research 423-4w
Set-aside schemes, Housing 647w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Agricultural research 392w

Clark, Dr Michael
Questions
Israel 501w
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 981
School administration, Budgeting 152w

Clark, Rt Hon Sir William
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 237-9
Questions
Car industry, Sunderland 866
Taxation, Public expenditure 491

***Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Secretary of State for Health*
Questions
Hospital waiting lists, Eye disorders 265w
NHS hospital trusts, Parliamentary questions 444w

Clarke, Mr Tom
Questions
Iron & steel industry 970

Class sizes
Primary education 165-6w
Secondary education 165-6w

Clay, Mr Bob
Questions
Industrial disablement benefits, Northern region 481w
Radiation hazards 861-2
Vibration white finger, Social security claims 481w

Clelland, Mr David
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1008
Questions
By elections 868
Industrial training, Germany 978-9
Regional planning & development 603w
School population 159w

Cleveland
Child abuse 680-1w

Cleveland Fuels
Company investigations 428w
Industrial wastes 477-8w

Climate
Agriculture 648-9w

Clinical trials
56w

Clothing industry
Redundancy 238w, 426-7w

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Cambodia (26:10:90) 645, 648, 649, 656, 657-8, 667-74
Questions
Aid financed trade 195w
Aid financed trade, Companies political contributions 197w
Aid financed trade, Contracts 196w, 203-4w
Aid financed trade, Corruption 196w
Aid financed trade, Profits 195-6w
British Overseas Trade Board, Public appointments 330-1w
Cambodia, Defence equipment 109w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls, East Germany 54w
Debts, Tanzania 9w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Civil servants' business appointments 382w
Developing countries, Aid financed trade 195w
Eastern Europe, EC aid 55w
EC countries, Development aid 671w
Energy, Malaysia 208w
Export controls, Vietnam 203w
Export licensing, Vietnam 203w
Foreign investment in UK, Cynon Valley 713
Malaysia, Aid financed trade 24-5w, 198w
Malaysia, Contracts 199w
Malaysia, Hydroelectric power 671-2w
Malaysia, Official visits 195w
Malaysia, Road construction 672w
Malaysia, Turbines 672w
Sudan, Food 650w

Clyde Port Authority Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (30:10:90) 852

Clydesdale
Iron & steel industry 970

Coal
National Power 364-5w
Ports 710w
Price differences 364-5w

Coal fired power stations
Research finance 363w

Coal gasification
Research finance 12-3w

Coal mining
Manpower 425w
Occupational deafness 115w
Opencast mining 342w, 585-6w

Coast Protection Act 1949
Questions
38w

Coastal areas
Scotland 591w
Surveys 181w

Coastal protection
Finance 422w
Nature conservation 38w
Towyn 355-6w

Codes of practice
Child protection registers 522-3w
Homelessness 342-3w
Insolvency practitioners 432-3w
Statistics 486w
Urban development corporations 531-2w

Cohen, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1002
Questions
Greenham Common, Trespass 500w
Interest rates, Unemployment 494-5
Road accidents, Pedestrian crossings 6-7
Textile industry, EC industrial policy 605w
Theatres, Repairs & maintenance 397w

Coinage
334-5w

Coleman, Mr Donald
Questions
Telephone services, Wales 719

Coleraine
333-4w

Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry
88w, (31:10:90) 1078-86

College governors
549w

Colvin, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 802, 821, 824
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 344
Questions
Computer Misuse Act 1990, Prosecutions 598w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence equipment 859-60
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Military aircraft 500w
Kenya, Civil rights 215w
Official engagements 422w
Piper Alpha Inquiry 440w
Police, Manpower 728w
Salmon, Drift nets 632w
Teachers, Pay 155w

Combined heat & power
658w

Commercial Fishermen's Association
72w

Commission for the New Towns
183-4w, 466-7w

Commissions for local administration
Parish councils 691w

Committal proceedings
Domestic violence 251-2w

Common agricultural policy
502

Common fisheries policy
80-1w
UK contributions to EC budget 80w

Common Services Agency
379w

Commonwealth
221w, 694w
Population 694w

Community care
318w
Computer applications 713w
Finance 420w
Government grants to local authorities 318-20w
Housing associations 724w
Local government finance 357-8w, 545w

Community care*—*continued
Scotland 713w, 724w
Wales 319-20w, 357-8w, 420w, 545w, 548w

Community care grants
575w

Community charge
181w
Appeals 180w, 187-8w
Armed forces 414-6w, 853-4
Armed forces housing 92w
Armed forces officers 501w
Beach huts 234w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux 599w
Duchy of Lancaster 11w
Electoral register 228w
Family credit 544w
Handicapped 670w
Households 689w
Income tax 653w
Liability 555w
Magistrates 14-5
Non-payment 187
Scotland 668w
Social security benefits reductions 78w, 224w, 232w
Standard community charge 550w
Students 181-3
Tax collection 501w

Community charge benefits
Doncaster 666-7w
Government grants to local authorities 43w, 76-7w

Community charge capping
689w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux 545w, 777w
Wales 549-50w

Community charge exemptions
230-2w
Departmental publications 232w
Mentally disadvantaged 231w
Scotland 211-2w
Youth training 181w

Community development
Glasgow 172-4w, 179w
London Docklands Development Corporation 320w, 529w
Strathclyde 179w
Urban programme 172-4w

Community health councils
Regional health authorities 524-5w
Wales 102w

Community programme
Employment training 630w

Community service orders
736w

Community work
London Docklands Development Corporation 320-1w

Compact discs
775w

Companies
609w
Consumer protection 774w
Environment 691w
Environmental policy 130w
Local authorities 689w
Marketing 558w
Northern Ireland 558w
Profitability 296w, 568w
Prosecutions 627w

Companies Act 1975
Questions
618-20w

Companies Act 1976
Questions
618-20w

Companies Act 1985
Questions
381w

Companies Act 1985*—*continued
Shares 381w

Companies Act 1988
Questions
618-20w

Companies Act 1989
Questions
379-81w, 428-9w

Companies House
see Companies Registration Office (England & Wales)

Companies House Users' Group
130-1w

Companies Investigation Branch
620-1w

Companies political contributions
Aid financed trade 197w

Companies Registration Office (England & Wales)
131w
Expenditure 620-1w
Fees & charges 767w
Offices 767w

Company accounts
130w, 621w
Accountants 129w
Audit 328w
Polly Peck 621w
Public companies 129w, 430w

Company cars
District health authorities 444w

Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986
Questions
618-20w

Company disclosure of information
British Steel Corporation 971
Pollution 616w

Company investigations
Accountants 200w, 328w
Caird Development 428w
Cleveland Fuels 428w
Eurocopy 616w
Genn Group 616w
Lowndes Queensway 619w
Polly Peck 381-2w
Publishing 620w
Purdie & Kirkpatrick 616w
Research Development & Investments (Building) 616w

Company law
EC action (22:10:90) 45-70, 150-65

Company liquidations
974-5
Retail trade 205-6w

Company management
Public companies 430w

Company registration
Information 131w
Microforms 131w

Compensation for Medical Injury Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (25:10:90) 518

Competition
Brewing industry 430w
Hazardous wastes 766w
Local authorities 469w, 691w

Complaints
Airmisses 244w
Political education 166w
Prison medical services 739w

Complaints against central government
Attorney General 278w
Dept of Education & Science 279-80w

Complaints against central government—continued
Dept of Employment 281-2w
Dept of Health 266w
Dept of Social Security 283-4w
Dept of the Environment 267w
Dept of Trade & Industry 382w
Dept of Transport 245-6w
Home Office 255-6w
Northern Ireland Office 365w
Scottish Office 242-3w
Welsh Office 290w
Young people 242-3w, 245-6w, 255-6w, 266-7w, 278-84w, 290w, 365w, 382w

Comptroller & Auditor General
see National Audit Office

Computer applications
Attendance allowance 77w
Community care 713w
Listed buildings 470w
Public expenditure 487w
Share certificates 617-8w
Statistics 491w

Computer industry
769w

Computer Misuse Act 1990
Questions
Prosecutions 598w

Computer terminals
Eyesight 191-2w

Computers
Export licensing 610w
Procurement 89w
Zimbabwe 610w

Computers in government departments
Redundancy 283w
Social security benefits 283w

Computers in national health service
London Ambulance Service 406-7w

Concessionary fares
Northern Ireland 557-8w

Concessionary television licences
Pensioners 347w, 725-6w

Confederation of British Industry
Honours 615w
Industrial wastes 779w
Interest rates 292w
Manufacturing industries 329w, 600w

Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe
see European Security Conference

Conferences
Arms trade 411w
Emergency planning 17w
Environment 434w
Environment protection 20w, 38w, 41-2w, 46w, 182w, 775w
Environmental policy 41w
Nuclear free zones 348w
Nuclear power 12w
Recycling 41w
"This Common Inheritance White Paper" 688w
Urban development corporations 531w
Waste disposal 235w

Conflict of interests
Audit 381w, 429w

Congleton
Council housing 344-6w
Homelessness 322w
Housing investment programmes 345w
Rented housing 344-5w

Congleton Borough Council
Council housing 345w

Conservative Party
Party conferences 316w, 766-7w

Construction
Dartford-Thurrock crossing 59w
Ely RAF Hospital 90w

Construction—continued
Gas fired power stations 656w
Local authorities 470w
Prisons 553-4w
RAF St Mawgan 346w
Schools 419-20w

Construction costs
Limehouse link 528-9w
Wales 548w

Construction News
46w

Consultancy initiative
479w, 603-4w, 979-80

Consultants
Bypasses 458w
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 86w
Coopers & Lybrand Associates 621w
Departmental coordination 640w
Drinking Water Inspectorate 321w
Electricity supply industry 655-6w
M4 459-60w
Privatisation 616w
Stoy Hayward 621w
Television licences 555-6w

Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies
201w
Departmental correspondence 429w

Consumer information
Environment protection (30:10:90) 893-4

Consumer protection
Companies 774w
Trading standards departments 595w

Consumption
Investment 300w

Containers
Radioactive wastes 459w

Contractorisation
AWE Aldermaston 497w

Contracts
Aid financed trade 196w, 203-4w
Birmingham relief road 62w
City technology colleges 675w
Iraq 982-3
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 983
Local authorities 470w
London Docklands Development Corporation 527w, 529w
Malaysia 199w
Road works 707w

Contracts for services
AWE Aldermaston 497-8w
Greater Glasgow Health Board 167-8w, 210w, 241w
Health service ancillary staff 168w
Local authorities 189, 541-2w
Passenger transport executives 461w

Contracts of employment
Youth training 745-6w
Youth training scheme 745-6w

Control of Industrial Air Pollution (Registration of Works) Regulations 1989
Questions
477-8w

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988
Questions
86-7w
Consultants 86w

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1989
Questions
261-2w

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
626-7w

Convictions
Dog fighting 348w
Domestic violence 251-2w

Convictions—continued
Homicide 727w
Ulster Defence Regiment 559w

Conway, Mr Derek
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 65
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 762-3
Questions
Income tax, Families 490-1
Industrial research, Research finance 984
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 860
Palestine, Refugee camps 329-30

Cook, Mr Frank
Questions
Export promotion 607w
START talks 498w
USA, EC external relations 214w

Cook, Mr Robin
Questions
Edinburgh Airport, Air traffic control 95w
NHS hospital trusts 192w
Physiotherapists, Student numbers 30w
Physiotherapy, Student numbers 73w

Coombs, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Licensing Reform Bill, 1R (25:10:90) 518
Noise control (31:10:90) 1026
Questions
Cars, Security 726w
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 600w
Eastern Europe, EC aid 324
Investment 493-4
National income 300-1w
Reading, Educational standards 178

Coombs, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 593-4, 598-600, 612, 613-4
Questions
Buses, Parking 66-7w
EC Environment Council 538-40w
Foreign tourists, Expenditure 383w
Historic buildings 465w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England, Historic buildings 465-6w
Political education, Complaints 166w
Spain, Lorry drivers 109-10w
Sunday trading 726w

Coopers & Lybrand Associates
Consultants 621w

Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte
533w

Coordinating Committee on Export Controls
203w, 385w
East Germany 54w
Export licensing 203w

Cope, Rt Hon John, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office
Questions
Complaints against central government, Northern Ireland Office 365w
European Communities, Northern Ireland 558-9w
Freehold land, Northern Ireland 250w
IRA, Bombings 560w
Northern Ireland Centre, Finance 636w
Robbery, Inquiries 559w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry, Police interrogation 53w
Travel allowances, Republic of Ireland 557w
Ulster Defence Regiment, Convictions 559w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 533, 537, 538, 547, 565, 571, 572-6, 588-9, 591, 593, 607, 608, 618

Corbett, Mr Robin*—*continued
Questions
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90, Lords amendments 315w
Cars, Japan 604w
Defence land, Blood sports 504w
Public inquiries, Offices 257w
School transport, Church schools 149w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 569
Questions
Arms exports, Iraq 412w
Arms trade, Conferences 411w
Arms trade, Video recordings 412w
Business statements 516-7
Developing countries, International conferences 358-9w
Educational aid, Iraq 371-2w
Explosives, Defence research 411w
Glynn Research Institute, Science & technology research 372w
Gulf states, Nuclear non proliferation 387w
Guyana, Elections 388-9w
HMS Renown, Health physics 411w
Iraq, Economic sanctions 387w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 495w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, National Peace Council 353w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Navy 410w
London Ambulance Service, Computers in national health service 406-7w
London Ambulance Service, Costs 407w
London Ambulance Service, Patients 406-7w
London Ambulance Service, Road travel 407w
London Ambulance Service, Wheelchairs 406w
Middle East, UN resolutions 386w
North East Thames Regional health Authority, Capital investment 445w
North East Thames Regional health Authority, Land acquisition 318w
Northern Ireland, UN resolutions 387w
Nuclear free zones, Conferences 348w
Nuclear submarines, Health physics 411w, 508w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Middle East 410w
Road accidents, Greater London 6
Road traffic control, Greater London 340w
Road traffic control, Paris 340-1w
Royal ordnance factories, Explosions 411w
Scottish Office, Civil servants 379w
Sellafield, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 365w
Stewart, Jamie Lloyd, Death 348w
Traffic Director for London 341w
Turkey, Human rights 387w
Whittington Hospital, NHS hospital trusts 406w
World Health Organisation, AIDS 323

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 343
Questions
Public lending right, Expenditure 651w

Cornwall
Chemical weapons 757w
Dolphins 268w
Wild animals 323w

Corporation tax
Provident societies 105w
Tax yields 298w

Corruption
Aid financed trade 196w

Cosmetics
Exports 609w

COST 219
778w

Cost benefit analysis
East-West crossrail line 704w
Road construction 189-90w, 240-2w

Cost effectiveness
Police 730w

Cost per pupil
Primary education 165w
Secondary education 165w

Cot deaths
Wales 28-9w

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
637-8w

Council house waiting lists
Wales 660w

Council housing
Capital investment 345-6w
Congleton 344-6w
Congleton Borough Council 345w
Empty housing 345w
Housing completions 289w
Wales 289w

Council housing finance
Housing construction 659w

Council of Europe
328, 385w
Environment 690w

Council of Ministers
697-9w
Germany 323-4
Voting methods 561w

Council of Welsh Districts
356w

Council tenants
Housing benefits 576-8w
Tenant eviction 101w

Countryside
Rural planning 499

Countryside Council for Wales
(30:10:90) 895-946

County councils in Wales
Civil defence 120w
Sixth form education 659w

County courts
Administrative delays 276-8w
Judges 353w

County Hall
Property transfer 687w

Courts
Buildings 727-8w

Courts & Legal Services Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (26:10:90) 631-8
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Cousins, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1010
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 363
Questions
Accountants, Disclosure of information 429w
Accounting Standards Board, Standards specifications 429w
Advisory Board for the Research Councils, Science & technology 159w
Ammunition, Defence procurement 505w
Arms exports, Saudi Arabia 204w
Arms trade, Saudi Arabia 100w
Audit, Conflict of interests 429w
Companies Act 1985, Shares 381w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Expenditure 620-1w
Company accounts 621w
Company investigations, Publishing 620w
Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies, Departmental correspondence 429w
Coopers & Lybrand Associates, Consultants 621w

Cousins, Mr Jim*—*continued
Defence industries, Unemployment 498w
Directors, Disqualifications 618-20w
Directors, Fees & charges 434w
Drinking Water Inspectorate, Northern region 325w
European Commission, Accountants 619w
Export of live animals 133w, 208-9w
Export of live animals, Animal welfare 133-4w
Financial Reporting Council, Disclosure of information 382w
Financial Services Tribunal 776w
Genn Group, Company investigations 616w
Insider trading, EC law 381w
Insider trading, Prosecutions 381w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales, Professional qualifications 433-4w
Investment 494
Link programme 984
Lowndes Queensway, Company investigations 619w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial research 601w
National Rivers Authority, Algae 344w
Polly Peck, Company accounts 621w
Polly Peck, Company investigations 381-2w
Public companies, Company accounts 430w
Public companies, Company management 430w
Rateable value, Appeals 472w
Royal Ordnance, Defence contracts 99-100w
Stoy Hayward, Consultants 621w
Urban development corporations, Expenditure 471w

Coventry
445-6w

Coventry Airport
Air accidents 244w
Airmisses 244w

Cox, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1026, 1049-51
Questions
Belmarsh Prison Woolwich, Prison medical services 447-8w
Belmarsh Prison Woolwich, Prison staff 447w
Defence review 499w
Long term prisoners, Prisons 554w
National Economic Development Council, Industry 601w
Penal reform, Management 447w
Prison hospitals, Agency nurses 555w
Prison staff, Greater London 742w
Prison staff, Housing 448w
Prison staff, Recruitment 448w
Prison visits, Prisoners 554w
Prisoners' transfers, Open prisons 553w
Prisons, Budgeting 448w
Prisons, Construction 553-4w
Prisons, Food 448w
Prisons, Sanitation 553w
Prisons, Sewers 554w

Craft industries
International conferences 112w

Cran, Mr James
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1009
Questions
Defence review 858
Housing revenue accounts, Housing subsidies 44-5w
Regional arts associations, Arts finance 396-7w

Credit cards
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 776-7w
Orders & regulations 776-7w

Credit Cards (Merchant Acquisition) Order 1990
Questions
776-7w

Credit Cards (Price Discrimination) Order 1990
Questions
776-7w

Crime
Economic regions 347w
North Yorkshire 727w
Scotland 720w
Strathclyde 475-8w

Crime prevention
Cheshire 730w
Greater London 731w
Motor vehicle theft 16w
Terrorism 90-1w
West Yorkshire 728w

Crimes of violence
450w
Police 735-6w
Prison sentences 168w

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
119-20w
Administrative costs 120w
Manpower 118-9w

Criminal investigation
"Another Blood Libel or Ritual Murder" 19w
Holocaust News 348w
Immigration officers 123w
Occupied territories 264w
Terrorism 763w

Criminal proceedings
Antisemitism 354w

Criminal statistics
Northern line 60w

Crisis loans
117-8w, 574w, 580w, 668-9w

Critchley, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 531-2

Critical Loads Advisory Group
45w

Crown Agents (Additional Powers) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(26:10:90) 638

Crown courts
Trials 737w

Crown Prosecution Service
12w, 635w

Crown Suppliers
38w
Privatisation 692w

Crowther, Mr Stan
Debates etc.
Landlord & Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 40-2, 44
Questions
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 150-1w

Cryer, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 575, 611, 615-6, 617, 618
Cambodia (26:10:90) 640, 642, 643, 646, 650, 651, 666, 668, 670, 676-82, 688, 690, 693
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 150-5, 161
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 755, 756-8, 836-7
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1004
Oral questions (29:10:90) 727
Parliamentary questions (31:10:90) 1018
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 402, 404, 405, 407-8, 409-10, 413, 421

***Cryer, Mr Bob**—continued*
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 106, 115, 118, 122, 129, 139, 142
Questions
Astra Training Services, Freehold land 629-30w
Bradford City Council, Government grants to local authorities 535w
British Rail, Investment 69w
Business statements 508
Cambodia, Overseas aid 22-3w
City technology colleges, Bradford 139w
EC internal relations 216w
European Commission 640w
Hospitals 273w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 31w
Multifibre arrangement 50w
Palace of Westminster, Carpets 41w
Parliamentary building maintenance & repair, Art works 536w
Profile Training, Finance 629w
Property development, Bradford 535w
Redundancy, Bradford 629w
Textile industry, Factories 421w
Trident missiles, Defence procurement 857

Cullen Committee
see Piper Alpha Inquiry

Cultural heritage
Civil service unions 398w
Trade unions 421w

Cumbria Education Authority
Budgeting 673w

Cummings, Mr John
Questions
A19, Ministers' domestic visits 708w
A19, Road works 708w
AWE Aldermaston, Contractorisation 497w
British Coal Corporation, Vibration white finger 657w
Child Poverty Action Group 295w
Combined heat & power 658w
Commissions for local administration, Parish councils 691w
Cyprus, Turkey 703w
Ear disorders, Screening 680w
Hazardous wastes, Competition 766w
Hedges & ditches, Northern region 650w
Induction loops, Public buildings 681w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Human rights 700w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 974-5
Middle East, Human rights 700w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Easington 740w
Police, Peterlee 740w
Ports, Coal 710w
Prisoners on remand, Durham 740w
Residential care, Easington 670w
Retirement pensions, Easington 666w
Saudi Arabia, Punishment 703w
Social Fund, Seaham 669w
Teachers, Vacancies 680w
Uniform business rate, Appeals 693w

Cunliffe, Mr Lawrence
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 497w
Textile industry, EC industrial policy 605w

Cunningham, Dr John
Debates etc.
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 379-80, 385
Questions
A595, Road works 461w
Assisted places scheme, Disclosure of information 13
Business statements 503
Egremont bypass, Road construction 249w
Parliamentary questions, Civil service agencies 581-2w
Pedestrian crossings, Bigrigg 249w
Tax avoidance 17

Curriculum
161-2w
Active citizenship 2-3w
History education 4w
Languages education 377-8w
Physical education 674w
Rural areas 160w

Currie, Mrs Edwina
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 541, 550
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1007
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 360
Questions
Eastern Europe, Know-how Fund 194-5w

***Curry, Mr David**, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture*
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 944-5
Questions
Agricultural chemicals, Prices 424w
Agricultural land, Lime 424w
Agricultural marketing, EC internal trade 304w
Agricultural marketing, Exports 304-5w
Agricultural policy, EC countries 395w
Agriculture, Climate 648-9w
Agriculture, EC budget 392w
Agriculture, European Communities 82-3w
Beef, Intervention stocks 133w
Beef premiums, Markets 306w
Bicycles, New Forest 645w
Blood sports, Licensing 646w
Blood sports, New Forest 645-6w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Wastes 136-7w
Cattle, Orders & regulations 650w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 423w
Coastal protection, Finance 422w
Common fisheries policy 80-1w
Common fisheries policy, UK contributions to EC budget 80w
Deer, New Forest 646w
Deer, Tuberculosis 646w
Dried milk, Trade barriers 209w
EC Agriculture Council, Methane 135w
EC Fisheries Inspectorate 80w
EC free food scheme, Social security recipients 81w
Environmentally sensitive areas, Marginal land 647w
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund, Tobacco 209-10w
Export of live animals 133w
Export of live animals, France 631w
Fish, EC action 309-10w
Fishing quotas, Fishery agreements 136w
Fishing quotas, Netherlands 136w
Fishing vessels, Marine fuels 136w
Food, EC external trade 424w
Food imports, Eastern Europe 307-8w
Food imports, EC internal trade 648w
Food supply 647w
Food surpluses, EC budget 395-6w
Green pound 632w
Green pound, Sheep meat 394w
Hedges & ditches, Northern region 650w
Hill livestock allowances 394w
Hill livestock allowances, EC law 647-8w
Intervention stocks, Greater London 81w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Oil prices 136w
Marginal land 393w
Marginal land, Agricultural subsidies 393w
New Forest 645w
Pigmeat, Germany 631w
Salmon, Dichlorvos 632w
Salmon, Drift nets 632w
Sea pollution, Chemical weapons 82w
Sea pollution, Pollution control 335w
Seals, Fish conservation 335w
Set-aside schemes, Housing 647w
Sheep meat, France 135w
Sheep meat, Prices 394w
Sheep premiums 306-7w
Sheep premiums, Marginal land 393w

***Curry, Mr David**—continued*
Straw burning, Safety measures 633-4w
Trout, Fish conservation 392w

Custodial treatment
Young people 737w

Customs & Excise
204w

"Cutting Your Losses"
47w

Cycleways
Greater London 65w, 246w

Cycling
Road traffic offences 509w

Cynon Valley
Foreign investment in UK 713

Cyprus
218w
Turkey 703w

Dalmellington
Low flying 760w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 48, 54-7, 61
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 457, 458, 472
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 836, 838, (30:10:90) 900, 905, 908, 911, 920, 921, 927
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 216
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 376
Iraq, Hostages (24:10:90) 480, 481-4
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 344
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Standing Order No 20 applications (29:10:90) 750
Noise control (31:10:90) 1027, 1029, 1031
Oral question time point of order (23:10:90) 184
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 370
Questions
Astra Holdings, Arms exports 88w
Birds, Animal quarantine 633w
Business statements 517
Coastal areas, Scotland 591w
Community charge, Duchy of Lancaster 11w
Diego Garcia, Resettlement 217w
Edinburgh-Glasgow railway, Railway electrification 65w
Electronic equipment, Departmental coordination 273w
Explosives, Cambodia 88w
Falkland Islands, Sovereignty 565w
GATT, Environment protection 768-9w
Graduates, Public sector 184
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces casualties 526w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces medical services 626w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armoured fighting vehicles 421w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Motor vehicle parts 88-9w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, USA 263w
Marine nature reserves, Loch Sween 591w
Motor vehicle theft, Crime prevention 16w
Overseas trade, Cambodia 969
Salmon, Dichlorvos 632w
Statistics, Industrial production 296w
Uruguay round, Environment protection 768w

Damages
Legal aid 103w

Dampness
721w
Scotland 587w

Dangerous Goods Advisory Service
51w

Darling, Mr Alistair
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 294-7, 302
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 610
Questions
EC regional policy 602-3w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 446w
Electoral register, Parliamentary constituencies 446w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Insurance 495w
Student loans, University finance 178-9
Temporary immigrants 550-2w

Dartford-Thurrock crossing
Construction 59w

Dartmoor National Park
Armed forces training 503w

Data banks
Handicapped 580-1w

Data Logic
506w

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 235-7
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, International cooperation 856
Welsh Development Agency 716

Davies, Mr Quentin
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 215
Questions
Student loans, Student numbers 179

Davies, Mr Ron
Questions
Animal husbandry, Wales 711
Balance of trade 597w
Bees, Import controls 631w
Bicycles, New Forest 645w
Blood sports, Licensing 646w
Blood sports, New Forest 645-6w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 644w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, EC countries 632w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Select Committee reports 632w
Carbon, Forestry 725w
Cattle, Orders & regulations 650w
Deer, New Forest 646w
Deer, Tuberculosis 644-6w
Forestry Commission, Blood sports 722w
Irradiation, EC action 634w
New Forest 645w
Official engagements 107-8w
Salmon, Fish conservation 589w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Mink 632-3w
Veterinary medicine, Licensing 422w

Davis, Mr David
Questions
"British Shipbuilders Annual Report & Accounts, 1989/90" 51w
EC Agriculture Council 84w
Exports, Fees & charges 974
Overseas trade, Japan 602w

Davis, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 79-80, 87-99, 101, 102-3

Day, Mr Stephen
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1005

Day care of children
Home Office 252-3w

Day surgery
District health authorities 501-2

Deaf
Blind 403-6w
Handicapped students 579-80w

***Deaf**—continued*
Optical charges exemptions 406w

Death
Dolphins 268w
Driving offences 71-2w
Palestine 457w
Prisoners 349-52w, 738w
Railway property 460-1w
Shipping accidents 341w
Stewart, Jamie Lloyd 348w

"Death on Delivery"
412w

Debt rescheduling
9w

Debts
Advisory services 598w, 971-2
Electricity supply industry 657w
Personal savings 972
Tanzania 9w
Uganda 9w

Decommissioning
Nuclear submarines 765-6w

Deer
New Forest 644-6w
Tuberculosis 644-6w

Defence contracts
Devonport dockyard 502-3w
Explosives 99-100w
Fees & charges 506w
Guided weapons 97w
Information technology 506w
Royal Ordnance 99-100w
Shipbuilding 503w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering 503w

Defence equipment
Cambodia 109w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 859-60, 864
Low flying 625w
Military aircraft 625w
Military exercises 624w
Modernisation 863

Defence expenditure
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 856
Trident 624w

Defence Export Services Organisation
412w, 496w

Defence industries
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 85-6w
Security 501w
Unemployment 498w

Defence land
Blood sports 504w
Land acquisition 506w
Pollution control 414w

Defence procurement
94w, 507-8w
Ammunition 505w
Offset arrangements 763w
Tanks 87-8w, 766w
Trident missiles 857
Warrior 95-6w

Defence research
Explosives 411w

Defence review
91w, 499w, 626w, 858-9
CFE talks 862-3
NATO 858
Navy 287w

Defence Select Committee
(26:10:90) 638

Del Monte
381-2w

Democracy
Romania 213-4w, 321-2

Demolition
Planning permission 687w

Demonstrations
729w

DEMOS
609-10w

Denny
Primary education 178-9w

Dental services
Scotland 326w

Departmental coordination
Children 274-5w
Consultants 640w
Electronic equipment 273w
Statistics 486w, 491w

Departmental correspondence
Administrative delays 654w
Auditing Practices Committee 429w
Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies 429w
Foreign languages 723w
Members' correspondence 654w

Departmental forms
Income tax assessment 654w

Departmental publications
Community charge exemptions 232w
Energy conservation 229-30w
Environment protection 47w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 566w
Security industry 347w

Departmental records
91w

Departmental responsibilities
British Rail 316-7w
Children 274-5w

Deportation
Women's prisons 186w

Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland
325-6w

Dept of Education & Science
274-5w
Complaints against central government 279-80w
Members' correspondence 679-80w

Dept of Employment
112w, 274-5w, 491w
Civil service dispersal 627w
Complaints against central government 281-2w
Members' correspondence 754w

Dept of Energy
658-9w
Electric lighting 521w
Members' correspondence 657w
Ministers' visits abroad 194w, 522w

Dept of Health
274w, 408-9w
Complaints against central government 266w

Dept of Social Security
274w
Complaints against central government 283-4w
Welsh language 580w

Dept of the Environment
236w, 267w, 274w, 535w, 546-7w
Civil service dispersal 530-1w
Complaints against central government 267w
Expenditure 691w
Members' correspondence 690w
Official hospitality 46w

Dept of Trade & Industry
48w, 199-200w, 487w, 775w, 779w
Civil servants' business appointments 382w
Complaints against central government 382w
Government department reorganisation 602w

Dept of Trade & Industry*—*continued
Members' correspondence 768w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 770w
Official hospitality 51w

Dept of Trade inquiries
Accountants 199-200w, 328w
Astra Holdings 49w
Audit 201w
Dunsdale Securities 47w
Professional organisations 200w
Public appointments 201-2w

Dept of Transport
316-7w, 462w
Civil service manpower 247-8w
Civil service recruitment 339w
Complaints against central government 245-6w
Environment protection 462-4w
Members' correspondence 708w
Official hospitality 72w

Derby City Council
462w

"Design for the Environment"
47w

Developing countries
Aid financed trade 195w
International conferences 358-9w

Developing countries trade
GATT 768w

Development aid
Brazil 568w
EC countries 671w
India 568w

Development Board for Rural Wales
27-8w, 717

Development plans
Castlereagh 638w
Energy conservation 693w

Devlin, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 124-5, 128-9, 130, 132
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Public order offences 726-7w
Birds, Nature conservation 467w
Greenhouse effect, International conferences 531w
Iron & steel industry, Location of industry 970
Macmillan City Technology College, Music education 513w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 368w, 678w

Devon & Cornwall Police
19-20w, 255w

Devon County Council
Gardens 535w

Devonport dockyard
Defence contracts 502-3w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Questions
Caird Development, Company investigations 428w
Cleveland Fuels, Industrial wastes 477-8w
Crime, Scotland 720w
Drug crimes, Glasgow 718-20w
Drug crimes, Scotland 718w
Health insurance, Scotland 720w
Hospital beds, Scottish health boards 713-6w
Hospital closures, Scotland 474-6w
Housing association grant, Scotland 720-1w
Housing support grants, Scotland 717-8w
Income support, Children 576w
Income support, Social security claims 575w
Police, Manpower 590-1w

Dewar, Mr Donald*—*continued
Prison sentences, Scotland 717w
Private hospitals, Scotland 717w
Scottish Development Agency, Resignations 721-2w

Dichlorvos
Agricultural research 724w
Salmon 632w
Scotland 724w

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 883
Questions
Business statements 509-10
Health hazards, Sanitation 191w
Members' allowances, Bicycles 16-7

Dicks, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 757, 759
Questions
Immigrants, Children 446w

Diego Garcia
Air routes 54w
Mauritius 53-4w
Resettlement 217w
US bases 53w

Diplomatic relations
385w
Afghanistan 565w

Diplomatic service
Parking offences 700-3w

Dir79/112/EEC
558w

Dir80/68/EEC
538w

DIR89/48/EEC
606w

DIR89/592/EEC
381w

Director of Public Prosecutions
559w

Directors
Banks 107w
Disqualifications 432-3w, 618-20w, 779-80w
Fees & charges 434w
Pay settlements 492-3
Professional organisations 200w

Disability Benefits Consortium
575-6w

Disability working allowance
Social security benefits rules 223-4w

Disabled facilities grants
Earnings rules 182w

Disabled Living Foundation
580-1w

Disabled workers
Aids for handicapped 427w
Multiply handicapped 427w

Disablement Advisory Service
427w

Disaster relief
Isle of Wight 693w

Disciplinary proceedings
Accountants 428-9w
Armed forces 410w
Wallace, Colin 506w

Disclosure of information
Accountants 379-80w, 429w
Armed forces training 92w
Assisted places scheme 13
Audit 429w
Churchill, Odette 419-20w
Electoral register 118w

***Disclosure of information**—continued*
Exchange rates 21w, 50-1w
Financial Reporting Council 382w
Fixed interest securities 203w
Ford Prison 347w
Ministry of Defence 85w
Personal records 444w
Police powers 256-7w
Select Committees 15
Statistics 489w

Discounts
Electricity tariffs 521w

Disposable income
298w
Leeds 366w

Disqualifications
Directors 432-3w, 618-20w, 779-80w

District councils
120w, 536-7w, 659w

District health authorities
Audit 192w
Company cars 444w
Day surgery 501-2
Hospital beds 289w

Diving clearance service
287w

Dobson, Mr Frank
Questions
Advanced gas-cooled reactors, Nuclear fuel cycle 657w
Advanced gas-cooled reactors, Scotland 725w
Dept of Energy, Ministers' visits abroad 522w
Eastern Electricity, Privatisation 658w
Electricity, Imports 14w
Electricity consumption 14w
Electricity generation, Fuels 15w, 521-2w
Electricity supply industry, Consultants 655-6w
Electricity supply industry, Debts 657w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 13w, 75w, 519w, 657w
Electricity supply industry, Profits 657w
Electricity tariffs, Discounts 521w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, British Coal Corporation 771w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Publishing 770-1w
Nuclear reactors, Exports 655w
Oil revenues, North Sea oil 9w
Petrol, Energy consumption 13w
Petrol, Prices 13w, 521w
PowerGen, Privatisation 15w
Privatisation, Accountants 640w
Privatisation, Consultants 616w
Tax yields, Oil prices 335w
Tax yields, Petroleum production 493w
VAT, Petrochemicals 362-3w, 653-4w

Docklands light railway
Capital investment 61w
Privatisation 61w

Doctors
Palestine 264w

Doctors' list of patients
Barnsley Health Authority 681w

Dog fighting
Convictions 348w

Dog registration scheme
(29:10:90) 752-841
Public petitions (26:10:90) 629

Dogs
Local authority powers 257-60w

Dolphins
Cornwall 268w
Death 268w
Moray Firth 724w

Domestic accidents
Statistics 330w

Domestic rates
Appeals 187-8w

Domestic service
Work permits 735w

Domestic violence
Committal proceedings 251-2w
Convictions 251-2w
Police stations 252w

Doncaster
Community charge benefits 666-7w
Social Fund 575w
Social security claims 580w

Doncaster Education Authority
Teachers 674w

Doncaster Health Authority
525w
Public appointments 525-6w

Doran, Mr Frank
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Contractorisation 497w
Import penetration 595w
Petroleum production 116w
Railway transport, Grampian 11-2
Student accommodation 156w

***Dorrell, Mr Stephen**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Dept of Health*
Debates etc.
Princess Alexandra Hospital, Capital investment (23:10:90) 311-4
Questions
Abortion, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 402-4w
Aids for handicapped, Inventions 403w
Aids for handicapped, Social services 403-4w
Aids for handicapped, Waiting lists 524w
Air ambulance services 30w
Alternative medicine, NHS 30w
Alzheimer's disease, Personal social services 524w
Arachnoiditis, Medical research 401w
Blind, Deaf 405w
Campylobacter, Food poisoning 685w
Cancer, Tower Hamlets 108w
Child abuse, Cleveland 680-1w
Children Act 1989, Orders & regulations 681-2w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Health 266w
District health authorities, Audit 192w
District health authorities, Company cars 444w
Ear disorders, Screening 680w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 408w
Electoral register, Electorate 408w
Eyesight, Computer terminals 191-2w
Food poisoning, Eggs 444w
Geriatric patients, Psychogeriatrics 679w
Giant hogweed, Hospital patients 35w
Hammersmith Hospital, Fires 525w
Health hazards, Sanitation 191w
Health service staff, Early retirement 682-3w
Health services, Public expenditure 681w
HIV infection, Wirral Health Authority 409w
Hospital beds, Northern Regional Health Authority 681w
Hospital beds, West Midlands Regional Health Authority 524w
Hospital closures 35w
Hospital consultants, Kidneys 445w
Hospital patients 680w
Hospital waiting lists, Orthopaedics 409-10w
Incontinence aids, NHS charges 32w
Induction loops, Public buildings 681w
Kidney machines, South West region 399-400w
Kidney patients, Ambulance services 399w
Kidneys, Medical treatments 399w

***Dorrell, Mr Stephen**—continued*
Legionnaires' disease, Power stations 407-8w
Local government social services, Personal records 444w
London Ambulance Service, Computers in national health service 406-7w
London Ambulance Service, Costs 407w
London Ambulance Service, Patients 406-7w
London Ambulance Service, Road travel 407w
London Ambulance Service, Wheelchairs 406w
Lowermoor Incident Health Advisory Group, Evidence 405w
Medical profession, Training 404-5w
Mental health services, Wirral Health Authority 409w
Mental hospitals, Blind 404w
Mental hospitals, Hospital admissions 683-6w
Mentally ill, Elderly 443w
Mentally ill, Women 265-6w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, Health service staff 683-4w
NHS, Capital investment 35w
NHS Income Generation Unit 685-6w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Capital investment 445w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Land acquisition 318w
Nurses, Greenwich Health Authority 405w
Pregnancy, Vitamin A 36w
Prescription charges, Income 682w
Radiation hazards, Medical research 36w
School milk 410w
Spinal injuries 400w
Spinal injuries, Preventive medicine 400w
Water pollution, Research finance 405w

Douglas, Mr Dick
Debates etc.
Calling of Members (31:10:90) 1018
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 918
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1012-3
Questions
Balance of trade 569w
Business statements 517-8
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 495w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 860
Manufactured exports, ERM 976
Oil revenues 492
Student numbers, Scotland 181-2

***Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James**, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 765, (30:10:90) 895
Questions
A7, Road works 212w
Breathalysers, Licensed premises 179w
Bus services, Scotland 173w
Caledonian MacBrayne, Energy costs 473-4w
Community care, Housing associations 724w
Crime, Strathclyde 475-8w
Dampness, Scotland 587w
Dounreay, Radioactive waste disposal 73w
Electorate, Scotland 721w
Giant hogweed, Health hazards 213w
Giant hogweed, Nuisance 74w
Giant hogweed, Prosecutions 74w
Giant hogweed, Scotland 74w
Homelessness, Scotland 711-2w
Housing standards, Scotland 721w
Kingston bridge Glasgow, Repairs & maintenance 178w
Marine nature reserves, Loch Sween 591w
Opencast mining, Coal mining 585-6w
Planning appeals, Glasgow 478w
Polychlorinated biphenyl, Waste disposal 180w
Prison sentences, Crimes of violence 168w
Prisoners, Per capita costs 211w
Public service vehicles, Scotland 176w

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James—continued
Radioactive waste disposal, Scotland 379w
Radioactive wastes, Scotland 589-90w
Railway freight transport, Scotland 723w
Railway network, Scotland 178w
Railway transport, Scotland 378w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Scotland 74w
Road accidents, Young people 325w
Road construction, Cost benefit analysis 240-2w
Sequestration of assets, Costs 593-4w
Sheltered housing, Scotland 177w
Slums, Glasgow 169-70w
Speedlink, Scotland 723w
Travel, Scotland 168w
Wheel clamps, Scotland 178w

Dounreay
180w, 379w
Radioactive waste disposal 73w

Dried milk
Health hazards 209w
Trade barriers 209w

Drift Net Fishing Inquiry
632w

Drift nets
Salmon 632w

Drigg
Radioactive waste disposal 42w

Drinking Water Inspectorate
Consultants 321w
Northern region 325w

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
462w
Police 251w

Driving
Motorways 188w

Driving instruction
66w

Driving offences
Cameras 461w
Death 71-2w
Traffic lights 461w

Drug abuse
Chemicals 185w
Scotland 177w

Drug crimes
Glasgow 718-20w
Scotland 718w

Drug seizures
736w

Drugs
United Nations 728w

DSS local offices
Leicester 365w
Repairs & maintenance 365w

Duchy of Cornwall
503w

Duchy of Lancaster
Community charge 11w

Dumfries & Galloway Regional Council
212w

Dundee District Council
(23:10:90) 173

Dundee Royal Infirmary
176w

Dunipace
178-9w

Dunn, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1001
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 744
Questions
Overseas trade, West Germany 610w

Dunn, Mr Bob—continued
Road traffic, Greater London 64w
Shareholders 295w
Teachers, Recruitment 176

Dunnachie, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Iron & steel industry 596w
Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre Glasgow, Finance 179w
START talks 498w

Dunsdale Securities
Dept of Trade inquiries 47w

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 531, 540-2
Questions
Balance of trade, OECD countries 603w
Business statements 509
Jordan, Political prisoners 221w
New Parliamentary building, House of Commons staff 17-8
Nursery schools, School population 158-9w
Refuges, Government grants 480w
Refuges, Housing benefits 480-1w

Durham
Prisoners on remand 740w

Durham Health Authority
680w

Duty free allowances
70w
EC internal trade 7w, 103-4w
Whisky 105w

Duty free shops
1w, 7w

Duty solicitors
Expenditure 276w
Mortgage defaulters 274w

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 540
European Council (30:10:90) 877
Questions
Bus services, Greater London 64w
County Hall, Property transfer 687w
EC internal trade, Legislation 599w
Fireworks, Festivals & special occasions 778w
GCE A level, Educational standards 4-5w
Interest rates 292w
Intergovernmental conference 273w
Members' facilities, Telephones 641-2w
NATO, Armed forces deployment 504w
Planning permission, Demolition 687w
Teachers, Pay 155w

Dyslexia
Northern Ireland 559w, 636w
School population 559w
Teacher training 636w

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Questions
European Commission, EC internal trade 208w

Ealing
Local enterprise agencies 237-8w

Ealing Borough Council
346w

Ear disorders
Screening 680w

Ear nose & throat
Hospital waiting lists 102w

Early retirement
Health service staff 682-3w

Earnings rules
Disabled facilities grants 182w
Income support 667w

Earnings rules—continued
Invalidity benefits 284w
Supplementary benefits 667w

Easington
Induction loops 681w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 740w
Residential care 670w
Retirement pensions 666w
Teachers 680w

Easington District Council
Uniform business rate 693w

East Africa
Entry clearances 54-5w

East coast railway line
Railway electrification 61-2w

East Germany
Airlines 979
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 54w
EC aid 111w
Overseas trade 978
Police 325
UK companies abroad 978

East Midlands
Railway transport 62w

East Shetland Basin
Offshore accidents 272w

Eastern Electricity
Privatisation 658w

Eastern Europe
Capitalism 300w
EC aid 55w, 324, (24:10:90) 456-75
English education 391w
Environment protection 111w, 263w
Food 424w
Food imports 307-8w
Know-how Fund 194-5w, 325
Overseas aid 109w, 263w, 324-5
Privatisation 612w
Visas 58-9w

Eastham, Mr Ken
Questions
Balance of payments 981
Defence review 499w
EC regional policy 602-3w
Industrial diseases benefits, Blackpool 78-9w

East-West crossrail line
Cost benefit analysis 704w

EC action
Air transport 68w
Company law (22:10:90) 45-70, 150-65
Fish 309-10w
Government assistance to industry 434w
Irradiation 634w
Part-time employment 2w, 754-5w
Railway network 4
Temporary staff 2w, 754-5w

EC Agriculture Council
84w, 395w, 697-9w
Methane 135w

EC aid
East Germany 111w
Eastern Europe 55w, 324, (24:10:90) 456-75
Sri Lanka 384w

EC budget
Agriculture 392w
Food surpluses 395-6w

EC Budget Council
492-3w, 697-9w

EC Civil Protection Council
697-9w

EC Culture Council
697-9w

EC Development Council
697-9w

EC Draft 4779/90
309-10w

EC Draft 7720/90
(24:10:90) 456-75

EC Draft 8288/90
269w

EC Draft 8404/89
(22:10:90) 45-70, 150-65

EC Energy Council
538-40w

EC Environment Council
538-40w
EC law 689-90w
Greenhouse effect 324w

EC external relations
221w
Albania 216w
Cambodia 695w
Central America 336w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 495w
South America 336w
USA 214w, 330

EC external trade
Food 424w
Iraq 48w
Japan 604w

EC Finance Council
299w, 697-9w

EC Fisheries Inspectorate
80w

EC Foreign Affairs Council
84w, 110w, 218-9w, 563w, 697-9w

EC free food scheme
Northern Ireland 53w
Pensioners 53w
Social security recipients 81w

EC grants & loans
Alternative energy 271w
Environment protection 269w, 689w
Regional aid 132-3w
Scotland 73w

EC industrial policy
976-7
Textile industry 605w

EC Industry Council
132-3w, 697-9w
Government assistance to industry 769w
Iron & steel industry 769-70w

EC institutions
Civil servants 723
Civil servants' secondment 724

EC integration
Economic & monetary union 694w
Intergovernmental conference 326-7, 564w

EC Internal Market Council
634w, 697-9w

EC internal relations
216w

EC internal trade
208w, 604w, 775w
Agricultural marketing 304w
Cars 986
Duty free allowances 7w, 103-4w
Environment protection 50w
European Commission 208w
Financial services 479w
Food imports 648w
Horses 422w
Insurance companies 613w
Legal opinion 606w
Legislation 599w
Scotland 479w
Statistics 104-5w
Takeovers 613w
Unit trusts 611w

EC Labour & Social Affairs Council
697-9w

EC law
Archery 472-3w
Building industry safety 628w
EC Environment Council 689-90w
Environment protection 269w
Financial services 613-4w
Food labelling 558w
Ground water 538w
Hazardous wastes 227w
Hill livestock allowances 647-8w
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 375-401
Insider trading 381w
Pregnant women 112-5w
Shipbuilding 614w
Smoke & chimney gases 235-6w

EC regional policy
131w, 602-3w

EC Research Council
697-9w

EC staff
Poland Hungary assistance for economic restructuring 55w

EC Statistical Office
489w
Statistics 488w

EC Telecommunications Council
697-9w

EC Tourism Council
697-9w

Economic & monetary union
217w, 297w
EC integration 694w
Intergovernmental conference 327

Economic & Social Research Council
372-6w

Economic growth
Overseas trade 495

Economic planning
North Wales 356w

Economic policy
Government achievements 499
Romania 213-4w

Economic regions
Crime 347w
Hard core unemployed 425w
Mortgages 106-7w
Public expenditure 571-2w
Regional aid 430-2w

Economic sanctions
British Electricity International 338w, 441w
Iraq 303-4w, 387w, 518w, 608-9w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 48-9w, 55-6w, 330, 389w, 855
Israel 338w

Economic situation
5-6w
Association of British Chambers of Commerce 502
Retail trade 330w
Statistics 483-4w

Ecotec Research & Consulting
116w

Edinburgh Airport
Air traffic control 95w

Edinburgh Royal Infirmary
176w

Edinburgh University
University finance 184

Edinburgh-Glasgow railway
Railway electrification 65w, 704-5w

Education
Education—continued
Haringey 160-1w
Inner London boroughs 151w
Prisoners' rights 732w
Public expenditure 589-90w, 677w
Scotland 589-90w

Education & industry
156-7w, 183
Educational finance 183
Expenditure 183
Government assistance to industry 435-6w

"Education for Citizenship"
2-3w

Education Reform Act 1988
Questions
549w
Local authority associations 163w

Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981
Questions
150w

Education support grants
164w, 167w

Educational aid
Iraq 371-2w

Educational assessment
Primary education 161w, 243-4w
Scotland 243-4w

Educational equipment
Scotland 712-3w

Educational finance
177-8
EC countries 370-1w
Education & industry 183
Grant maintained schools 417w
Hackney 157-8w
Higher education teachers 184
Newham (30:10:90) 947
Pre-school education 158w
Primary education 370w
Public petitions (30:10:90) 947
Scotland 149-50w, 378w
Secondary education 370w

Educational institutions
Access to buildings 162w
Libraries 513-4w
Ministers' domestic visits 517w
Science parks 615w

Educational psychology
Student numbers 679w
Wales 291w

Educational publications
160w
Scotland 712-3w

Educational qualifications
Armed forces retirement 91w
Civil servants 91w
Licensed teachers 673w
Ministry of Defence 91w
Scotland 584w
Sixth form education 137w
Teachers 661-2w, 674w
Youth training 751-2w

Educational standards
GCE A level 4-5w, 187
General Certificate of Secondary Education 163-4w
Outer London boroughs 162-4w
Reading 178

Efficiency scrutinies
185-6w, 484w, 491-2w
London Underground 433w
Statistics 490w

***Eggar, Mr Tim**, Minister of State, Dept of Education & Science*
Questions
City technology colleges, Bradford 139w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Education & Science 279-80w

Eggar, Mr Tim—continued
Curriculum 161-2w
Curriculum, Active citizenship 2-3w
Curriculum, History education 4w
Curriculum, Rural areas 160w
Education, Inner London boroughs 151w
Education Reform Act 1988, Local authority associations 163w
Educational finance, Hackney 157-8w
Educational standards, Outer London boroughs 162-4w
GCE A level, Educational standards 4-5w
Graduates, Private sector 184
Graduates, Public sector 184
Grant maintained schools 137-9w
Grant maintained schools, Costs 417w
Grant maintained schools, Educational finance 417w
Grant maintained schools, Local education authorities 137-8w
Grant maintained schools, Local government expenditure 313w
Grant maintained schools, Voting methods 138w
Higher education teachers, Educational finance 184
Languages education 3-4w, 157w
Languages education, Foreign languages 678w
Nursery schools, Primary education 417-9w
Nursery schools, School population 158-9w
Political education, Complaints 166w
Pre-school education, Educational finance 158w
Primary education, Educational assessment 161w
Science & technology research, Overseas students 184w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 166w, 368w, 678w
Sixth form education, Educational qualifications 137w
Teachers, Pay 3w, 155w, 369w
Teachers, Pay review bodies 369-70w
Teachers, Recruitment 175-6
Telford City Technology College, Headteachers 193w

Eggs
Food poisoning 444w

Egremont
459w

Egremont bypass
Road construction 249w

Elderly
Heart diseases 709
Mentally ill 443w
Residential care 681w
Social security benefits 77w

Elders IXL
Grand Metropolitan 52w, 770w

Elections
Guyana 388-9w
Pakistan 390-1w

Electoral register
120-2w, 185w
British residents abroad 408w, 446w
Community charge 228w
Costs 733w
Disclosure of information 118w
Electorate 408w
Finchley 16-7w, 256w, 739w
Parliamentary constituencies 446w
Post codes 449w

Electorate
Electoral register 408w
Scotland 721w

Electric lighting
Dept of Energy 521w

Electricity
Imports 14w

Electricity consumption
14w

Electricity generation
Alternative energy 520w
Fuels 15w, 521-2w
OECD countries 520w

Electricity supply industry
Accountants 270w
Advertising 364w, 441w, 519w
Consultants 655-6w
Debts 657w
Electricity tariffs 655w
Non-fossil fuel obligation 13w
Privatisation 13w, 75w, 270w, 363-4w, 441w, 519w, 655-7w
Profits 657w
Scotland 75w

Electricity tariffs
Discounts 521w
Electricity supply industry 655w

Electronic equipment
Departmental coordination 273w
Scotland 585w

Electronic surveillance
Offenders 738-9w

Electrostatic data analysis test
Evidence 735w

Elton Committee
see School Discipline Inquiry

Ely RAF Hospital
503w
Construction 90w

Emergency planning
AWE Cardiff 502w
British Rail 341w
Conferences 17w
Manpower 123w
Transport of radioactive materials 96w
Wales 123w

Emery, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 380-2
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 340
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1000
Oral questions (29:10:90) 728
Questions
NATO 318

Emigration
Scotland 586w
USSR 110w, 384w

Employment
Wales 356w

Employment Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (22:10:90) 22-38
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Employment discrimination
Older workers 754w

Employment level
Manufacturing industries 425w
Road travel 177w

Employment opportunities
Financial services 718
Glasgow 170w
Paisley North 583w

Employment Service
630-1w, 750w, 752-3w

Employment services
Hard core unemployed 630-1w

Employment training
745-7w, 750w
Community programme 630w
Finance 745w
Industrial accidents 745w
Industrial health & safety 745w
Skill shortages 745w
Take-up 745w

Employment training—continued
Take-up of employment 751-2w

Empty housing
Council housing 345w

Empty property
Factories 717

Energy
Environmental impact assessment 520-1w
Malaysia 208w

Energy conservation
Departmental publications 229-30w
Development plans 693w
Harmonisation of standards 270-1w
Information services 272w
Labelling 270-1w
Tax incentives 296w

Energy consumption
Petrol 13w

Energy costs
Caledonian MacBrayne 473-4w

Energy Efficiency Ministerial Committee
271-2w, 519w

Energy Efficiency Office
272w, 519w

Energy research
Geothermal power 655w
Government contracts 520-1w
Research finance 439-40w
Wave power 439-40w

Energy Technology Support Unit
520-1w

Engineering industries
612w
Foreign investment in UK 598-9w, 977
Industrial production 596w, 977-8
Mining 608w

English education
Eastern Europe 391w

English Heritage
see Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England

Enterprise Initiative
434w, 479w

Entry clearances
Adoption 16w
East Africa 54-5w
Ethiopia 457w
Indian subcontinent 54-5w

Environment
Companies 691w
Conferences 434w
Council of Europe 690w
EC countries 268-9w
Statistics 268-9w
Treaties 454w, 700w

Environment Council
41-2w

Environment protection
Advertising 182-3w
Antarctic 565w, 692w
Building industry 46w
Conferences 20w, 38w, 41-2w, 46w, 182w, 775w
Consumer information (30:10:90) 893-4
Departmental publications 47w
Dept of Transport 462-4w
Eastern Europe 111w, 263w
EC grants & loans 269w, 689w
EC internal trade 50w
EC law 269w
European Investment Bank 539-41w
GATT 768-9w
Government assistance to industry 981-2
Industry 981-2
Trade fairs 771-2w
Uruguay round 768w

Environment Select Committee
(26:10:90) 639

Environmental education
Open University 46w

Environmental impact assessment
1-2, 24w, 72w
Energy 520-1w
Greater Manchester relief road 706w

Environmental policy
Companies 130w
Conferences 41w
Radio programmes 42w
Wales 715-6

Environmental Protection Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
(26:10:90) 629, (31:10:90) 1023-77
Lords amendts (29:10:90) 752-841, (30:10:90) 895-946
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087
Questions
633-4w
Orders & regulations 233w

Environmentally sensitive areas
Marginal land 647w

Epilepsy
Medical equipment 176w

Equal opportunities
Occupational pensions 282w

Equipment
Occupational deafness 36w

Equity
755w

ERASMUS
Student numbers 159-60w

ERM
Industrial development 329w
Industry 614w
Inflation 293w
Manufactured exports 976

Espionage
Families 561w

Established Church Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (30:10:90) 891

Estuaries
Planning permission 321w

Ethiopia
326
Entry clearances 457w
Immigrants 446w

Ethnic minorities
Government grants to local authorities 123-6w

Ethnic monitoring
Probation 734w

ETIS
609-10w

Eurocopy
Company investigations 616w

Europe
Balance of trade 597w
NATO 854-5

European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund
305w
Tobacco 209-10w, 305w

European Central Bank
(23:10:90) 195-291

European Commission
2w, 209w, 359w, 364-5w, 558w, 640w, 754-5w, 769w
Accountants 619w

European Commission*—*continued
EC internal trade 208w
Sheep 355w

European Commission & Court of Human Rights (Immunities & Privileges) (Amendment) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(25:10:90) 619

European Commission of Human Rights
Income tax (25:10:90) 619

European Communities
Agriculture 82-3w
Howe, Geoffrey 865
Northern Ireland 558-9w

European companies
(22:10:90) 45-70, 150-65

European Council
640w
Agricultural surpluses 421w
Documents 639w
Ministerial statements (30:10:90) 869-91

European Court of Human Rights
444w
Income tax (25:10:90) 619

European Court of Justice
557w

European currency unit
187

European Development Bank
22w, 359w
Kirklees Borough Council 359w
Manpower 359w

European Economic Community
GATT 319

European Environment Agency
268-9w

European fighter aircraft
410w

European home & leisure accident surveillance system
330w

European Investment Bank
697-9w
Environment protection 539-41w

European Legislation Select Committee
(24:10:90) 375-401

European monetary system
Exchange rates 9w, (23:10:90) 195-291

European Parliament
Members' visits abroad 582w

European Parliament constituencies
Boundary Commission for England 260w

European Proliferation Information Centre
57-8w

European Regional Development Fund
73w, 132-3w
Wales 27w

European Security Conference
56-7w
International conferences 328
National territory 699w
Treaties 421w

European Standing Committee A
(24:10:90) 375-401

European Standing Committee B
(24:10:90) 375-401

European Standing Committee C
(24:10:90) 375-401

Eurostat
486-7w

Evans, Mr David
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1046
Questions
Arms control negotiations, Chemical weapons 453-4w

Evans, Mr David*—*continued
Education, Inner London boroughs 151w
Hong Kong, China 219w
Road traffic, Transport policy 8-9
Sunday trading 726w

Evans, Mr John
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1006
Questions
Alzheimer's disease, Personal social services 524w
Armed forces training 93-4w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Recruitment 286w
Magistrates' Courts Review 741w
Ports, Police 704w
Small businesses, Interest rates 980
Youth training scheme, Industrial accidents 1w

Evennett, Mr David
Questions
Dartford-Thurrock crossing, Construction 59w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, EC external relations 495w
Local education authorities, Budgeting 140-50w
Poland 220-1w
Police, Shift work 728w
Small Firms Service 383w

Evidence
Electrostatic data analysis test 735w
Lowermoor Incident Health Advisory Group 405w
Public interest 687w, 742w
Sexual offences 736w

Ewing, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 197

Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 743-4
Oral questions (29:10:90) 728
Questions
Breathalysers, Licensed premises 179w
Channel tunnel, Scotland 59w
Directors, Disqualifications 779-80w
ERASMUS, Student numbers 159-60w
Fishing vessels, Shipping accidents 379w
Giant hogweed, Health hazards 213w
Giant hogweed, Hospital patients 35w, 74w
Giant hogweed, Import controls 240w
Giant hogweed, Nuisance 74w
Giant hogweed, Prosecutions 74w
Giant hogweed, Scotland 74w
Heart diseases, Intensive care 592w
Heart diseases, Surgery 592w
Insolvency practitioners, Codes of practice 432-3w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 496w
Manufactured exports, Scotland 605w
Mental illness, Finance 591w
Senile dementia, Scottish health boards 595w
Sequestration of assets, Costs 593-4w
Students, Community charge 182-3
Submarines, Fishing gear 412-3w
Submarines, Fishing vessels 412w

Ex gratia payments
364w, 441w, 519w, 556w

Examinations
Primary education 176-8

Exchange rates
10-1w
Bank of England 9-10w
Disclosure of information 21w, 50-1w
European monetary system 9w, (23:10:90) 195-291
Mark 10w

Exercise Green Lanyard
Military aircraft 762-3w

Exercise Red Lanyard
Military aircraft 762w

Exhaust emission controls
Cars 65w
Law enforcement 512-3w
Motor vehicle registration 462w

Exhaust emissions
Motor vehicle testing 245w

Exhibitions
Upper Waiting Hall 777w

Explosions
Peterborough 339w
Royal ordnance factories 411w

Explosives
Cambodia 88w
Defence contracts 99-100w
Defence research 411w

Explosives Inspectorate
261-2w

Export controls
Horses 422w
Iraq 385w
Vietnam 203w

Export credit guarantees
Fishing gear 207w
USSR 207w

Export Credits Guarantee Department
615w, 982-3

Export licensing
Administrative delays 599-600w
British Aerospace 204w
British Telecom 203w
Computers 610w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 203w
Vietnam 203w

Export of Goods (Control) Order 1989
Questions
54w

Export of live animals
133w, 208-9w
Animal welfare 133-4w
France 631w

Export prices
6w

Export promotion
607w

Export Union
48w

Exports
607w
Agricultural marketing 304-5w
Animal feed 395w
Cosmetics 609w
Fees & charges 974
Furs 132w
Intervention stocks 310w, 423w
Iraq 204w
Middle East 615w
Nuclear reactors 655w
Plutonium 658w
Surveillance 204w

Exservicemen
Cambodia 414w
Nuclear weapons tests 861-2

Extortion
Food industry 446-7w

Eye disorders
Hospital waiting lists 265w

Eye tests
Newham 35w
Scotland 241w

Eyesight
Computer terminals 191-2w

F111 aircraft
USA 505w

Factories
Empty property 717
Textile industry 421w

Factory closures
Greenall Whitley 129w
Iron & steel industry 971
Ravenscraig steelworks 970

Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland
Integrated schools 637-8w

Falkland Islands
Petroleum exploration 454w
Sovereignty 565w

***Fallon, Mr Michael**, Under-Secretary of State, Dept of Education & Science*
Questions
City technology colleges 156w
City technology colleges, Contracts 675w
City technology colleges, Government grants 515-6w
City technology colleges, Pupil-teacher ratios 516w
City technology colleges, School admission 514-5w
City technology colleges, School population 516w
City technology colleges, Schools & parents 156w
City technology colleges, Southwark 515w
Class sizes, Primary education 165-6w
Doncaster Education Authority, Teachers 674w
Education, Haringey 160-1w
Education & industry 156-7w, 183
Education & industry, Educational finance 183
Education & industry, Expenditure 183
Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981 150w
Educational finance, Primary education 370w
Educational institutions, Libraries 513-4w
Educational publications 160w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Educational standards 163-4w
Haberdashers' Aske's School, City technology colleges 516-7w
Headteachers, Men 376w
Headteachers, Resignations 376-7w
Languages education, Teachers 3w
Licensed teachers, Educational qualifications 673w
Licensed teachers, Manpower 672-3w
Licensed teachers, Professional qualifications 672w
Licensed teachers, Shortage subjects 673w
Local education authorities, Budgeting 152-4w, 181
Local education authority training grant scheme, Trade unions 167w
Macmillan City Technology College, Music education 513w
Physical education, Curriculum 674w
Primary education, Cost per pupil 165w
Primary education, Staffordshire 159w
School administration, Budgeting 151-2w, 673w
School administration, School governors 181
School administration, School meals 180-1
School administration, Special education 155-6w, 513w
School administration, Village schools 180
School admission, Judgments 159w
School buildings, Bradford 151w
School buildings, Capital investment 150w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 150-1w
School discipline 165w
School population 159w
School transport, Church schools 149w
Schools, Fires 164-5w
Schools, Solvents 162w
Special schools, Budgeting 377w

***Fallon, Mr Michael**— continued*
Teacher training 161w
Teacher training, Student numbers 369w
Teacher training, Teachers 367-8w
Teachers, Educational qualifications 674w
Teachers, Manpower 371w
Teachers, Recruitment 149w
Teachers, Vacancies 149w, 160w, 680w
Truancy 164w, 193w

Families
Espionage 561w
Income tax 490-1

Family benefits
489
Paisley 664w

Family credit
Community charge 544w
Scotland 77w
Social security recipients 77w

Family doctors
Patients 34w
Property transfer 34w

Family expenditure survey
Statistics 484w

Family income
570w

Farm & conservation grants scheme
424w

Farm buildings
Planning permission 229w

Farmers
Personal income 288w
Wales 288w

Farmers' Union of Wales
Sheep 355w

Farms
Foxes 134-5w
Furs 134-5w

Fathers
Maintenance 500

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 882-3
Questions
Business statements 512

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 881
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1014
Questions
Bypasses, Road construction 68w
Intergovernmental conference, Economic & monetary union 327
Prisons, Privatisation 730w

Fearn, Mr Ronnie
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 994-5
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 75
Questions
Baby milks, Midwives 31w
Baby milks, Procurement 31w
Childbirth, Home births 108w
Childbirth, Medical malpractice 108w
Cycleways, Greater London 65w
Freight transport, Small businesses 460w
Halons, Fire extinguishers 324-5w
Home births, Nurses' training 108-9w
Minibuses, Safety belts 96w
Non-domestic rates, Small businesses 541w
Nursery schools, School population 158-9w
Planning permission, Farm buildings 229w
Roads, Catering 190w
Small businesses, Advisory services 426w
Small businesses, Financial services 426w
Small businesses, Training & enterprise councils 426w
Tax administration, Small businesses 491-2w

Fearn, Mr Ronnie*—*continued
Tickets, Touting 450-1w

Fellowship of Reconciliation
353w

Ferries
Road signs 72w

Fertility
Medical treatments 26-7w, 32-3w, 73-4w, 107w
Northern Ireland 107w
Scotland 73-4w
Wales 26-7w

Festivals & special occasions
Fireworks 778w

Field, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1006
Noise control (31:10:90) 1032
Questions
Civil servants, EC institutions 923
Coastal protection, Finance 422w
Community charge, Appeals 180w
Disaster relief, Isle of Wight 693w
Domestic rates, Appeals 187-8w
Ferries, Road signs 72w
Germany 215w
Greenhouse effect, Nitrous oxide 2w
Light dues, Sailing boats 72w
Polish Resettlement Act 1947, Members' correspondence 210w
Spain, Lorry drivers 110w
Sunday trading 726w
Teachers, Pay 155w
Tidal power, Solent 72w

Field, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 737-8
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 357
Questions
Balance of trade 569-70w
Civil service dispersal, Government departments 301-3w
Fine defaulters, Income support 738w
HIV infection, Wirral Health Authority 409w
Mental health services, Wirral Health Authority 409w
Social Fund, Social security benefits reductions 223w, 669w

Fields, Mr Terry
Questions
Defence review 499w

Financial institutions
Advisory services 971-2

Financial markets
611-2w
Overseas trade 973

Financial Reporting Council
Disclosure of information 382w

Financial services
608w
EC internal trade 479w
EC law 613-4w
Employment opportunities 718
Investor protection 131-2w, 607-8w, 612w
Small businesses 426w

Financial Services Tribunal
776w

Finchley
Electoral register 16-7w, 256w, 739w

Fine defaulters
Income support 738w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Cycling, Road traffic offences 509w
Housing benefits, Residential care 366-7w
Local government functions, Camden 40-1w, 542w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey*—*continued
Share certificates, Computer applications 617-8w

Fire extinguishers
Halons 324-5w

Fire regulations
739w

Fire Service College
Fees & charges 729-30w

Fires
Channel tunnel 426w
Hammersmith Hospital 525w
Schools 164-5w

Fireworks
Festivals & special occasions 778w
Safety 777-8w

Firing ranges
Armed forces training 764w

Fish
EC action 309-10w

Fish conservation
Salmon 589w
Seals 335w
Trout 52w, 325-6w, 392w

Fish farming
Salmon 52w

Fishburn, Mr Dudley
Debates etc.
British Council (26:10:90) 695-8
Questions
Big Ben, Repairs & maintenance 268w

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 570, 596-7, 602-6, 611, 615, 617
Walsh, Craig, Standing Order No 20 applications (29:10:90) 751
Questions
Arts finance, Expenditure 652w
BBC, Income 555w
Church buildings, Repair grants 346-7w
Educational institutions, Libraries 513-4w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 494-5w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, BBC 556w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Journalism 624w
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 600w
Prisoners, Suicide 732-3w
Public lending right 573w
Public libraries, Books 573w
Statistics, Civil service manpower 571w
Statistics, Expenditure 571w
Teachers, Recruitment 149w
Television licences, Consultants 555-6w
Theatre, Arts finance 722
Unruly children, Local government social services 687w

Fisheries
Germany 640w
Scotland 421w

Fishery agreements
Fishing quotas 136w

Fishery protection
Aircraft 176w
Scotland 176w

Fishguard
Roads 547-8w

Fishing gear
Export credit guarantees 207w
Scotland 592w
Submarines 412-3w

Fishing quotas
Fishery agreements 136w
Netherlands 136w

Fishing vessels
Marine fuels 136w
Scotland 379w

Fishing vessels*—*continued
Shipping accidents 379w
Submarines 412w

Fixed assets
Public companies 129w

Fixed interest securities
Disclosure of information 203w

Fixed penalties
Parking offences (30:10:90) 948-59

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 797
Questions
Arms exports, Iraq 983
Inflation 493
Israel, Peace negotiations 219w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Brewing industry 602w
Teachers, Recruitment 176

Flexi-ownership scheme
287w
Wales 27-8w

Flint
Salmonella 714

Flue gas desulphurisation
116w

Fluidised bed combustion
Research finance 12-3w

Flynn, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 347
Noise control (31:10:90) 1041-3
Questions
Agriculture, Climate 648-9w
Air pollution, Printing industry 323-4w
Alternative energy, EC grants & loans 271w
Alternative energy, Government assistance 271w
Argentina, Human rights 263w
Arms exports, Iraq 86w
Arms exports, Saudi Arabia 88w
Arms exports, Trade fairs 87-8w
Arms exports, United Arab Emirates 86w
Arms trade, Iraq 239-40w
Arms trade, Television programmes 48w, 779w
Astra Holdings, Dept of Trade inquiries 49w
Bank of England, Iraq 8w
Brazil, Rain forests 24w
British Aerospace, Export licensing 204w
Bus lanes, Greater London 246w
CAB International, International conferences 23-4w
Cancer, Tower Hamlets 108w
Chemical industries, Industrial health & safety 50w
Child health, Romania 20w
Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry 88w
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988, Consultants 86w
Council housing, Housing completions 289w
Council of Europe, Environment 690w
Craft industries, International conferences 112w
Defence industries, Security 501w
Dept of Transport, Civil service manpower 247-8w
Dept of Transport, Environment protection 462-4w
Dounreay, Radioactive waste disposal 73w
Drigg, Radioactive waste disposal 42w
East Germany, EC aid 111w
Eastern Europe, Environment protection 111w
EC Agriculture Council, Methane 135w
EC Environment Council, EC law 689-90w
EC Environment Council, Greenhouse effect 324w

Flynn, Mr Paul*—*continued
EC external trade, Iraq 48w
EC internal trade, Environment protection 50w
Emergency planning, Conferences 17w
Energy conservation, Departmental publications 229-30w
Energy conservation, Harmonisation of standards 270-1w
Energy conservation, Information services 272w
Energy Efficiency Ministerial Committee 271-2w
Environment, Conferences 434w
Environment, Statistics 268-9w
Environment protection, Building industry 46w
Environment protection, Conferences 20w, 41-2w, 182w, 775w
Environment protection, EC grants & loans 269w, 689w
Environment protection, EC law 269w
Environmental policy, Conferences 41w
Environmental policy, Radio programmes 42w
European Investment Bank, Environment protection 539-41w
European Security Conference 56-7w
Exports, Surveillance 204w
Farmers, Personal income 288w
Fire Service College, Fees & charges 729-30w
Foreign loans, Iraq 8w
Geothermal power, Energy research 655w
Greenhouse effect, International conferences 690w
Greenpeace 230w
Hazardous wastes, Advisory services 51w
Hazardous wastes, EC law 227w
Hazardous wastes, Italy 227w
Hazardous wastes, Printing industry 324w
Hospital beds, District health authorities 289w
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 714-5
Independent Living Fund, Social security benefits rules 283w
International Atomic Energy Agency, Nuclear safety 115-6w
International trade, Iraq 47-8w
Invalidity benefits, Earnings rules 284w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence industries 85-6w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Economic sanctions 48-9w, 55-6w, 389w
Karin B, Hazardous wastes 227w
Lung diseases, Medical equipment 267w
Mercenaries, Treaties 388w
Middle East, Nuclear weapons 696w
Ministry of Defence, Disclosure of information 85w
MV Gur Mariner, Arrests 70-1w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Radioactive waste disposal 42w
Nuclear non proliferation, Non-governmental organisations 696w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 110w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Local authorities 696w
Nuclear power, Conferences 12w
Nuclear safeguards, Treaties 655w
Nuclear safety, Metals 86-7w
Nuclear safety, USSR 86w
Nuclear test ban, International conferences 387w, 639-40w
Nuclear test ban, Verification 388w
Nuclear weapons, Chemicals 87w
Nuclear weapons tests 388w
Nuclear weapons tests, Costs 413w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear safety 413w
Nuclear weapons tests, Radiation hazards 413w
Nuclear weapons tests, USA 413w
Open University, Environmental education 46w
Parliamentarians' Global Action, Nuclear test ban 639w
Plutonium, Exports 658w

Flynn, Mr Paul*—*continued
Pollution, London docklands 324w
Printing industry, Cancer hazards 111w
Radiation hazards, Newsprint 269w
Radioactive fallout, Health physics 15w
Radioactive waste disposal, Scotland 379w
Rechem International, Hazardous wastes 186-7w
Recycling, Conferences 41w
Road accidents, Road traffic control 246-7w
Romania, AIDS 56w
Romania, Democracy 321-2
Scottish Office, Transport 241-2w
Sellafield, Industrial health & safety 753-4w
Severn bridge, Road traffic 248w
Social security benefits, Computers in government departments 283w
Solar power, Buildings 229w
South Africa, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 696w
Summertime 315-6w
TDG, Lear Fan 107w
"This Common Inheritance White Paper", Conferences 688w
Trade promotion, USSR 608w
Traffic lights, Buses 246w
Trident 388w
United Nations, Overseas trade 49-50w
Waste disposal, Conferences 235w
Waste Management 235w
Water treatment, Printing industry 269w
Wave power, Television programmes 12w
Welsh Office, Civil service manpower 289-90w

Food
Eastern Europe 424w
EC external trade 424w
Prisons 448w
Sudan 650w

Food additives
Surveys 393w

Food contamination
Meat 134w

Food from Britain
304-5w

Food hygiene
Sweets 631w

Food imports
Eastern Europe 307-8w
EC internal trade 648w

Food industry
Extortion 446-7w

Food labelling
EC law 558w
Northern Ireland 558w

Food poisoning
Campylobacter 685w
Eggs 444w

Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Copper or Other Metal Poisoning) (England) Order 1990
Questions
305w

Food Safety Act 1990
Questions
39-40w

Food Safety & Applied Nutrition Research Committee
Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food 424w

Food standards
Government grants to local authorities 39-40w

Food supply
647w

Food surpluses
EC budget 395-6w

Fookes, Dame Janet
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 797, 803-6, 824

Football
Arrests 128w
Public order policing 731w

Footwear industry
Government assistance to industry 614-5w
Manpower 427-8w

Ford Prison
552-3w
Disclosure of information 347w
Telephones 552w

Foreign adoptions
32w, 56w, (29:10:90) 842-50

Foreign aid
Peace negotiations 326

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
263-4w, 695w
Members' correspondence 700w
Ministers' visits abroad 454-6w
Official visits 455w

Foreign companies in UK
Manpower 569-70w
West Germany 979

Foreign investment in UK
494
Cynon Valley 713
Engineering industries 598-9w, 977
Manufacturing industries 976
South East region 436-8w
Wales 357w, 712-4

Foreign languages
377-8w
Departmental correspondence 723w
Languages education 678w

Foreign loans
Iraq 8w

Foreign policy
Albania 561w
Cambodia 214w
Israel 221w
Somalia 566w
South Africa 220w, 331-2

Foreign relations
China 215w
India 216w
USA 318

Foreign tourists
Expenditure 383w

Foreigners
Adoption (29:10:90) 842-50

Forestry
Carbon 725w

Forestry Commission
645-6w
Blood sports 722w
Foxes 719w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 346

***Forsyth, Mr Michael**, Minister of State for Scotland*
Questions
AIDS, Scotland 177w
Alzheimer's disease, Scotland 173-4w
Carbon, Forestry 725w
Coastal areas, Scotland 591w
Community care, Computer applications 713w
Community development, Strathclyde 179w
Dental services, Scotland 326w
Dichlorvos, Agricultural research 724w
Dolphins, Moray Firth 724w
Educational finance, Scotland 378w

Forsyth, Mr Michael*—*continued
Educational publications, Scotland 712-3w
Emigration, Scotland 586w
Eye tests, Scotland 241w
Fertility, Medical treatments 73-4w
Fishing gear, Scotland 592w
Fishing vessels, Shipping accidents 379w
Foreign languages, Departmental correspondence 723w
Forestry Commission, Blood sports 722w
Forestry Commission, Foxes 719w
Foxes, Pest control 719w
Giant hogweed, Hospital patients 74w
Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Legionnaires' disease 175w
Greater Glasgow Health Board, Contracts for services 167-8w, 210w, 241w
Greater Glasgow Health Board, Offices 327w
Greater Glasgow Health Board, Public appointments 169w
Handicapped, Scotland 175w
Health service ancillary staff, Contracts for services 168w
Heart diseases, Intensive care 592w
Heart diseases, Scotland 327w
Heart diseases, Surgery 592w
Herons, Pest control 473w
Holm School Orkney, Self-governing schools 725w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 326-7w
Land acquisition, School buildings 243w
Medical equipment, Epilepsy 176w
Mental hospitals, Hospital admissions 723w
Mental illness, Expenditure 591w
Mental illness, Finance 591w
Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre Glasgow, Finance 179w
Pensioners, Scotland 169w
Prescription charges, Income 723-4w
Primary education, Denny 178-9w
Private education, Child care 178w
Public expenditure, Education 589-90w
Salmon, Fish conservation 589w
Scholarships, Scotland 169w
School boards, Publicity 179-80w
Scottish Office, Civil servants 379w
Senile dementia, Scottish health boards 595w
Southern General Hospital Glasgow, Spinal injuries 593w
Sports, Teachers 722-3w
Trout, Fish conservation 325-6w

Forsythe, Mr Clifford
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 557-8

***Forth, Mr Eric**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 159
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 22, 23-4, 34-7, 38
Wages councils (22:10:90) 169-72
Questions
British Tourist Authority, Japan 1-2w
Building industry safety, EC law 628w
Channel tunnel, Industrial accidents 627-8w
Channel tunnel, Industrial health & safety 426w
Companies, Prosecutions 627w
Craft industries, International conferences 112w
Foreign tourists, Expenditure 383w
Industrial health & safety 755w
Industrial safety, Transport of hazardous materials 629w
Legionnaires' disease, Industrial health & safety 383w
Minimum wage, Civil proceedings 627w
Minimum wage, Prosecutions 627w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 383w
Part-time employment, EC action 2w, 754-5w

Forth, Mr Eric*—*continued
Pregnant women, EC law 112-5w
Printing industry, Cancer hazards 111w
Radiation hazards, Newsprint 269w
Redundancy, Bradford 629w
Sellafield, Industrial health & safety 753-4w
Small businesses, Advisory services 426w
Small businesses, Financial services 426w
Small Firms Service 383w
Work permits, Actors 755w
Work permits, Sheri, Patrick 317-8w

Fossil fuel levy
520w

Foster care
Children in care 523w

Foulkes, Mr George
Questions
Air force, Armed forces deployment 757w
Airmisses 763w
Armed forces training, Firing ranges 764w
Low flying, Air accidents 759-61w
Low flying, Aircrew 762w
Low flying, Bombs 760w
Low flying, Canada 758-9w, 761-2w
Low flying, Dalmellington 760w
Low flying, Handbooks 760w
Low flying, Lockerbie 761w
Low flying, Military aircraft 759-62w
Low flying, Public holidays 761w
Low flying, Radar 759w
Low flying, RAF Machrihanish 760w
Low flying, USA 758w
Low flying, West Germany 622w
Military aircraft, Air accidents 623-4w
Red Flag Exercises, Buccaneer aircraft 759w
Tornado aircraft, Lasers 757w
United Nations, Cambodia 333

Foundation for Education & Business Partnerships
183

Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 358

Fox, Sir Marcus
Questions
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 61-2w

Foxes
Farms 134-5w
Forestry Commission 719w
Pest control 719w
Scotland 719w

France
Export of live animals 631w
Members' pay 581w
Nuclear weapons 518w
Sheep meat 135w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Questions
Disposable income 298w

Fraser, Mr John
Debates etc.
Cambodia (26:10:90) 652
Courts & Legal Services Bill (HL), Lords amendts (26:10:90) 633-5
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 829-30, 832, 833
Questions
Brixton Prison, Suicide 252w
Duty solicitors, Mortgage defaulters 274w
Employment training, Community programme 630w
Haslar Young Offenders' Institution, Prison population 118w
Immigration officers, Criminal investigation 123w
Legal aid, Damages 103w
Legal aid, Expenditure 276w
Legal aid, Greater London 103w
Legal aid, Legal costs 103w

Fraser, Mr John*—*continued
Listed buildings 471w
Motorways, Driving 188w
Prosecutions, Costs 635w

Fraud
Scargill, Arthur 741-2w

Freehold land
Astra Training Services 629-30w
Northern Ireland 250w

***Freeman, Mr Roger**, Minister for Public Transport*
Debates etc.
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 438-40, 442, 445
Questions
Birmingham relief road, Contracts 62w
British Rail, Departmental responsibilities 316-7w
British Rail, Emergency planning 341w
British Rail, Investment 69w
British Rail, Performance indicators 65w
Bus fares 68w
Bus permits, Retirement age 71w
Bus services, Greater London 64w
Bus services, Railway travel 703w
Buses, Parking 66-7w
Channel tunnel, Railway freight transport 59w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 245w
Channel tunnel, Scotland 4-5, 59-60w
Channel tunnel, Trains 191w
Channel tunnel, Transport of radioactive materials 60w
Channel tunnel, Transport policy 60w
Channel Tunnel Safety Authority 510w
Dartford-Thurrock crossing, Construction 59w
Docklands light railway, Capital investment 61w
Docklands light railway, Privatisation 61w
East-West crossrail line, Cost benefit analysis 704w
Edinburgh-Glasgow railway, Railway electrification 65w, 704-5w
Jubilee line, Handicapped 711w
Jubilee line, Railway stations 95w
London Transport, Central line 11
London Transport, Investment 62w
London Underground, Central line 10-1
London Underground, Finance 96w
London Underground, Modernisation 66w
Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, Trains 461w
Midland main railway line, Railway electrification 68w
Mobility of disabled, Public transport 62w
Network SouthEast, Railway travel 341w
Passenger transport executives, Contracts for services 461w
Railway electrification, Scotland 65w
Railway freight transport 63w, 509w
Railway network, Investment 4
Railway network, Lancaster 5
Railway network, North West region 5
Railway property, Children 460-1w
Railway stations, Greater London 61w
Trams, Greater London 245w
Transport, Investment 63w
Underground railways, Private Bills 97w

Freight transport
Small businesses 460w

French, Mr Douglas
Questions
Engineering industries 612w
Investment trusts 300w
Life imprisonment, Parole 449w
Prison escapes, Parole 449w
Rents to mortgages scheme 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Basildon 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Gloucester 466w
Road accidents, Roundabouts 66w

Fresh Start
449w

Frontiers
EC countries 736w
Poland 54w

Fry, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 761-2, 763-4
Questions
Common agricultural policy 502

Fuels
Electricity generation 15w, 521-2w

Furs
Exports 132w
Farms 134-5w

Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 364
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Contractorisation 497w
Iron & steel industry 132w
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 487
Osteoporosis, Screening 318w
Pregnant women, EC law 112-5w
Takeovers, EC internal trade 613w

Galbraith, Mr Sam
Questions
Battle of Britain 85w
Greater Glasgow Health Board, Contracts for services 167-8w, 210w, 241w
Health service ancillary staff, Contracts for services 168w
Road construction, Cost benefit analysis 189-90w, 240-2w
Scottish Information Office, Members' correspondence 210w

Gale, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 528, 546-8, 574, 612
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 762, 795, 809, 816-8
Noise control (31:10:90) 1066, 1067-70
Questions
Business statements 512
Electricity supply industry, Advertising 519w
Pay, Unemployment 495

Galloway, Mr George
Questions
Regional planning & development 603w

Gamete intrafallopian transfer treatment
26-7w, 32-3w, 73-4w, 107w

Gardens
Devon County Council 535w

Gardiner, Mr George
Questions
Fireworks, Safety 778w

***Garel-Jones, Mr Tristan**, Minister of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office*
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 456-8, 473-5
Questions
Antarctic, Environment protection 565w
Antarctic, International conferences 696-7w
Antarctic, Mineral resources 264w, 457w
Argentina, Human rights 263w
Berlin, Armed forces deployment 222w
Council of Ministers 697-9w
Council of Ministers, Germany 323-4
Council of Ministers, Voting methods 561w
Cyprus 218w
Cyprus, Turkey 703w
Eastern Europe, EC aid 55w
EC countries, Travel restrictions 336w
EC external relations 221w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 563w

***Garel-Jones, Mr Tristan**—continued*
EC internal relations 216w
Economic & monetary union 217w
Economic & monetary union, EC integration 694w
Falkland Islands, Petroleum exploration 454w
Falkland Islands, Sovereignty 565w
Germany 215w, 324
Germany, Intergovernmental conference 324
Germany, Treaties 334
Intergovernmental conference 217w
Intergovernmental conference, EC integration 564w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 221w
South America, EC external relations 336w
Turkey, Human rights 387w
USA, EC external relations 330
USA, Middle East 331
USA, Palestine 330
USA, Republic of Ireland 330-1
USSR, International aid from international bodies 220w
Voting methods 324

Garrett, Mr John
Questions
Company disclosure of information, Pollution 616w
District health authorities, Audit 192w
House of Commons broadcasting, Offices 641-2w
Members' pay, West Germany 581w

Garrett, Mr Ted
Questions
Child Poverty Action Group 488-9
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge 599w

Gas fired power stations
Construction 656w
Turbines 656w

Gas reserves
North Sea 658w

Gaskin, Graham
444w

GATT
50w, 84w, 204w, 336w, 395w, (30:10:90) 869-91
Developing countries trade 768w
Environment protection 768-9w
European Economic Community 319
Multifibre arrangement 610w

GCE A level
Educational standards 4-5w, 187

GEC
24-5w, 195w, 199w, 382w

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Educational standards 163-4w

General Medical Council
(23:10:90) 191

Genetically Modified Organisms Release Advisory Committee
(30:10:90) 895-946

Genn Group
Company investigations 616w

Gentile Self Defence League
354w

George, Mr Bruce
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 464-7
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 77-85, 96
Questions
Security industry, Departmental publications 347w

Geothermal power
Energy research 655w

Geriatric patients
Psychogeriatrics 679w

Germany
215w, 324
Bomb disposal 504w
Council of Ministers 323-4
Fisheries 640w
Industrial training 978-9
Intergovernmental conference 324
Iraq 55-6w, 563w
Overseas aid 334
Overseas trade 985-6
Pigmeat 631w
Treaties 334

Giant hogweed
Health hazards 213w
Hospital patients 35w, 74w
Import controls 240w
Northern Ireland 332w
Nuisance 74w
Prosecutions 74w
Scotland 74w, 213w
Weed control 332w

Gill, Mr Christopher
Questions
Sentencing 729w

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 530, 549
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 359
Questions
Child support, Expenditure 670-1w

Glasgow
169w, 173-6w, 241w, 326w, 594w
Community development 172-4w, 179w
Drug crimes 718-20w
Employment opportunities 170w
Nursery schools 722w
Planning appeals 478w
Scottish Development Agency 170-1w
Slums 169-70w
Urban programme 722w

Glasgow District Council
478w

Glasgow eastern area renewal
170w
Expenditure 170w

Glasgow Royal Infirmary
Legionnaires' disease 175w

Glen Parva Youth Custody Centre
(29:10:90) 751

Gloucester
Rents to mortgages scheme 466w

Glyn, Sir Alan
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 465
Noise control (31:10:90) 1023-4
Questions
Terrorism, Crime prevention 90-1w

Glynn Research Institute
Science & technology research 372w

Godman, Dr Norman A
Questions
Business statements 515
Community care, Housing associations 724w
Community charge exemptions, Scotland 211-2w
Community development, Strathclyde 179w
Family credit, Social security recipients 77w
Germany, Fisheries 640w
Housing standards, Scotland 721w
Import penetration 430w
Industrial disablement benefits, Scotland 670w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 221w

***Godman, Dr Norman A**—continued*
Prisoners, Per capita costs 211w
School boards, Publicity 179-80w
Shipbuilding, EC law 614w
Social Fund, Social security benefits reductions 117-8w
Social Fund, Social security claims 223w
Social security benefits reductions, Community charge 224w

Golding, Mrs Llin
Debates etc.
Cambodia (26:10:90) 651
Vagrancy Acts (Repeals & Amendment) Bill, 1R (31:10:90) 1020-2
Questions
Homelessness, Codes of practice 342-3w
Vagrancy, Prosecutions 251w
West Midlands Arts, Public appointments 397w

Golf
Planning permission 321w

Goodhart, Sir Philip
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1024-5

Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Questions
EC countries, Sovereignty 866
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, NATO countries 495w
London Underground, Northern line 8
NATO, Europe 855
Sentencing, Magistrates' courts 729w

Gordon, Ms Mildred
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 346
Questions
Arrests 740w
Lilley Group 527w
Limehouse link, Construction costs 528-9w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Budgeting 529-30w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Community development 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Contracts 527w, 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Government grants 530w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Housing 527-8w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Housing improvement 528-9w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Land acquisition 528w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Property development 527w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Resignations 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Roads 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Tower Hamlets 528w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Transport policy 528w
Retirement pensions, Polygamy 670w
Skillcentres, Building industry 532w
Urban development corporations, Codes of practice 531-2w
Urban development corporations, Conferences 531w

Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 301
Questions
EC internal trade 604w
Food poisoning, Eggs 444w
Next steps initiative 392w
Poultry, Salmonella 649w
Rents to mortgages scheme 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Basildon 183-4w, 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Marketing 466-7w

***Gorman, Mrs Teresa**—continued*
Rents to mortgages scheme, Wales 287w

Gould, Mr Bryan
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 904-11, 919, 926
Local government finance (31:10:90) 991-2, 993, 1013
Questions
Environment protection, Antarctic 692w

Government achievements
Economic policy 499

Government assistance
Alternative energy 271w
Small businesses 979-80

Government assistance to industry
EC action 434w
EC Industry Council 769w
Education & industry 435-6w
Environment protection 981-2
Expenditure 973-4
Footwear industry 614-5w
High technology 976
Industrial research 434-5w

Government contracts
Energy research 520-1w

Government department reorganisation
Dept of Trade & Industry 602w
Regional planning & development 602w

Government departments
Civil service dispersal 301-3w
Ministerial statements 642w
Statistics 484-5w

"Government Economic Statistics"
490w

Government grants to local authorities
Bradford City Council 535w
Community care 318-20w
Community charge benefits 43w, 76-7w
Ethnic minorities 123-6w
Food standards 39-40w
Housing benefits 43w, 76-7w
Nottingham City Council 465w
Nottinghamshire County Council 465w
Road finance 548w
Scotland 588-90w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
RELATE 19w

Government information services
Statistics 486w

Government Statistical Service
483-6w, 488-90w, 571w
Civil service manpower 571w

Graduates
Private sector 184
Public sector 184

Graham, Mr Thomas
Questions
British Steel Corporation 596w
Herons, Pest control 473w

Grampian
Railway transport 11-2

Grand Metropolitan
Elders IXL 52w, 770w

Grant, Sir Anthony
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 199
Local government finance (31:10:90) 998

Grant, Mr Bernie
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 343
Questions
Building Societies Association, Interest rates 496-7
Financial services 608w
Homicide, Convictions 727w

***Grant, Mr Bernie**—continued*
Ronson, Gerald, Prison sentences 866
START talks, Trident missiles 860-1

Grant maintained schools
137-9w
Costs 417w
Educational finance 417w
Local education authorities 137-8w
Local government expenditure 313w
Voting methods 138w
Wales 28w, 356w

Grants for education support & training
167w

Greater Glasgow Health Board
170w, 175w, 593w
Contracts for services 167-8w, 210w, 241w
Offices 327w
Public appointments 169w

Greater London
Arts 396w
Bus lanes 246w
Bus services 64w
Crime prevention 731w
Cycleways 65w, 246w
Intervention stocks 81w
Leasehold housing 467w
Legal aid 103w
Planning permission 37-8w
Prison staff 742w
Railway stations 61w
Road accidents 6
Road traffic 64w
Road traffic control 340w
Trams 245w

Greater London Arts
396w

Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No 4) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No 5) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Greater Manchester relief road
Environmental impact assessment 706w
M66 706w
Public participation in planning 705w
Road construction 705-7w
Road works 705w

Green pound
632w
Sheep meat 394w

Greenall Whitley
Factory closures 129w

Greenham Common
Bye laws 500w
Nuclear weapons deployment 854
Peace camps 854
Rights of way 854
Trespass 500w

Greenhouse effect
EC Environment Council 324w
International conferences 531w, 690w
Nitrous oxide 2w
Research 648-9w

Greenock
77w, 117-8w, 211-2w, 223-4w

Greenpeace
230w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1013
Questions
Arts finance 398w
Business statements 511

Greenway, Mr Harry—continued
Inflation 7w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 338w
Local authority powers, Planning permission 346w
Local enterprise agencies, Ealing 237-8w
London Underground, Central line 10-1
New Parliamentary building, Members' facilities 17
Official engagements 273w
Physical education, Curriculum 674w
Prisoners' rights, Education 732w

Greenway, Mr John
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 577-9, 588
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1013-4
Questions
EC Agriculture Council 395w
Financial services, EC law 613-4w
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 712-3
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Operating costs 496w
Opera, Arts finance 719-20

Greenwich Health Authority
Nurses 405w

Greenwich Hospital Estates
Salmon 622w

Gregory, Mr Conal
Questions
Crime, North Yorkshire 727w
Local authorities, Contracts for services 189

Griffiths, Mr Nigel
Questions
CFE talks 499w
Companies, Consumer protection 774w
Debts, Personal savings 972
Environment, Companies 691w
Eurocopy, Company investigations 616w
Industrial health & safety 755w
Students 185

Griffiths, Mr Win
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 265-8
Questions
Curriculum 161-2w
EC grants & loans, Scotland 73w
EC regional policy 131w
Economic sanctions, Iraq 303-4w
Employment, Wales 356w
European Regional Development Fund, Wales 27w
Higher education teachers, Resignations 676-8w
Medical research, Wales 662-3w
Mental hospitals, Hospital admissions 662w, 664w, 683-6w, 723w
Prescription charges, Income 682w, 723-4w
Prescription charges, Wales 661-2w
Princess of Wales Hospital 709-10
Rate rebates, Handicapped 663-4w, 688-9w
Regional aid, EC grants & loans 133w
Social security appeals, Administrative delays 669w
Teachers, Educational qualifications 661-2w, 674w
Teachers, Pay 174

***Grist, Mr Ian**, Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Carers 710
Carers, Wales 710
Childbirth, Wales 27w
Community care, Finance 420w
Community care, Government grants to local authorities 319-20w
Community care, Local government finance 357-8w, 545w
Community care, Wales 320w, 548w
Community health councils, Wales 102w
Cot deaths, Wales 28-9w
Council house waiting lists, Wales 660w
Council housing, Housing completions 289w

Grist, Mr Ian—continued
Council tenants, Tenant eviction 101w
Ear nose & throat, Hospital waiting lists 102w
Fertility, Medical treatments 26-7w
Flexi-ownership scheme, Wales 27-8w
Heart diseases, Elderly 709
Homelessness, Wales 550w
Hospices, Government grants 29w
Hospital beds, District health authorities 289w
Hospital closures, South Glamorgan Health Authority 718-9
Hospital consultants, Surgery 101w
Hospital waiting lists, Mid Glamorgan Health Authority 710
Hospital waiting lists, Surgery 102w
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 714-5
Hospitals, Radioactive waste disposal 101w
Hospitals, Sewage 27w
Hospitals, Wales 715
Housing, Wales 356w
Housing construction, Council housing finance 659w
Housing for Wales, Local authorities 659w
Housing revenue accounts, Housing subsidies 291-2w
Housing starts, Local authorities 659w
Intensive care, Hospital beds 26w, 102w
Medical rehabilitation, Aids for handicapped 545-6w
Medical research, Wales 662-3w
Mental hospitals, Hospital admissions 662w, 664w
Mid Glamorgan Health Authority 709
NHS, Building repairs 358w
Nurses, Career structure 25-6w
Planning appeals, Swansea 420w
Prescription charges, Wales 661-2w
Princess of Wales Hospital 709-10
Rate rebates, Handicapped 663-4w
Rechem International, Hazardous wastes 186-7w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Wales 287w
Rookwood Hospital, Handicapped children 663-4w
Salmonella, Flint 714
Sanitation, Wales 661w
Secure accommodation, Wales 25w, 548w
Sewage, Ysbyty Gwynedd 102w
"This Common Inheritance White Paper" 715-6

Grocott, Mr Bruce
Questions
City technology colleges 156w
City technology colleges, Contracts 675w
Commonwealth 694w
Commonwealth, Population 694w
Food supply 647w
Hospital beds, West Midlands Regional Health Authority 524w

Ground water
EC law 538w

Group of Seven
572w, 981

Grylls, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 885
Questions
Productivity, Pay 975

Guided weapons
Defence contracts 97w

Gulf states
Nuclear non proliferation 387w

***Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn**, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*
Questions
Agricultural Mortgage Corporation 312w
Agricultural research, Near market research 308w
Agricultural research, Research finance 308-9w
Agriculture, Advisory bodies 394-5w
Animal feed, Exports 395w

Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn—continued
Animal feed, Orders & regulations 311w
Animals, Waste disposal 306w
EC Agriculture Council 84w, 395w
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund, Tobacco 305w
Food additives, Surveys 393w
Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Copper or Other Metal Poisoning) (England) Order 1990 305w
Food Safety & Applied Nutrition Research Committee, Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food 424w
Intervention stocks 310w, 634w
Intervention stocks, Exports 310w, 423w
Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food, Agricultural research 423-4w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Agricultural research 392w

Guyana
Elections 388-9w

Gwent
Lorries 25w
Railway stations 356w

H & H Metalform
48w

Haberdashers' Aske's School
City technology colleges 516-7w
School governors 516-7w

Hackney
Educational finance 157-8w
Underground railways 9

Hackney Borough Council
97w

Haemophilia
AIDS 29w

Hague, Mr William
Questions
Air transport, EC action 68w
Civil servants' secondment, EC institutions 724
Languages education 157w
Languages education, Curriculum 377-8w
Transmissible encephalopathies, London Zoo 644w

Halons
Fire extinguishers 324-5w

***Hamilton, Mr Archie**, Minister of State for the Armed Forces*
Debates etc.
Wallace, Colin (31:10:90) 1081-6
Questions
Air force, Armed forces deployment 757w
Air force, Morocco 763w
Armed forces, Community charge 414-6w, 853-4
Armed forces, Disciplinary proceedings 410w
Armed forces deployment, Saudi Arabia 287w
Armed forces deployment, USA 496-7w
Armed forces housing, Community charge 92w
Armed forces housing, Shoeburyness 504w
Armed forces married quarters, Housing construction 766w
Armed forces medical services, Hospitals 98-9w
Armed forces officers 90w
Armed forces officers, Community charge 501w
Armed forces pay 853
Armed forces retirement, Educational qualifications 91w
Armed forces retirement, Training 101w
Armed forces training 93-4w
Armed forces training, Cambodia 100w
Armed forces training, Disclosure of information 92w
Armed forces training, Licensing 503w
Armed forces training, Thailand 90w, 286w
Arms control, NATO ministerial meetings 498w

***Hamilton, Mr Archie**—continued*
Army 494w
Battle of Britain 85w
Bomb disposal, Germany 504w
CFE talks 499w
CFE talks, Civil service manpower 499w
CFE talks, Defence review 862-3
Chemical weapons, Army stores 262-3w
Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry 88w
Defence equipment, Modernisation 863
Defence land, Blood sports 504w
Defence land, Land acquisition 506w
Defence review 91w, 499w, 626w
Ely RAF Hospital 503w
Ely RAF Hospital, Construction 90w
Explosives, Cambodia 88w
Explosives, Defence research 411w
Exservicemen, Cambodia 414w
Greenham Common, Nuclear weapons deployment 854
Greenham Common, Rights of way 854
Greenham Common, Trespass 500w
Greenwich Hospital Estates, Salmon 622w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 99w, 337w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces casualties 756w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 90w, 97-8w, 210w, 336w, 338w, 495-6w, 765w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces medical services 626w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 494-5w, 859-60
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence equipment 859-60
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, EC external relations 495w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 337w, 503w, 763w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Insurance 495w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, International cooperation 756-7w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Journalism 624w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Merchant ships 755-6w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Military aircraft 500w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Motor vehicle parts 88-9w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, NATO countries 495w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Navy 410w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Operating costs 496w
Israel 501w
Members' correspondence, Ministry of Defence 766w
Military aid, Cambodia 864
Ministry of Defence, Disclosure of information 85w
MV Atlantic Conveyor, Shipbuilding 755w
NATO, Armed forces deployment 504w
NATO ministerial meetings 500w, 503w
NATO ministerial meetings, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 501w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Middle East 410w
Nuclear weapons tests, Costs 85w, 413w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear safety 413w, 624w
Nuclear weapons tests, USA 413w
Party conferences, Security 766-7w
Polish Resettlement Act 1947, Members' correspondence 210w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Hospital beds 99-100w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Hospital patients 100w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Manpower 98w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, NHS 98w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Operating costs 98-9w
Riot control weapons, Army stores 261-2w
Royal Marine Reserve, Armed forces strength 338w
Shackleton aircraft, Air accidents 765w
SRAM-T missile, Nuclear weapons deployment 286w

***Hamilton, Mr Archie**—continued*
START talks 498w
START talks, Military balance 861
START talks, Trident missiles 860-1
Strategic nuclear weapons, Arms control negotiations 89w
Submarines, Fishing gear 412-3w
Submarines, Fishing vessels 412w
Terrorism, Crime prevention 90-1w
Tornado aircraft, Lasers 757w
Wallace, Colin, Disciplinary proceedings 506w
Warships, USA 97w

Hammersmith Hospital
Fires 525w

Hampson, Dr Keith
Questions
Child benefit 576w

Handbooks
Low flying 760w

Handicap benefits
Social security reform 575-6w

Handicapped
Access to buildings 671w, 739w
Community charge 670w
Data banks 580-1w
Jubilee line 711w
Rate rebates 663-4w, 688-9w
Rehabilitation 580w
Scotland 175w
Telecommunications technology 778w

Handicapped children
Mobility allowance 670w
Rookwood Hospital 663-4w

Handicapped students
Deaf 579-80w
Higher education 377w
Multiply handicapped 377w
Social security benefits 579-80w

Handynet
580-1w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 60-8
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 452
Noise control (31:10:90) 1025-6
Questions
Bomb disposal, Germany 504w
EC Budget Council 492-3w
Motor vehicle testing 64w
Next steps initiative 724
Official Report, Price increases 572w
Road accidents, Research 189w
Road accidents, Young people 188-9w, 325w
School admission, Judgments 159w
Toll bridges 190w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
Access to buildings, Handicapped 671w, 739w
Disability working allowance, Social security benefits rules 223w
Fire regulations 739w
Handicapped, Community charge 670w
Jubilee line, Handicapped 711w
Medical profession, Training 404-5w
Mobility of disabled, Public transport 62w

Hard core unemployed
Economic regions 425w
Employment services 630-1w
Scotland 175w

Hardie, Keir
536w

Hardy, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 789-90, 804 (30:10:90) 906, 915-6, 917, 939-40

***Hardy, Mr Peter**—continued*
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1005
Parking offences, Fixed penalties (30:10:90) 948-55, 957, 958-9
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 122, 125
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Public order offences 445-6w
Balance of trade 297w
Dog fighting, Convictions 348w
Dolphins, Moray Firth 724w
Education & industry, Educational finance 183
Electoral register, Costs 733w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 363w
Exports 607w
Teachers, Recruitment 149w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Nature conservation 344w

Hargreaves, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 377, 388
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 344

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Questions
Grant maintained schools, Voting methods 138w
Scargill, Arthur, fraud 741-2w

Haringey
Education 160-1w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Debates etc.
Compensation for Medical Injury Bill, 1R (25:10:90) 518
Questions
Business statements 512-3
Teachers, Vacancies 160w

Harmondsworth Detention Centre
Public appointments 128-9w

Harmondsworth Visiting Committee
128-9w

Harmonisation of standards
Energy conservation 270-1w
Retail price index 494w

Harrier aircraft
761w

Harrogate Borough Council
Standard spending assessments 692w
Tourism 692w

Hartlepool Health Authority
680w

Haselhurst, Mr Alan
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 889
Princess Alexandra Hospital, Capital investment (23:10:90) 309
Questions
Intergovernmental conference, EC integration 327
Teachers, Recruitment 149w

Haslar Young Offenders' Institution
Political refugees 118w
Prison population 118w

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 525-31, 539, 563-4

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 733
Princess Alexandra Hospital, Capital investment (23:10:90) 307-11
Questions
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community, Sterling 867-8

Hayes, Mr Jerry—*continued*
Profitability, Companies 296w

Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Questions
M4, Consultants 459-60w

Haynes, Mr Frank
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 497w
Balance of trade, OECD countries 603w
Primary education, Educational assessment 161w
Regional arts associations 397w

Haystacks
Agricultural safety 633-4w

Hayward, Mr Robert
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Postal services 695w
Profitability, Companies 296w

Hazardous wastes
Advisory services 51w
Chemical weapons 757w
Competition 766w
EC law 227w
Italy 227w
Karin B 227w
Printing industry 324w
Rechem International 186-7w
Rhymney Valley 716
Safety 766w

Heads of State
Prime Minister 352w

Headteachers
Men 376w
Resignations 376-7w
Telford City Technology College 193w
Women 376w

Heal, Mrs Sylvia
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 361
Questions
Access funds, Mature students 162w
Alternatives to prison, Women 731w
Association of British Chambers of Commerce, Economic situation 502

Health
Prisoners 449w

Health & Safety at Work Etc Act 1974
Questions
383w, 628w, 755w

Health & Safety Executive
45w, 111w, 339w, 383w, 511w, 627-8w, 753-5w

Health centres
Property transfer 34w

Health education
AIDS 322-3

Health Education Authority
408-9w

Health hazards
Campylobacter 688w
Dried milk 209w
Giant hogweed 213w
Sanitation 191w

Health insurance
Scotland 720w

Health physics
HMS Renown 411w
Ministry of Defence 500w
Nuclear submarines 411w, 508w
Radioactive fallout 15w
Submarines 508w

Health service ancillary staff
Contracts for services 168w
Scotland 168w

Health service staff
Early retirement 682-3w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis 683-4w

Health service staff—*continued*
Personnel management 399w

Health services
Public expenditure 681w

Health warnings
Paracetamol 108w
Vitamin A 36w

Heart diseases
Elderly 709
Intensive care 592w
Medical treatments 34w
Scotland 327w
Scottish health boards 592w
Surgery 592w

Heath, Edward
(24:10:90) 335-47, 498-9

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David,
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of the Environment
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 791-3, 795-800, 805, 807, 823-4, 838-9, 840-1, (30:10:90) 900-2
Noise control (31:10:90) 1073-7
Questions
Big Ben, Repairs & maintenance 268w
Bradford City Council, Government grants to local authorities 535w
Campylobacter, Health hazards 688w
Coastal protection, Nature conservation 38w
Council of Europe, Environment 690w
Dolphins, Death 268w
Drinking Water Inspectorate, Northern region 325w
Environment, Companies 691w
Ground water, EC law 538w
Hazardous wastes, EC law 227w
Hazardous wastes, Italy 227w
Karin B, Hazardous wastes 227w
Land pollution, Acids 45w
Lilley Group 527w
Limehouse link, Construction costs 528-9w
Local authorities, Access to buildings 343w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Budgeting 529-30w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Community development 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Contracts 527w, 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Government grants 530w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Housing 527-8w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Housing improvement 528-9w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Land acquisition 528w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Property development 527w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Resignations 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Roads 529w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Tower Hamlets 528w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Transport policy 528w
National Rivers Authority, Algae 344w
Palace of Westminster, Asbestos 45w
Palace of Westminster, Carpets 41w
Palace of Westminster, Operating costs 688w
Parliamentary building maintenance & repair, Art works 536w
Planning authorities, Access to buildings 343-4w
Pollution control, Upper Waiting Hall 232w
Property development, Bradford 535w
Property Services Agency, Air force bases 346w
Radioactive waste disposal, Sea pollution 343w

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David—*continued*
Radioactive wastes 467-8w
Recycling, Conferences 41w
Recycling, EC countries 40w
River Rother, River pollution 687-8w
Skillcentres, Building industry 532w
3D, City grants 235w
Urban development corporations 690w
Urban development corporations, Codes of practice 531-2w
Urban development corporations, Conferences 531w
Waste disposal, Conferences 235w
Waste disposal, Leicester 233-4w
Waste Management 235w
Water meters, Water charges 468w
Water pollution, Bristol Channel 690-1w
Water treatment, Printing industry 269w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Nature conservation 344w
Yorkshire Water, Nitrates 545w

Heathrow Airport
446w

Hedges & ditches
Northern region 650w

HELIOS programme
580-1w

Henderson, Mr Doug
Debates etc.
Landlord & Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 39-40, 44
Questions
Engineering industries, Industrial production 978
Nursery schools, School population 158-9w

Herons
Pest control 473w
Scotland 473w

Hertford
679w

Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Saudi Arabia 186

Heterosexuality
322-3, 555w
AIDS 323

Heyhoe Committee
see Colin Wallace Dismissal from Civil Service Inquiry

Hicks, Mrs Maureen
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1009
Noise control (31:10:90) 1034, 1043-8, 1054
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 366
Questions
City technology colleges, Schools & parents 156w
Examinations, Primary education 177-8
Maintenance, Fathers 500
Police Complaints Authority, Public appointments 186w
Supervision & Punishment in the Community Consultation Paper 728w

Hicks, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 886
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 382
Questions
Devonport dockyard, Defence contracts 502-3w
Hill farming, Agricultural subsidies 499-500

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 878
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 241-4
Questions
Local authority powers, Water sports 260w
M1, Road accidents 511w

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L—continued
Motorways, Road traffic control 512w

High Court
Judges 353w

High technology
Government assistance to industry 976

High Wycombe
679w

Higher civil servants
Political doctrines 726

Higher education
Handicapped students 377w
Student numbers 166w

Higher education corporations
Finance 673-4w
Manpower 673-4w

Higher education teachers
Educational finance 184
Overseas workers 676-8w
Resignations 676-8w

Highland Regional Council
213w

Highlands & Islands Enterprise
593-4w, 725w

Highway code
64w

Hill, Mr James
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 342
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Finance 972
Mobility of disabled, Public transport 62w
Road traffic, Southampton 9-10

Hill farming
Agricultural subsidies 499-501

Hill livestock allowances
394w
EC law 647-8w

Hillsborough Stadium Inquiry
450-1w

Hinchliffe, Mr David
Questions
Disabled facilities grants, Earnings rules 182w
Income support, Social security benefits rules 76w
Income tax, Tax burden 295w
Mining, Engineering industries 608w
Ministry of Defence, Health physics 500w
Prison staff, Manpower 733w
Prison staff, Prison population 17w
Prison staff, Yorkshire & Humberside 18w
Prisons, Per capita costs 17-8w
Residential care, Income support 500
Wakefield Health Authority, Public appointments 33-4w
Wakefield Prison, Industrial disputes 18w
Wakefield Prison, Prison staff 18w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 555-7
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1008
Questions
Business statements 509
Bypasses, Consultants 458w
European fighter aircraft 410w
Local education authorities, Budgeting 140-50w
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 296-7w
Rights of accused, Police interrogation 729w
South Africa, Violence 331-2
Urban railways, Manchester 60w
USSR, International aid from international bodies 220w

Hip replacements
Hospital waiting lists 333w
NHS & private practice 333w
Northern Ireland 332-4w

Historic buildings
465w
Building repairs 360w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 465-6w
Local government expenditure 323w

Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England
346-7w, 470-1w
Government grants 236w
Historic buildings 465-6w
Relocation of employees 236w

Historical Monuments of England Royal Commission
470w

History
South Yorkshire Residuary Body 537w
West Yorkshire Residuary Body 537w

History education
Curriculum 4w

HIV infection
19-20w, 29w, 408-9w
Pregnant women 443w
Wirral Health Authority 409w

HM Inspectorate of Pollution
233-4w, 324w, 589-90w
Annual reports 230w

HM Inspectorate of Prisons
120w

HMS Churchill
411w, 765-6w

HMS Conqueror
765-6w

HMS Renown
Health physics 411w

HMS Vulcan
Nuclear reactors 757w

HMS Warspite
765-6w

Hoey, Miss Kate
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 815-6
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1008
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 429-32
Questions
Israel, Occupied territories 329
Post Office, Investment 614w

Hogg, Mr Douglas, Minister of State for Industry
Debates etc.
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 448
Questions
Audio recordings, Prices 775w
Balance of trade, Information technology 605w
Bicycles, Imports 772-4w
British Shipbuilders, Property transfer 595-6w
"British Shipbuilders Annual Report & Accounts, 1989/90" 51w
British Telecom 604w
Computer industry 769w
Computer Misuse Act 1990, Prosecutions 598w
Confederation of British Industry, Honours 615w
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 329w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Government department reorganisation 602w
EC Industry Council 132-3w

Hogg, Mr Douglas—continued
EC Industry Council, Government assistance to industry 769w
EC Industry Council, Iron & steel industry 769-70w
EC regional policy 131w, 602-3w
Education & industry, Government assistance to industry 435-6w
Engineering industries 612w
Engineering industries, Foreign investment in UK 598-9w, 977
Engineering industries, Industrial production 596w, 977-8
Enterprise initiative 434w
Footwear industry, Government assistance to industry 614-5w
Foreign investment in UK, South East region 436-8w
Government assistance to industry, EC action 434w
Greenall Whitley, Factory closures 129w
Import penetration 430w
Industrial development, ERM 329w
Industrial research, Government assistance to industry 434-5w
Information technology 129w, 605w
Information technology, Balance of trade 984-5
Information technology, Semiconductor devices 985
Iron & steel industry 132w
Link programme 596w
Location of industry, North Devon 597w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 596w, 600-1w, 974-5
Manufacturing industries, Industrial research 601w
Manufacturing industries, North East region 975
Mining, Engineering industries 608w
Motor industry, Ministers' domestic visits 613w
Productivity, Pay 975
Raleigh Industries, Manufactured imports 975
Regional aid, EC grants & loans 132-3w
Regional aid, Economic regions 430-2w
Regional planning & development 603w
Retail trade, Economic situation 330w
Science parks, Educational institutions 615w
Shipbuilding, EC law 614w
Shipbuilding, Trade competitiveness 597w
Small businesses, Industrial production 980
Small businesses, Industrial research 601-2w
Small businesses, Innovation 603-4w
Small businesses, Interest rates 980
Small businesses, Product development 979-80
Small businesses, Technology transfer 980
Telecommunications technology, Handicapped 778w
Textile industry 131w
Textile industry, EC industrial policy 605w
Trade, Public expenditure 772w

Hogg, Mr Norman
Questions
Balance of trade 597w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 219-20w

Holm School Orkney
Self-governing schools 725w

Holocaust News
Criminal investigation 348w
Prosecutions 12w

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 30, 33-4, 37, 38
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1010
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 748, 749
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 107, 110-2, 125, 130, 142, 145, 146, 147
Unparliamentary expressions (30:10:90) 892
Questions
BBC 730w

Holt, Mr Richard*—*continued
Child abuse, Cleveland 680-1w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Defence 725-6
Hospital beds, Northern Regional Health Authority 681w
Investment, EC countries 298w
Iron & steel industry, Subsidies 971
New Parliamentary building, Parliamentary security 18
Railway freight transport 509w
Teachers, Pay 155w

Home accident surveillance system
330w

Home births
Childbirth 108w
Nurses' training 108-9w

Home Office
274w
Complaints against central government 255-6w
Day care of children 252-3w
Members' correspondence 741w
Secrecy 687w, 742w
Women's employment 314w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Questions
Defence Export Services Organisation 496w
HMS Churchill 411w
Israel, Peace negotiations 219w
Nuclear submarines, Decommissioning 765-6w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 866

Homelessness
235w, (31:10:90) 1020-2
British residents abroad 468w
Cheshire 343w
Codes of practice 342-3w
Congleton 322w
Leeds 46-7w
Scotland 711-2w
Wales 550w

Homicide
Convictions 727w

Homosexuality
Age of consent 555w

Hong Kong
British citizenship (23:10:90) 292-306
China 219w
Citizenship of the British dependent territories 695w
Civil service pensions 672w
Ivory 567-8w
Population 695w
Prosecutions 566w

Honours
Confederation of British Industry 615w

Hood, Mr Jimmy
Questions
British Steel Corporation 596w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Iraq 857

Hordern, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 222-4
Questions
National Audit Office, Pay 15
Public Accounts Commission 15
Select Committees, Disclosure of information 15

Horse Committee
see Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 Review

Horse riding
Road safety 63w

Horserace Totalisator Board
Privatisation 351w

Horses
EC internal trade 422w
Export controls 422w

Hospices
Government grants 29w
Wales 29w

Hospital admissions
Mental hospitals 662w, 664w, 683-6w, 723w

Hospital beds
District health authorities 289w
Intensive care 26w, 102w
Northern Regional Health Authority 681w
Private hospitals 717w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 99-100w
Scottish health boards 713-6w
West Midlands Regional Health Authority 524w

Hospital closures
35w
Scotland 474-6w
South Glamorgan Health Authority 718-9

Hospital consultants
Kidney patients 334w
Kidneys 445w
Merit awards 526w
Northern Ireland 334w
Surgery 101w
Trent Regional Health Authority 526w
Wales 101w

Hospital patients
680w
Children 398-9w
Giant hogweed 35w, 74w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 100w

Hospital waiting lists
Ear nose & throat 102w
Eye disorders 265w
Hip replacements 333w
Hull Health Authority 409-10w
Leicestershire 442-3w
Mid Glamorgan Health Authority 710
Orthopaedics 409-10w
Surgery 102w
Wales 102w, 714-5

Hospitals
273w
Armed forces medical services 98-9w
Radioactive waste disposal 101w
Sewage 27w
Wales 358w, 715

Hostages
Armed forces 337w, 503w, 763w
Iraq (24:10:90) 476-84
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 337w, 389-90w, 455-6w, 481w, 498-9, 503w, 695w, 763w, 867
Lebanon 58w
Social security benefits 481w

Hostels
Finance 35w
Government grants 480w
Income support 76w
Residential care 75-6w
Social security benefits 76w
Social security benefits uprating 76w
Social security payments 75-6w

House of Commons broadcasting
Offices 641-2w

House of Commons debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 619

House of Commons galleries
(24:10:90) 420-1

House of Commons motions
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:10:90) 375

House of Commons procedure
EC law (24:10:90) 375-401
Oral questions (24:10:90) 375-401
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 109-10, (24:10:90) 402, 403, (30:10:90) 946

House of Commons (Services) Select Committee
641-2w

House of Commons staff
New Parliamentary building 17-8

House of Commons standing orders
Private Bills (24:10:90) 315-7

House of Commons stationery
12w
Recycling 19-20

House of Fraser
Solicitors 201w

House prices
488

House purchase
Tax allowances 492w

Households
Community charge 689w
Income 366w
Tax burden 651-2w

Housing
London Docklands Development Corporation 527-8w
Prison staff 448w
Public expenditure 654w
Set-aside schemes 647w
Wales 356w

Housing action trusts
Expenditure 546-7w

Housing & Building Control Act 1984
Questions
533-4w

Housing & handicapped
John Groom's Housing Association 39w

Housing association grant
Scotland 720-1w

Housing associations
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90 449w
Community care 724w
Housing starts 344w

Housing benefits
Council tenants 576-8w
Government grants to local authorities 43w, 76-7w
Refuges 480-1w
Residential care 366-7w
Students 579w

Housing Choice
647w

Housing completions
Council housing 289w

Housing construction
Armed forces married quarters 766w
Council housing finance 659w
Wales 659w
Wheelchair housing 233-4w

Housing Corporation
170w, 467w
Budgeting 532-3w

Housing estates
Southwark 528-9w

Housing finance
Suffolk 532-3w

Housing for Wales
Local authorities 659w

Housing (Grants for Fire Escapes in Houses in Multiple Occupation) (Prescribed Percentage) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(26:10:90) 638

Housing improvement
Housing standards 234w
Liverpool City Council 469w
London Docklands Development Corporation 528-9w

Housing investment programmes
Congleton 345w

Housing revenue accounts
717-8w
Housing subsidies 44-5w, 291-2w
Wales 291-2w

Housing standards
Housing improvement 234w
Scotland 721w

Housing starts
Housing associations 344w
Local authorities 659w
Public sector housing 344w
Wales 659w

Housing subsidies
Housing revenue accounts 44-5w, 291-2w

Housing support grants
Scotland 717-8w

Hovercraft
Shipping safety (25:10:90) 619

Hovercraft (Application of Enactments) (Amendment) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(25:10:90) 619

***Howard, Rt Hon Michael**, Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Hard core unemployed, Employment services 630-1w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Employment 754w

Howard Humphreys & Partners
459-60w

***Howarth, Mr Alan**, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Questions
Access funds, Mature students 162w
Access funds, Students 167w
Adult education, Unemployed 674w
Advisory Board for the Research Councils, Public appointments 375-6w
Advisory Board for the Research Councils, Science & technology 159w
Agricultural research, Civil service manpower 676w
Agricultural research, Scientists 280w, 675-6w
Education, Public expenditure 677w
Educational aid, Iraq 371-2w
Educational finance, EC countries 370-1w
Educational finance, Scotland 149-50w
Educational institutions, Access to buildings 162w
Educational psychology, Student numbers 679w
ERASMUS, Student numbers 159-60w
Glynn Research Institute, Science & technology research 372w
Greenhouse effect, Nitrous oxide 2w
Handicapped students, Higher education 377w
Higher education, Student numbers 166w
Higher education corporations, Manpower 673-4w
Higher education teachers, Resignations 676-8w
Medical Research Council, AIDS 161w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Education & Science 679-80w
Polytechnics, Student numbers 673w
Research councils, Public appointments 372-6w
Research councils, Research finance 158w
Science & technology, Peace 517w
Special education, Multiply handicapped 377w
Student accommodation 156w
Student loans 157w
Student loans, Access funds 157w
Student loans, Publicity 179-80
Student loans, Student numbers 179-80
Student loans, University finance 178-9
Student numbers, Scotland 181-2
Students 185

***Howarth, Mr Alan**—continued*
Students, Community charge 182-3

Howarth, Mr George
Questions
Mentally ill, Women 265-6w

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 530, 538, 561-3
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 346-7
Questions
Birmingham relief road, Contracts 62w
Profitability, Companies 568w

Howe, Geoffrey
864-5
European Communities 865

***Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons*
Debates etc.
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 375-9, 388-9
Questions
Business statements 503-18
European Parliament, Members' visits abroad 582w
House of Commons broadcasting, Offices 641-2w
House of Commons stationery 12w
House of Commons stationery, Recycling 19-20
Members' allowances, Bicycles 16-7
Members' facilities, Telephones 641-2w
Members' interests 18-9
Members' pay, West Germany 581w
Members' staff, Overtime 644w
Ministerial statements, Government departments 642w
New Parliamentary building, House of Commons staff 17-8
New Parliamentary building, Members' facilities 17
New Parliamentary building, Parliamentary security 18
Parliamentary questions, Civil service agencies 581-2w
Sharpe Pritchard, Private Bills 642-4w
Written questions, Costs 641w

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Child benefit 489

Howells, Mr Geraint
Questions
Agriculture, Wales 357w
Teachers, Vacancies 160w

Howells, Dr Kim
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 468-70
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 19-20w
Coal gasification, Research finance 12-3w
Defence land, Blood sports 504w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 263w
Flue gas desulphurisation 116w
Grant maintained schools, Wales 28w, 356w
Heart diseases, Elderly 709
Heart diseases, Medical treatments 34w
Import penetration 595w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Offshore drilling 116w
Kleinwort Benson, Privatisation 105-6w
London Underground, Finance 96w
NATO, West Germany 215w
Remand in custody 737w
Shareholders 132w
Smoke & chimney gases, EC law 235-6w
South America 24w
Training & enterprise councils, Finance 115w

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Questions
Grand Metropolitan, Elders IXL 52w, 770w
Israel, Foreign policy 221w

***Hoyle, Mr Doug**—continued*
Link programme 596w
Overseas trade 973
Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation, Re-employment 688w

Hughes, David
56w

Hughes, Mr John
Questions
Armed forces officers, Community charge 501w
Balance of trade, OECD countries 603w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Questions
Financial services, Investor protection 608w
Piper Alpha Inquiry 15w
South Africa, Foreign policy 332
Student loans, Access funds 157w
VAT zero rated goods, Charities 8w

Hughes, Mr Robert G
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1001
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 428-9, 445, 451-5
Questions
Disposable income 298w
Docklands light railway, Privatisation 61w
Examinations, Primary education 176-7

Hughes, Mr Roy
Questions
Balance of trade 569-70w
Hospitals, Wales 715
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Costs 855
Lorries, Gwent 25w
Railway stations, Gwent 356w

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 761, 768-70, 774-5, 776, 779-80, 782, 786-8, 799-800, 806-8, 809, 810, 830-1, 833, 839, (30:10:90) 924-5, 936-7, 944, 945-6
Immigration applications, Members (22:10:90) 21
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 435-8
Noise control (31:10:90) 1071-2
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Wastes 136-7w
Business statements 504-5
City technology colleges, School admission 514-5w
City technology colleges, Southwark 515w
Electricity generation, Alternative energy 520w
Electricity generation, OECD countries 520w
Environment protection, Conferences 38w
Gardens, Devon County Council 535w
Jubilee line, Railway stations 95w
Land pollution, Acids 45w
Local authority powers, Planning permission 536w
London Underground, Investment 7-8
Palace of Westminster, Asbestos 45w
Pesticide residues, Prosecutions 649-50w
Planning permission 536w
Police, Party conferences 741w
Radiation hazards, Medical research 36w
Sea pollution, Chemical weapons 82w
Slaughterhouses, Sewage 46w
Teachers, Vacancies 149w
"Transport of Delight" 704w

Hull Health Authority
Hospital waiting lists 409-10w

Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Human rights
Argentina 263w
India 216w, 699-700w

Human rights—continued
Iraq 217w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 700w
Middle East 700w
Romania 322
Sri Lanka 383-4w
Turkey 387w

Humberside
Local government constituencies 182w

Hume, Mr John
Questions
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 333w
Hip replacements, NHS & private practice 333w
Hip replacements, Northern Ireland 332-4w

Hunt, Rt Hon David, Secretary of State for Wales
Questions
Agricultural subsidies 711-2
Agricultural subsidies, Small farms 712
Agriculture, Wales 357w
Animal husbandry, Wales 711
British Urban Development, Swansea 291w
Cars, Local authorities 288w
Coastal protection, Towyn 355-6w
Community charge capping, Wales 549-50w
Complaints against central government, Welsh Office 290w
Development Board for Rural Wales 717
Employment, Wales 356w
European Commission, Sheep 355w
European Regional Development Fund, Wales 27w
Factories, Empty property 717
Farmers, Personal income 288w
Farmers' Union of Wales, Sheep 355w
Financial services, Employment opportunities 718
Foreign investment in UK, Cynon Valley 713
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 357w, 712-4
Hazardous wastes, Rhymney Valley 716
Local government finance, Wales 549w
Public expenditure, Wales 660w
Standard community charge, Community charge 550w
Telephone services, Wales 719
Welsh Development Agency 716

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Contracts for services 497-8w
Export licensing, Computers 610w
Germany 215w

Hunterston B
115-6w

Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc.
Middle East, Ministerial statements (24:10:90) 335-47
Questions
EC Foreign Affairs Council 218-9w
European Economic Community, GATT 319
European Security Conference, National territory 699w
Intergovernmental conference, EC integration 326-7
Intergovernmental conference, Economic & monetary union 327
Israel 319-20
Israel, Arab boycott 320-1
Israel, Armed forces deployment 321
Lebanon 320
NATO 318
NATO, Nuclear weapons 319
USA, EC external relations 214w
USA, Foreign relations 318
USA, IRA 318-9

Hussein, Saddam
(24:10:90) 335-47

Hydroelectric power
Aid financed trade 198w
Malaysia 24-5w, 199w, 671-2w

I Spy Strangers
(24:10:90) 420-1

ICI
188

Illsley, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 406-7, 411-2, 414
Questions
Export licensing, Administrative delays 599-600w

Immigrants
Children 446w
Ethiopia 446w

Immigration
Administrative delays 260-2w
Political refugees 452w

Immigration & Nationality Division
123w, 556-7w

Immigration applications
Administrative delays 452w
Political refugees 451-2w
Somalia 556w

Immigration officers
Criminal investigation 123w

Impact Foundation
265w

Import controls
Bees 631w
Giant hogweed 240w

Import duties
Australia 199w
Spirits 199w

Import of live animals
Birds 613w

Import penetration
430w, 595w

Imports
Bicycles 772-4w
Electricity 14w
Radioactive wastes 458-9w

Incinerators
Livestock 306w

Income
300w
BBC 555w
Households 366w
Prescription charges 682w, 723-4w

Income Generation Unit
see NHS Income Generation Unit

Income-Related Benefits Amendment Regulations 1990
Questions
579-80w

Income support
Availability for work 575w, 663-6w
Children 576w
Earnings rules 667w
Fine defaulters 738w
Hostels 76w
Pupils 480w
Residential care 500
Scotland 575-6w
Social security benefits reductions 668w
Social security benefits rules 76w
Social security claims 575w, 663-6w
Social security payments 75w
Transitional arrangements 668w

Income tax
Community charge 653w
European Commission of Human Rights (25:10:90) 619

Income tax—continued
European Court of Human Rights (25:10:90) 619
Families 490-1
Local government finance 652w
Tax avoidance 490
Tax burden 295w, 489-90
Tax reform 294-5w
Tax yields 295w, 490

Income tax assessment
Departmental forms 654w

Incontinence aids
NHS charges 32w

Independent Living Fund
(24:10:90) 348-66
Social security benefits rules 283w

Independent Television Commission
(25:10:90) 518-619

Index linking
Retirement pensions 285w

India
Development aid 568w
Foreign relations 216w
Human rights 216w, 699-700w
Punjab 699w

Indian subcontinent
Entry clearances 54-5w

Indonesia
Nuclear non proliferation 655w

Induction loops
Easington 681w
Public buildings 681w

Industrial accidents
Channel tunnel 627-8w
Employment training 745w
Industrial health & safety 753w
Offshore structures 440-1w
Youth training scheme 1w

Industrial development
ERM 329w

Industrial disablement benefits
Northern region 481w
Scotland 670w

Industrial diseases benefits
Blackpool 78-9w

Industrial disputes
Wakefield Prison 18w

Industrial health & safety
755w
Channel tunnel 426w
Chemical industries 50w
Employment training 745w
Industrial accidents 753w
Legionnaires' disease 383w
Sellafield 753-4w
Training 753w

Industrial investment
298w, 360-2w, 497-8

Industrial policy
975-6

Industrial production
361-2w
Engineering industries 596w, 977-8
Manufacturing industries 486, 596w, 600-1w, 974-5
Scotland 583w
Small businesses 980
Statistics 296w

Industrial research
Expenditure 983-4
Government assistance to industry 434-5w
Information technology 984-5
Manufacturing industries 601w
Research finance 984
Small businesses 601-2w

Industrial safety
Transport of hazardous materials 629w

Industrial training
Germany 978-9
Manufacturing industries 486-7

Industrial wastes
Cleveland Fuels 477-8w
Confederation of British Industry 779w
Recycling 609-10w
River pollution 530w

Industry
Environment protection 981-2
ERM 614w
National Economic Development Council 601w
Public expenditure 772w

Inflation
7w, 292-4w, 492-3, 496
EC countries 293w, 495
ERM 293w
Interest rates 493, 496-7
Money supply 493
Pay settlements 111w
Public lending right 652w

Information
Airmisses 244w
Company registration 131w
Road works 707w
Shareholders 777w

Information services
Energy conservation 272w

Information technology
129w, 605w
Balance of trade 239w, 605w, 984-5
Defence contracts 506w
Industrial research 984-5
Semiconductor devices 985

Infrastructure
London Docklands Development Corporation 320w
North West region 187-8

Ingram, Mr Adam
Questions
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 601w

Initial teacher training
367-9w

Inland Revenue
484w, 654w
Tax evasion 7-8w

Inner London boroughs
Education 151w

Innovation
Small businesses 603-4w

Inquiries
MV Derbyshire 96w, 249w, 317w
Robbery 559w
Sheffield Development Corporation 227-8w, 469w

Insider trading
EC law 381w
Prosecutions 381w

Insolvency
Audit 328w

Insolvency practitioners
779-80w
Codes of practice 432-3w

Insolvency Service
432-3w

Institute of Animal Health
280w, 676w

Institute of Animal Physiology & Genetics
280w, 676w

Institute of Arable Crops Research
280w, 676w

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales
200-1w
Professional qualifications 433-4w

Institute of Engineering Research
280w, 676w

Institute of Food Research
280w, 676w

Institute of Grassland & Environmental Research
280w, 676w

Institute of Horticultural Research
280w, 676w

Institute of Plant Science Research
280w, 676w

Institute of Wastes Management
41w

Institution of Civil Engineers
232w

Institution of Professionals Managers & Specialists
421w

Insurance
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 495w
Light aircraft 459w

Insurance companies
EC internal trade 613w

Integrated pollution control
233w, (29:10:90) 752-841

Integrated schools
559-60w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland 637-8w

Intensive care
Heart diseases 592w
Hospital beds 26w, 102w
Wales 26w, 102w

Interest rates
292w
Bankruptcy 494
Building Societies Association 496-7
Confederation of British Industry 292w
Inflation 493, 496-7
Small businesses 980
Unemployment 296w, 494-5
West Germany 292w

Intergovernmental conference
217w, 273w, 295w, (30:10:90) 869-91
EC integration 326-7, 564w
Economic & monetary union 327
Germany 324

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
538-40w

Interim Advisory Committee on School Teachers' Pay
3w, 173-4

Interim development orders
42w

Interim Licensing Authority
32-3w

International Aeradio
406w

International aid from international bodies
Sri Lanka 383-4w
USSR 220w

International Atomic Energy Agency
13-4w, 57w, 655w, 696w
Nuclear safety 115-6w

International Bank for Reconstruction & Development
see World Bank

International Business Communications
17w,41w

International conferences
Antarctic 696-7w
CAB International 23-4w
Craft industries 112w
Developing countries 358-9w
European Security Conference 328
Greenhouse effect 531w, 690w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 110w, 562w
Nuclear test ban 387w, 639-40w

International cooperation
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 756-7w, 856
Nuclear non proliferation 561-2w
Over-the-horizon radar 286w, 622w
Police 336w
Postage stamps 775w

International Monetary Fund
10w
Manufactured exports 6w

International Stock Exchange of the UK & Republic of Ireland
see Stock Exchange

International trade
Iraq 47-8w

Intervention stocks
310w, 634w
Beef 133w
Exports 310w, 423w
Greater London 81w

Invalid care allowances
Judgments 75w

Invalidity benefits
Earnings rules 284w

Inventions
Aids for handicapped 403w

Inverclyde
721w

Inverness District Council
213w

Investment
493-4
Air traffic control 64w
British Rail 69w
Consumption 300w
EC countries 298w
London Transport 62w
London Underground 7-8
Post Office 614w
Railway network 4
Transport 63w

Investment trusts
300w

Investor protection
Audit 328w
Financial services 131-2w, 607-8w, 612w

Invisible exports
Trade barriers 973

Invisible trade balance
303w

IRA
(24:10:90) 367-74
Bombings 560w
USA 318-9

Iraq
(24:10:90) 335-47
Arms exports 86-8w, 412w, 983
Arms trade 48w, 239-40w, 606w, 615-6w, 779w
Bank of England 8w
Brazil 564w
British residents abroad 468w, 667w
Chile 56w
China 55w, 389w
Contracts 982-3
EC external trade 48w
Economic sanctions 303-4w, 387w, 518w, 608-9w

***Iraq**—continued*
Educational aid 371-2w
Export controls 385w
Exports 204w
Foreign loans 8w
Germany 55-6w, 563w
Hostages (24:10:90) 476-84
Human rights 217w
International trade 47-8w
Israel 265w
Nuclear physics 563w
Nuclear power 563w
Nuclear reactors 563-4w
Nuclear weapons deployment 857
Occupied territories 695w
Ordnance Technology 609w
Saudi Arabia 563w
Spain 387w
Technology transfer 563w
Uranium 564w

Iraq-Kuwait conflict
99w, 110w, (24:10:90) 335-47, 337w, 386w, 476-84, 502-3w, 697-9w, (30:10:90) 869-91
Armed conflict 287w
Armed forces casualties 526w, 686w, 756w, 856-7, 863-4
Armed forces deployment 90w, 97-8w, 210w, 336w, 338w, 362-3w, 495-6w, 765w, 858
Armed forces medical services 626w
Armed forces pay 494-5w, 859-60
Armoured fighting vehicles 421w
BBC 556w
British nationality 455-6w
Broadcasting 456w
Contracts 983
Costs 495w, 855
Defence equipment 859-60, 864
Defence expenditure 856
Defence industries 85-6w
Departmental publications 566w
EC external relations 495w
Economic sanctions 48-9w, 55-6w, 330, 389w, 855
Hostages 337w, 389-90w, 455-6w, 481w, 498-9, 503w, 695w, 763w, 867
Human rights 700w
Insurance 495w
International cooperation 756-7w, 856
Journalism 624w
Merchant ships 755-6w
Military aircraft 500w
Motor vehicle parts 88-9w
MV Atlantic Conveyor 755w
National Peace Council 353w
NATO 855
NATO countries 495w
Navy 410w
Offshore drilling 116w
Oil prices 136w
Operating costs 496w
Postal services 695w
Saudi Arabia 186
Standing Order No 20 applications (29:10:90) 750
UN General Assembly 222w
USA 263w

Iron & steel industry
132w, 596w, 970
Clydesdale 970
EC Industry Council 769-70w
Factory closures 971
Location of industry 970
Subsidies 971

Irradiated food
634w

Irradiation
EC action 634w

Irvine, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1040, 1064-7

Islam
Religious persons 265w

Isle of Harris
765w

Isle of Wight
Disaster relief 693w

Israel
319-20, 501w
Arab boycott 320-1, 329-30w
Armed forces deployment 321
Economic sanctions 338w
Foreign policy 221w
Iraq 265w
Ministers' visits abroad 264-5w, 563w
Occupied territories 328-9
Peace negotiations 219w

Italy
Hazardous wastes 227w

Ivory
566w
Hong Kong 567-8w

***Jack, Mr Michael**, Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Agriculture, Manpower 425w
Astra Training Services, Freehold land 629-30w
Average earnings 743-4w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Employment 627w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Employment 281-2w
Disabled workers, Aids for handicapped 427w
Disabled workers, Multiply handicapped 427w
Duty free shops 1w
Employment training 745w, 750w
Employment training, Community programme 630w
Employment training, Finance 745w
Employment training, Industrial accidents 745w
Employment training, Skill shortages 745w
Employment training, Take-up 745w
Employment training, Take-up of employment 751-2w
Footwear industry, Manpower 427-8w
Hard core unemployed, Economic regions 425w
Industrial health & safety, Training 753w
Local enterprise agencies, Ealing 237-8w
Manufacturing industries, Employment level 425w
Older workers, Employment discrimination 754w
Pay settlements, Inflation 111w
Profile Training, Finance 629w
Sheltered placement scheme, Scotland 626-7w
Small businesses, Training & enterprise councils 426w
Take-up of employment, Advisory services 752-3w
Textile industry, Redundancy 238w, 426-7w
Training & enterprise councils, Finance 115w, 746-7w
Training & enterprise councils, Public appointments 748-50w
Training & enterprise councils, Resignations 747w
Unemployment, Lancashire 237w
Unemployment benefits, Availability for work 753w
Youth training, Contracts of employment 745-6w
Youth training, Managing agents 746w

***Jackson, Mr Robert**—continued*
Youth training, Social Security Act 1975 747-8w
Youth training, Take-up 746w
Youth training scheme, Industrial accidents 1w

Jaguar aircraft
622-3w, 761w

Janman, Mr Tim
Questions
Productivity, Japan 297w
Waste disposal, Local authorities 689w

Janner, Mr Greville
Questions
"Another Blood Libel or Ritual Murder", Criminal investigation 19w
Antisemitism, Criminal proceedings 354w
Arab boycott, Israel 329-30w
British Electricity International, Economic sanctions 338w
Business statements 506-7
Holocaust News, Criminal investigation 348w
Holocaust News, Prosecutions 12w
India, Foreign relations 216w
Israel, Arab boycott 320-1

Japan
Balance of trade 597w
British Tourist Authority 1-2w
Cars 604w, 986
EC external trade 604w
Ministers' visits abroad 969
Overseas trade 602w
Productivity 297w

Jayship
70-1w

Jessel, Mr Toby
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1031, 1037, 1041, 1054, 1056-62
Questions
Business statements 507-8
Educational standards, Outer London boroughs 162-4w
Investment, Consumption 300w
Planning permission, Greater London 37-8w
Planning permission, Twickenham 37w
Royal Military School of Music 868
Theatre, Arts finance 721

Jobclubs
630-1w

John Groom's Housing Association
Housing & handicapped 39w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Nuclear weapons deployment 857

Johnston, Sir Russell
Questions
Cambodia, EC external relations 695w
Inflation, ERM 293w
Prison sentences, Crimes of violence 168w

Joint Airmiss Working Group
248-9w

Joint Committee of Nature Conservancy Councils
(30:10:90) 895-946

Jones, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Community charge, Wales (31:10:90) 1018
Questions
Agricultural subsidies, Small farms 712
Community health councils, Wales 102w
Ear nose & throat, Hospital waiting lists 102w
Hospital consultants, Surgery 101w
Hospital waiting lists, Mid Glamorgan Health Authority 710
Hospital waiting lists, Surgery 102w

Jones, Mr Barry—continued
NHS, Building repairs 358w
Rookwood Hospital, Handicapped children 663-4w

Jones, Mr Gwilym
Questions
Community charge capping, Wales 549-50w
Financial services, Employment opportunities 718
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 715
Housing revenue accounts, Housing subsidies 291-2w
Local government finance, Wales 549w
Motor vehicle registration 510w
Standard community charge, Community charge 550w

Jones, Mr Ieuan Wyn
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 881
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 740
Questions
Agricultural marketing, EC internal trade 304w
Agricultural marketing, Exports 304-5w
Bus services, Wales 187w
Coastal areas, Surveys 181w
Council tenants, Tenant eviction 101w
European Commission, Sheep 355w
Hospices, Government grants 29w
Hospitals, Radioactive waste disposal 101w
Pornography, Research 727w
Social security benefits reductions, Community charge 232w
Water distribution 228w

Jones, Mr Martyn
Questions
CFE talks, Civil service manpower 499w
Information technology, Balance of trade 984-5

Jones, Mr Robert B
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 801
Questions
Education & industry 156-7w
Standard community charge, Orders & regulations 543-4w
Tanks, Defence procurement 766w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 340
Questions
Defence procurement, Offset arrangements 763w
Environmentally sensitive areas, Marginal land 647w
Hill livestock allowances, EC law 647-8w
Hong Kong, Population 695w
School administration, Budgeting 673w
Wave power, Energy research 439-40w

Jordan
Political prisoners 221w

Journalism
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 624w

Jubilee Gardens
(24:10:90) 426-55

Jubilee line
(24:10:90) 426-55
Handicapped 711w
Railway stations 95w

Judges
County courts 353w
High Court 353w
Manpower 353-4w

Judgment debts
278w
Judgments enforcement 278w

Judgments
Invalid care allowances 75w
School admission 159w

Judgments enforcement
Judgment debts 278w

Judiciary
Road traffic offences 509w

Junior hospital doctors
Scotland 326-7w
Working hours 31w, 326-7w

Junior Hospital Doctors' Working Hours Working Group
31w

Kario B
Hazardous wastes 227w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 337-8
Questions
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 128w
NATO, Nuclear weapons 319

Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 600, 601
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 54-5
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 774
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 205
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1004
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 741
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 357
Questions
Railway network, Lancaster 5

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Questions
Inflation 293-4w
Railway freight transport 63w

Kenya
Civil rights 215w
Political prisoners 263w

***Key, Mr Robert**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment*
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge capping 545w
Commissions for local administration, Parish councils 691w
Community charge, Beach huts 234w
Community charge, Households 689w
Community charge exemptions 230-1w
County Hall, Property transfer 687w
Disabled facilities grants, Earnings rules 182w
Disaster relief, Isle of Wight 693w
Domestic rates, Appeals 187-8w
Food standards, Government grants to local authorities 39-40w
Gardens, Devon County Council 535w
Housing Corporation, Budgeting 532-3w
Housing improvement, Liverpool City Council 469w
Housing starts, Public sector housing 344w
Leasehold housing, Greater London 467w
Local authorities, Refugees 469w
Local government constituencies, Humberside 182w
Local government expenditure, Theatres 689w
Local government functions, Camden 40-1w, 542w
London boroughs, Capital investment 322-3w
London Residuary Body, Annual reports 323w
London Residuary Body, Public appointments 323w
Non-domestic rates, Small businesses 541w
Nottingham City Council, Government grants to local authorities 465w
Parish councils 536-7w
Parish councils, Local authority powers 537w

Key, Mr Robert—continued
Parish councils, Local government finance 544w
Rate rebates, Handicapped 688-9w
Rateable value, Appeals 472w
Rent arrears, Local authorities 228w
Rents to mortgages scheme 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Basildon 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Gloucester 466w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Marketing 466-7w
Repossession orders 691w
Residuary bodies, Annual reports 537w
Revenue support grant, Bournemouth 38w
Sleeping rough, Census of population 230w
South Yorkshire Residuary Body, History 537w
Standard spending assessments, Harrogate Borough Council 692w
Uniform business rate, Appeals 693w
Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation, Re-employment 688w
Waste disposal, Local authorities 689w

Khmer Rouge
100w, 109w, (26:10:90) 640-94
Armed forces training 333, 864

Kidney machines
Northern Ireland 333-4w
South West region 399-400w

Kidney patients
445w
Ambulance services 399w
Hospital consultants 334w
Medical treatments 333w
Northern Ireland 333w

Kidneys
Hospital consultants 445w
Medical treatments 399w

Kilfedder, Mr James
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 371
Questions
Companies, Marketing 558w
EC free food scheme, Pensioners 53w
European Communities, Northern Ireland 558-9w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Integrated schools 637-8w
Food labelling, EC law 558w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 765w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 455-6w
Northern Ireland Centre, Finance 636w
South Eastern Education & Library Board, School governors 453w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 452w

Killingholme Generating Stations (Ancillary Powers) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (25:10:90) 485
Order to proceed in next Session (31:10:90) 851-2

King, Mr Roger
Questions
Armed forces training, Cambodia 100w
British Rail, Investment 69w
Engineering industries, Foreign investment in UK 598-9w, 977
Immigration applications, Political refugees 451-2w
Manchester Prison, Prison riots 734w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 452w

***King, Rt Hon Tom**, Secretary of State for Defence*
Questions
Defence review 858-9
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces casualties 856-7, 863-4
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 495w

King, Rt Hon Tom—*continued*
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Costs 855
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence equipment 864
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence expenditure 856
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, International cooperation 856
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, NATO 855
Low flying 858
NATO, Defence review 858
NATO, Europe 854-5
NATO, Republic of Ireland 855
Tanks, Defence procurement 766w

King's Cross Railways Bill 1988/89
Questions
2-3

Kingston bridge Glasgow
Repairs & maintenance 178w

Kingston-Portsmouth Prison
Prison escapes 450w
Security 450w
Video equipment 347w

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 871-2
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 204-13
Questions
Child benefit 186-7
Howe, Geoffrey, European communities 865
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 498-9

Kirklees
Roads (25:10:90) 620-8

Kirklees Borough Council
European Development Bank 359w

Kirklees District Council
462w, (25:10:90) 620-8

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 738-9
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 356-7
Questions
A1, Road safety 61w
A7, Road works 212w
British Steel Corporation, Company disclosure of information 971
Fisheries, Scotland 421w
GATT, Multifibre arrangement 610w
Health education, AIDS 322-3
Homelessness 235w
Hostels, Finance 35w
Housing benefits, Students 579w
Income support, Hostels 76w
Income support, Social security payments 75w
Low flying, Borders region 626w
Low flying, Defence equipment 625w
Low flying, Military aircraft 626w
Low flying, Noise control 625w
Low flying, Northern region 624-5w
Low flying, RAF Spadeadam 625w
Low flying, Shackleton aircraft 765w
Low flying, West Germany 502w
Military aircraft, Defence equipment 625w
Military exercises, Defence equipment 624w
RAF Spadeadam, Armed forces training 625w
Shackleton aircraft, Air accidents 765w
Shackleton aircraft, Military exercises 764-5w
Sleeping rough, Census of population 230w
Social security benefits, Hostels 76w
Social security benefits, Students 579w
Social security payments, Hostels 75-6w

Kleinwort Benson
Privatisation 105-6w

Knapman, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 471
European Council (30:10:90) 891
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 399

Knapman, Mr Roger—*continued*
Questions
Council of Ministers, Germany 323-4
Demonstrations 729w
Education & industry, Expenditure 183
Ground water, EC law 538w
Transport, Investment 63w
UK companies abroad, East Germany 978

Knight, Mr Greg, Lord Commissioner to the Treasury
Debates etc.
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 379

Know-how Fund
263w, 324
Bulgaria 222w
Eastern Europe 194-5w, 325

Knox, Mr David
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 600w
EC external relations 221w
Frontiers, EC countries 736w
Interest rates 292w
Motorways, Road construction 68w
Primary education, Staffordshire 159w
Roads, Wales 355w

Labelling
Energy conservation 270-1w

Labelling (Environmental Effects & Safety) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (30:10:90) 893-4

Labour Party
Party conferences 741w

Laing Industrial Engineering
511-2w

Lambie, Mr David
Questions
Inflation, EC countries 293w
Link programme 596w

Lamond, Mr James
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 875
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 340
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1003
Questions
Financial services, Investor protection 608w
Manufacturing industries, North East region 975

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 277-84
Questions
Average earnings, Scotland 361w
Balance of payments 294w, 296w
Balance of payments, UK trade with EC 653w
Balance of trade 297w, 569-70w
Child Poverty Action Group 295w
Economic growth, Overseas trade 495
Economic situation 5-6w
Foreign companies in UK, Manpower 569-70w
Industrial investment 298w, 360-2w, 497-8
Industrial production 361-2w
Interest rates, Unemployment 296w, 494-5
International Monetary Fund, Manufactured exports 6w
Investment, Consumption 300w
Invisible trade balance 303w
Manufactured exports 299w
National income 300-1w
Oil revenues 492
Pay, Unemployment 495
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 296-7w
Profitability, Companies 296w, 568w
Profitability, Manufacturing industries 568w

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman—*continued*
Public expenditure, Economic regions 571-2w
Public expenditure, Housing 654w
Public expenditure, Local government expenditure 492
Public expenditure, National income 298-9w

Lancashire
Unemployment 237w

Lancashire County Council
460w

Lancaster
Railway network 5

Lance missiles
507-8w

Land acquisition
Defence land 506w
London Docklands Development Corporation 528w
North East Thames Regional health Authority 318w
School buildings 243w
Schools 267w

Land pollution
Acids 45w

Land use
Brookwood Hospital 228-9w

Landlord & Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (22:10:90) 39-44
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Lanelli Borough Council (Burry Port Harbour) Bill (HL)1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Lang, Mr Ian, Minister of State for Scotland
Questions
Advanced gas-cooled reactors, Scotland 725w
Alternative energy, Non-fossil fuel obligation 74-5w
Apprentices, Scotland 169w
Capital investment, Scotland 587-8w
Community charge exemptions, Scotland 211-2w
Community development, Urban programme 172-4w
EC grants & loans, Scotland 73w
EC internal trade, Financial services 479w
EC internal trade, Scotland 479w
Educational qualifications, Scotland 584w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 75w
Employment opportunities, Glasgow 170w
Employment opportunities, Paisley North 583w
Glasgow eastern area renewal, Expenditure 170w
Government grants to local authorities, Scotland 588-90w
Hard core unemployed, Scotland 175w
Industrial production, Scotland 583w
Local enterprise companies 593-4w
Local enterprise companies, Public appointments 725w
Locate in Scotland 593w
Manpower, Scotland 583w
Manufactured exports, Scotland 583-4w
Manufactured goods, Scotland 585w
Motor industry, Buses 173w
Nursery schools, Glasgow 722w
Regional aid, Scotland 584w
Road travel, Employment level 177w
Scottish Development Agency, Expenditure 170w
Scottish Development Agency, Finance 586-8w, 722w
Scottish Development Agency, Glasgow 170-1w

***Lang, Mr Ian**—continued*
Storms, Compensation 213w
Taxi fares, Oil prices 176w
Unemployment, Paisley North 582w
Unemployment, Scotland 174-6w
Vacancies, Scotland 583w
Youth training, Finance 479w
Youth training scheme, Scotland 594w

Languages
Civil servants 723-4

Languages education
3-4w, 157w
BBC External Services 391w
Curriculum 377-8w
Foreign languages 678w
Teachers 3w
Welsh language 660w

Lanstar Wimpey Waste
227w

Lasers
Tornado aircraft 757w

Latham, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Established Church Bill, 1R (30:10:90) 891
Questions
Antisemitism, Prosecutions 354w
National Audit Office, Pay 15
START talks, Military balance 861

Law Commission
315w

Law enforcement
Exhaust emission controls 512-3w

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 301-2, 304
Cambodia (26:10:90) 646, 655, 674-6
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 45, 47, 163
Courts & Legal Services Bill (HL), Lords amendts (26:10:90) 635
Questions
Palestine, Refugees 329
Police, Management 185-6w
Special constables, Manpower 185w, 313w
Special constables, Police 313w

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 214-9

Le Vay Committee
see Magistrates' Courts Review

Leadbitter, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 341
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 113-27, 128, 138, 141
Questions
Business statements 509
Child benefit, Low incomes 488-9
Import penetration 595w

Lear Fan
TDG 107w

Leasehold housing
Greater London 467w

Lebanon
320
Hostages 58w

Lee, Mr John
Questions
Golf, Planning permission 321w
Historic buildings, Building repairs 360w
Manufacturing industries, Employment level 425w

***Lee, Mr John**—continued*
Residential care, Costs 225-6w
Unemployment, Lancashire 237w

Leeds
767w
Disposable income 366w
Homelessness 46-7w

Leeds Infirmary
Self-governing hospitals 192w

Leeds-Bradford railway
Railway electrification 61w

Legal aid
Damages 103w
Expenditure 276w
Greater London 103w
Legal costs 103w
Matrimonial proceedings 11-2w

Legal Aid Board
103w

Legal costs
Legal aid 103w
Northern Regional Health Authority 680-1w

Legal opinion
EC internal trade 606w

Legal profession
(26:10:90) 631-8

Legionnaires' disease
Glasgow Royal Infirmary 175w
Industrial health & safety 383w
Power stations 383w, 407-8w

Legislation
EC internal trade 599w

Leicester
Dept of Social Security local offices 365w
Waste disposal 181w, 233-4w

Leicestershire
Hospital waiting lists 442-3w

Leigh, Mr Edward
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 744
Questions
Business statements 505-6
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 865

Leighton, Mr Ron
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 879-80
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 258-61, 283
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 445-8, 453, 454
Questions
British Tourist Authority, Japan 1-2w
EC internal trade 208w, 775w
Invisible trade balance 303w
Languages education, Foreign languages 678w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Community development 320w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Community work 320-1w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Infrastructure 320w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Location of industry 267w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Resignations 342w
Pay settlements, Inflation 111w
Statistics, EC internal trade 104-5w
Trams, Greater London 245w

***Lennox-Boyd, Mr Mark**, Under-Secretary of State, Foreign & Commonwealth Office*
Debates etc.
British Council (26:10:90) 701, 703-6

***Lennox-Boyd, Mr Mark**—continued*
Cambodia (26:10:90) 685-94
Iraq, Hostages (24:10:90) 478-81
Questions
Afghanistan, Diplomatic relations 565w
AIDS, Heterosexuality 323
Albania, Foreign policy 561w
Arms control negotiations, Chemical weapons 453-4w
BBC External Services, Languages education 391w
Cambodia, China 333
Cambodia, Defence equipment 109w
Cambodia, EC external relations 695w
Cambodia, Foreign policy 214w
Cambodia, Ministers 263-4w
Cambodia, Overseas aid 333-4
Cambodia, Peace negotiations 214w, 561w
Cambodia, Pol Pot 333
China, Foreign relations 215w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls 385w
Diplomatic relations 385w
Diplomatic service, Parking offences 700-3w
East Germany, EC aid 111w
Eastern Europe, English education 391w
Eastern Europe, Environment protection 111w
Eastern Europe, Visas 58-9w
Environment, Treaties 454w, 700w
Espionage, Families 561w
Ethiopia, Entry clearances 457w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Ministers' visits abroad 454-6w
Gulf states, Nuclear non proliferation 387w
Guyana, Elections 388-9w
Health education, AIDS 322-3
Hong Kong, China 219w
Hong Kong, Ivory 567-8w
Hong Kong, Population 695w
Hong Kong, Prosecutions 566w
India, Foreign relations 216w
India, Human rights 216w, 699-700w
India, Punjab 699w
Indian subcontinent, Entry clearances 54-5w
Iraq, Economic sanctions 387w
Iraq, Export controls 385w
Iraq, Nuclear physics 563w
Iraq, Nuclear power 563w
Iraq, Nuclear reactors 563-4w
Iraq, Technology transfer 563w
Iraq, Uranium 564w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Departmental publications 566w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Economic sanctions 389w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 389-90w, 455-6w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Postal services 695w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, UN General Assembly 222w
Israel, Ministers' visits abroad 563w
Members' correspondence, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 700w
Mercenaries, Treaties 388w
Mexico, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 562w
Middle East, UN resolutions 386w
Nepal, Religious freedom 385w
North Korea, South Korea 217w
Northern Ireland, UN resolutions 387w
Nuclear non proliferation, International cooperation 561-2w
Nuclear non proliferation, Non-governmental organisations 562-3w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 562w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 562w
Nuclear test ban 562w
Nuclear test ban, International conferences 387w
Nuclear test ban, Verification 388w
Nuclear weapons tests 388w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear non proliferation 564-5w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear test ban 565w

***Lennox-Boyd, Mr Mark**—continued*
Official visits, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 455w
Pakistan, Elections 390-1w
Palestine, Death 457w
Palestine, Self-determination of states 386w
Science & technology, Peace 565w
Somalia, Foreign policy 566w
Spain, Lorry drivers 109-10w
Sri Lanka, Human rights 383-4w
Syrian Arab Republic 389w
Tibet, China 54w
Trident 388w
UK companies abroad, Armed forces training 457w
UN Institute for Disarmament Research 564w
UN Security Council, Cambodia 214w
United Nations, Cambodia 333
USSR, Emigration 384w
World Health Organisation, AIDS 323

Lester, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
Cambodia (26:10:90) 644, 650, 659-66

Lestor, Miss Joan
Questions
Hospital patients, Children 398-9w
Prison population, Young offenders 314-5w
Road safety, Publicity 245w

Letcombe Laboratory
675-6w

Lewis, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Animals (Welfare in Transit) Bill, 1R. (23:10:90) 192-4
Questions
Balance of trade, Europe 597w

Liability
Community charge 555w

Libraries
Educational institutions 513-4w

Licensed premises
Breathalysers 179w

Licensed teachers
Educational qualifications 673w
Manpower 672-3w
Professional qualifications 672w
Shortage subjects 673w

Licensing
Armed forces training 503w
Audit 380-1w, 428w
Blood sports 646w
Slaughterhouses 311-2w
Veterinary medicine 422w

Licensing Reform Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (25:10:90) 518

Life imprisonment
Parole 449w
Prisoners' release 123w

Life insurance
Armed forces 859

Light aircraft
Insurance 459w

Light dues
Sailing boats 72w

***Lilley, Rt Hon Peter**, Secretary of State for Trade & Industry*
Questions
Airlines, East Germany 979
Balance of payments 981
British Steel Corporation 596w, 970-1
British Steel Corporation, Company disclosure of information 971
Cars, Japan 604w, 986
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 600w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 615w

***Lilley, Rt Hon Peter**—continued*
Exports, Fees & charges 974
Foreign companies in UK, West Germany 979
Government assistance to industry, Expenditure 973-4
Import penetration 595w
Industrial research, Expenditure 983-4
Industrial research, Research finance 984
Industrial training, Germany 978-9
Industry, ERM 614w
Iron & steel industry 596w, 970
Iron & steel industry, Clydesdale 970
Iron & steel industry, Factory closures 971
Iron & steel industry, Location of industry 970
Iron & steel industry, Subsidies 971
Link programme 984
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 981
Members' correspondence, Dept of Trade & Industry 768w
Minerals 204w
National Economic Development Council, Industry 601w
Overseas trade 973
Overseas trade, Financial markets 973
Overseas trade, Manufactured exports 973
Privatisation, Eastern Europe 612w
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 572w
UK companies abroad, East Germany 978

Lilley Group
527w

Limavady
Pipelines 53w

Lime
Agricultural land 424w

Limehouse link
Construction costs 528-9w

Link programme
596w, 984

Liquidators
779-80w

Listed buildings
471w
Computer applications 470w
Tax yields 360w

Liverpool
679w

Liverpool City Council
Housing improvement 469w

Liverpool University
443w

Livestock
Incinerators 306w

Livingstone, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 253-6
Wallace, Colin (31:10:90) 1082, 1084
Questions
Information technology 605w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Questions
Agricultural subsidies 711-2
Agriculture, Wales 357w
Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981 150w
Ministers' domestic visits, Wales 275w

Llanidloes
Road works 548w

Lloyd, Sir Ian
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 887
Questions
Air safety, Seating 70w
Business statements 504
Information technology, Semiconductor devices 985

***Lloyd, Mr Peter**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office*
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 292-4, 295-6, 302-6
Parking offences, Fixed penalties (30:10:90) 955-8
Special constables (30:10:90) 965-8
Questions
Access to buildings, Handicapped 671w, 739w
"Another Blood Libel or Ritual Murder", Criminal investigation 19w
Arrests 740w
Arrests, Football 128w
BBC 730w
BBC, Income 555w
British nationality, Administrative delays 733w
Concessionary television licences, Pensioners 347w, 725-6w
Crime prevention, Greater London 731w
Crime prevention, West Yorkshire 728w
Demonstrations 729w
Deportation, Women's prisons 186w
Entry clearances, Adoption 16w
Extortion, Food industry 446-7w
Frontiers, EC countries 736w
Holocaust News, Criminal investigation 348w
Horserace Totalisator Board, Privatisation 351w
Immigrants, Children 446w
Immigration, Administrative delays 260-2w
Immigration applications, Political refugees 451-2w
Immigration applications, Somalia 556w
Immigration officers, Criminal investigation 123w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, BBC 556w
Local authority powers, Water sports 260w
Party conferences, Security 316w
Police 734w
Police, Cost effectiveness 730w
Police, Crimes of violence 735-6w
Police, Management 185-6w
Police, Manpower 127w, 254-6w, 728w
Police, Northumberland 127w
Police, Party conferences 741w
Police, Peterlee 740w
Police, Shift work 728w
Police interrogation, Audio recordings 450w
Police records, AIDS 19-20w
Police stations, Domestic violence 252w
Police stations, Rape 255w
Political refugees, Immigration applications 452w
Public inquiries, Offices 257w
Public order policing, Football 731w
Refugees 735w
Scargill, Arthur, Fraud 741-2w
Special constables, Manpower 185w, 313w
Special constables, Police 313w
Special constables, Recruitment 348w
Stewart, Jamie Lloyd, Death 348w
Television licences, Consultants 555-6w
Temporary immigrants 550-2w
Tote Bookmakers, Privatisation 733w
Work permits 740w
Work permits, Domestic service 735w

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 22, 23, 24-6, 30, 38
Questions
Building industry safety, EC law 628w
Channel tunnel, Industrial accidents 627-8w
Channel tunnel, Industrial health & safety 426w
Channel Tunnel Safety Authority 510w
Debts, Advisory services 598w
Railway property, Children 460-1w

Lloyd's Merchant Bank
351w

Local authorities
Access to buildings 343w
Cars 288w
Civil defence 120w
Companies 689w
Competition 469w, 691w
Construction 470w
Contracts 470w
Contracts for services 189, 541-2w
Housing for Wales 659w
Housing starts 659w
North West & Merseyside Arts Board 398w
Nuclear free zones 696w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 696w
Refugees 469w
Rent arrears 228w
Waste disposal 689w

Local authority associations
43-5w, 531w
Education Reform Act 1988 163w

Local authority powers
Dogs 257-60w
Parish councils 537w
Planning permission 346w, 535-6w
Water sports 260w

Local education authorities
Budgeting 140-50w, 152-4w, 181
Grant maintained schools 137-8w

Local education authority training grant scheme
679w
Trade unions 167w

Local education business partnerships
156-7w, 183

Local enterprise agencies
Ealing 237-8w

Local enterprise companies
593-4w
Public appointments 725w

Local Government Act 1966
Questions
123-6w

Local Government Act 1988
Questions
40-1w, 469w, 541-2w

Local Government & Housing Act 1989
Questions
182w

Local Government Boundaries Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(26:10:90) 638

Local Government Boundary Commission for England
182w, 536-7w

Local government constituencies
Bolton 13
Humberside 182w
Northern Ireland (26:10:90) 638

Local government expenditure
Building repairs 533-4w
Grant maintained schools 313w
Historic buildings 323w
Magistrates' courts 471-2w
Public expenditure 492
Scotland 588-90w
Theatres 689w

Local government finance
Community care 357-8w, 545w
Income tax 652w
Ministerial statements (31:10:90) 987-1017
Parish councils 544w
Transitional relief 465w
Wales 549w

Local government functions
Camden 40-1w, 542w
Residential care 681w

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
Questions
190w

Local government pensions
Pension funds 181-2w

Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980
Questions
470w, 531-2w

Local government revenue
Non-domestic rates 43-4w, 180w

Local government social services
Personal records 444w
Registered homes 31w
Residential care 30-1w
Unruly children 687w

Locate in Scotland
593w

Location of industry
Iron & steel industry 970
London Docklands Development Corporation 267w
North Devon 597w

Loch Sween
Marine nature reserves 591w

Lockerbie
Low flying 761w

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 997
Parking offences, Fixed penalties (30:10:90) 951, 957
Questions
Crime prevention, West Yorkshire 728w
Financial services, Investor protection 612w

London Ambulance Service
Computers in national health service 406-7w
Costs 407w
Patients 406-7w
Road travel 407w
Wheelchairs 406w

London Arts Board
396w

London boroughs
Capital investment 322-3w

London docklands
Pollution 324w
Roads 540w

London Docklands Development Corporation
527-9w, 540w
Budgeting 529-30w
Community development 320w, 529w
Community work 320-1w
Compensation 267w
Contracts 527w, 529w
Expenditure 320-1w
Government grants 530w
Housing 527-8w
Housing improvement 528-9w
Infrastructure 320w
Land acquisition 528w
Location of industry 267w
Property development 527w
Resignations 342w, 529w
Roads 529w
Tower Hamlets 528w
Transport policy 528w

London Dumping Convention
335w

London International Financial Futures Exchange
50w

London Local Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

London Local Authorities (No 2) Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
Rep* & 3R* (29:10:90) 707
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

London Regional Transport (Penalty Fares) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (25:10:90) 485

London Residuary Body
322-3w, 537w, 687w
Annual reports 323w
Public appointments 323w

London Transport
97w, 462-4w
Central line 11
Investment 62w

London Underground
8, 95w, (24:10:90) 426-55
Central line 10-1
Efficiency scrutinies 433w
Finance 96w
Investment 7-8
Modernisation 66w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 433w
Northern line 8

London Underground Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Business motion & order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 426-55
Questions
95w

London Underground (Safety Measures) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

London Underground (Victoria) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (30:10:90) 852

London Zoo
Transmissible encephalopathies 644w

Long term prisoners
Prisons 554w

Lord, Mr Michael
Questions
GCE A level, Educational standards 187

Lord Chancellor
274w

Lords amendments
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90 315w
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 601, 604, 611, 612

Lorries
Gwent 25w
Spot checks 458w

Lorry drivers
Spain 109-10w

Low flying
858
Air accidents 759-61w
Aircrew 762w
Armed forces training 89-90w
Belgium 502w
Bombs 760w
Borders region 623w, 626w
Canada 758-62w
Dalmellington 760w
Defence equipment 625w
Handbooks 760w
Lockerbie 761w
Military aircraft 622-3w, 626w, 759-62w
Military exercises 758w
Netherlands 759-60w
Noise control 501-2w, 625w
Northern region 624-5w

***Low flying**—continued*
Public holidays 761w
Radar 758-9w
RAF Machrihanish 760w
RAF Spadeadam 625w
Scotland 624-5w, 759w
Shackleton aircraft 765w
Urban areas 623w
USA 758w
Wales 89w
West Germany 502w, 622w

Low incomes
Child benefit 282w, 488-9
Prescription charges exemptions 682w

Low rateable value areas grants
465w

Lowermoor Incident Health Advisory Group
405w
Evidence 405w

Lowndes Queensway
Company investigations 619w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 494-5w
MV Derbyshire, Inquiries 317w
MV Derbyshire, Shipping accidents 317w

Luncheon vouchers
Tax collection 493w
Tax yields 493w

Lung diseases
Medical equipment 267w

***Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas**, Solicitor-General*
Debates etc.
Courts & Legal Services Bill (HL), Lords amendts (26:10:90) 632-8
Questions
Holocaust News, Prosecutions 12w
Serious Fraud Office, Trade union finances 279w

M1
Road accidents 462-4w, 511w
Road traffic 189w
Road traffic control 462-4w
Road works 709w

M11
Motorway service areas (26:10:90) 630
Road construction 709w

M20
Road construction 71w

M4
Consultants 459-60w
Road works 547w
Roads 547w

M40
Road construction 189w

M62
3, 705w
Road traffic 709-10w

M66
Greater Manchester relief road 706w
Road construction 3, 709-10w

McAllion, Mr John
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 818-9
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 362-3
Wages councils (22:10:90) 166-9
Questions
Business statements 516
Export promotion 607w
Local enterprise companies, Public appointments 725w
Ministers' visits abroad, Japan 969
Scottish Development Agency, Finance 722w

***McAllion, Mr John**—continued*
Social security benefits, Elderly 77w

McAvoy, Mr Thomas
Questions
CFE talks 499w
Inflation, EC countries 495
Information technology 605w
Meat, Food contamination 134w

McCartney, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 155-8
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 345-6
Questions
Greenham Common, Trespass 500w

Macclesfield
Road accidents 247w

Macdonald, Mr Calum
Questions
Economic & monetary union 217w

McFall, Mr John
Questions
Import penetration 595w
Mental illness, Expenditure 591w
Ministry of Defence, Health physics 500w
Student loans, Access funds 157w

McGrady, Mr Eddie
Questions
Agriculture, Northern Ireland 559w
Concessionary fares, Northern Ireland 557-8w

***MacGregor, Rt Hon John**, Secretary of State for Education & Science*
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Pupil records 194w
City technology colleges, Sponsorship 514w
Educational finance 177-8
Educational institutions, Ministers' domestic visits 517w
Examinations, Primary education 176-8
Grant maintained schools 137w
Languages education, Curriculum 377-8w
Local education authorities, Budgeting 140-50w
Reading, Educational standards 178
School closures 193w
School closures, School population 193-4w
Standard assessment tasks, Primary education 281w
Teachers 174
Teachers, Pay 173-5
Teachers, Vacancies 517w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 162
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1003
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 745
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 405, 414
Questions
Attendance allowance, Computer applications 77w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 600w
Timesharing 51w

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Questions
Exhaust emission controls, Cars 65w
Inflation 492-3
Net book agreement 607w

McKelvey, Mr William
Questions
Inflation 292w

***Maclean, Mr David**, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture*
Questions
Bees, Import controls 631w
Birds, Animal quarantine 633w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 81-2w, 644w

***Maclean, Mr David**—continued*
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, EC countries 632w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Select Committee reports 632w
Deer, Tuberculosis 644-5w
Export of live animals 208-9w
Export of live animals, Animal welfare 133-4w
Foxes, Farms 134-5w
Furs, Farms 134-5w
Horses, Export controls 422w
Irradiation, EC action 634w
Livestock, Incinerators 306w
Meat, Food contamination 134w
Pesticide residues, Prosecutions 649-50w
Poultry, Salmonella 649w
Slaughterhouses, Government grants 312w
Slaughterhouses, Licensing 311-2w
Sweets, Food hygiene 631w
Transmissible encephalopathies, London Zoo 644w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Mink 632-3w
Veterinary medicine, Licensing 422w
Zoonoses Order 1989 646w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 298-300, 305
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 524, 532-3, 547, 579-80, 587-8, 592, 594-6, 607, 609-10
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 905-6, 909, 916-9, 923
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 342
Questions
Arts Council, Finance 396w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge capping 545w, 777w
Inflation, ERM 293w
Intergovernmental conference, EC integration 327
Locate in Scotland 593w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 864-5
Probation, Ethnic monitoring 734w
Public lending right 651w
Public lending right, Inflation 652w
Theatre, Arts finance 721

***McLoughlin, Mr Patrick**, Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc.
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 85-6
Roads, Kirklees (25:10:90) 623-8
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 128, 134
Questions
Accidents Investigation Branch, Air accidents 704w
Air safety, Seating 70w
Air traffic control, Investment 64w
Air transport, EC action 68w
Airmisses, Complaints 244w
Airmisses, Information 244w
Airport & Airspace Capacity Working Group 510w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Transport 245-6w
Containers, Radioactive wastes 459w
Coventry Airport, Air accidents 244w
Coventry Airport, Airmisses 244w
Dept of Transport, Civil service manpower 247-8w
Dept of Transport, Civil service recruitment 339w
Dept of Transport, Environment protection 462-4w
Duty free allowances 70w
East coast railway line, Railway electrification 61-2w
Edinburgh Airport, Air traffic control 95w
Leeds-Bradford railway, Railway electrification 61w
Light aircraft, Insurance 459w
Light dues, Sailing boats 72w

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick—continued
Members' correspondence, Dept of Transport 708w
Merchant ships, Shipping accidents 341w
Minibuses, Safety belts 96w
MV Atlantic Conveyor, Marine insurance 626w
MV Derbyshire, Inquiries 96w, 249w, 317w
MV Derbyshire, Shipping accidents 317w
MV Gur Mariner, Arrests 70-1w
Navigation, Professional qualifications 342w
Network SouthEast, Performance indicators 59w
Newcastle Airport, Airmisses 248-9w
Official hospitality, Dept of Transport 72w
Port of London Authority, Police 462w
Port of London Authority, Privatisation 188w
Ports, Coal 710w
Ports, Police 70w, 704w
Radioactive wastes, Imports 458-9w
Railway transport, East Midlands 62w
Regional airports, Air traffic 67-8w
Regional airports, Capital investment 67w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Safety standards 316w
Shipping accidents, Pentland Firth 342w
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority, Public appointments 248w
Tidal power, Solent 72w
Traffic lights, Buses 246w
"Transport of Delight" 704w
Transport of radioactive materials, Sea transport 62-3w
Trust ports 458w
Urban railways, Manchester 60w

Macmillan City Technology College
Music education 513w

McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 373
Questions
Abortion 319w
Hospital consultants, Kidneys 445w
Kidney machines, Northern Ireland 333-4w
Kidney patients, Hospital consultants 334w
Kidney patients, Medical treatments 333w
Northern Ireland government 52w
Organ donors, Northern Ireland 334w
Rape, Prison sentences 743w
Security industry 732w

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 368-9
Questions
Action for Community Employment, Finance 453w
Hospital waiting lists, Orthopaedics 409-10w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry, Police interrogation 53w

McWilliam, Mr John
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 755-6, 763
Questions
Educational publications 160w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 601w

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc.
Elections, Pakistan (22:10:90) 21
Questions
Business statements 515-6
Campylobacter, Food poisoning 685w
Campylobacter, Health hazards 688w
Child workers, Bradford City Council 686w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 324-5
EC free food scheme, Social security recipients 81w
India, Human rights 216w

Madden, Mr Max—continued
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 390w
Islam, Religious persons 265w
Multifibre arrangement 610-1w
Pakistan, Elections 390-1w
Refugees 735w
Road freight transport, Spain 191w
School buildings, Bradford 151w
Syrian Arab Republic 389w

Madel, Mr David
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 26
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1005-6
Questions
M1, Road accidents 511w

Magistrates
Community charge 14-5
Men 351w
Public appointments 14-5
Women 351w

Magistrates' courts
Local government expenditure 471-2w
Sentencing 729w

Magistrates' Courts Review
741w

Mahon, Mrs Alice
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 888
Questions
Armed forces training, Thailand 90w
Cambodia, Technical assistance 23w
Financial services, Investor protection 612w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Insurance 495w

Mailing lists
Unsolicited goods & services 774-5w

Mailing Preference Service
774-5w

Maintenance
Children (29:10:90) 729-49
Fathers 500
Ministerial statements (29:10:90) 729-49

Maintenance defaulters
500, (29:10:90) 729-49

Major, Rt Hon John, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 195-204, 206-7
Questions
Bank of England, Exchange rates 9-10w
Child benefit 489
Child benefit, Low incomes 488-9
Child Poverty Action Group 488-9
Economic & monetary union 297w
Exchange rates, European monetary system 9w
Exchange rates, Mark 10w
Family benefits 489
Inflation 492-3
Inflation, Interest rates 493
Inflation, Money supply 493
Interest rates 292w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 486
Manufacturing industries, Industrial training 486-7
Manufacturing industries, Pay 487
Tax collection, Luncheon vouchers 493w
Taxable benefits, Tax thresholds 362w
Trades Union Congress, Child benefit 296w

Maladministration
242-3w, 245-6w, 255-6w, 266-7w, 278-84w, 290w, 365w, 382w

Malaysia
Aid financed trade 24-5w, 198w
Contracts 199w
Energy 208w
Hydroelectric power 24-5w, 199w, 671-2w

Malaysia—continued
Official visits 195w
Road construction 672w
Turbines 672w

Mallon, Mr Seamus
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 372

Management
610w
Penal reform 447w
Police 185-6w

Managing agents
Youth training 746w
Youth training scheme 746w

Manchester
187-8, 767w
Urban railways 60w

Manchester Prison
Prison riots 734w
Prisoners' transfers 734-5w

Manpower
Agriculture 425w
Coal mining 425w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 118-9w
Emergency planning 123w
European Development Bank 359w
Footwear industry 427-8w
Foreign companies in UK 569-70w
Higher education corporations 673-4w
Judges 353-4w
Licensed teachers 672-3w
Manufacturing industries 583w
National Rivers Authority 468w
Police 127w, 254-6w, 590-1w, 728w
Prison staff 733w
Prisons 553-4w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 98w
Recorders 353-4w
Scotland 583w
Special constables 185w, 313w
Teachers 371w
Textile industry 427-8w

Manpower Services Commission
170w

Mans, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 773
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1002
Questions
British Telecom 604w
Council of Ministers 697-9w

Manual workers
Wales 288w

Manufactured exports
299w
ERM 976
International Monetary Fund 6w
Overseas trade 973
Scotland 583-4w, 604-5w

Manufactured goods
Balance of trade 975-6
Scotland 585w
UK trade with EC 975-6

Manufactured imports
Raleigh Industries 975

Manufacturing industries
Confederation of British Industry 329w, 600w
Employment level 425w
Foreign investment in UK 976
Industrial production 486, 596w, 600-1w, 974-5
Industrial research 601w
Industrial training 486-7
Manpower 583w
North East region 975
Pay 487
Productivity 296-7w, 572w, 981

***Manufacturing industries**—continued*
Profitability 568w
Scotland 981
Trade competitiveness 600w

***Maples, Mr John**, Economic Secretary to the Treasury*
Questions
Bank of England, Iraq 8w
Building societies, Repossession orders 7w
Capitalism, Eastern Europe 300w
Central Statistical Office, Budgeting 488-9w
Central Statistical Office, Civil servants' secondment 489w
Coinage 334-5w
Confederation of British Industry, Interest rates 292w
Debts, Tanzania 9w
EC Statistical Office, Statistics 488w
Economic sanctions, Iraq 303-4w
Exchange rates 10-1w
Family expenditure survey, Statistics 484w
Foreign investment in UK 494
House prices 488
Inflation 7w, 292-4w, 496
Inflation, EC countries 293w, 495
Inflation, ERM 293w
Inflation, Interest rates 496
Interest rates 292w
Investment 493-4
Investment, EC countries 298w
Mortgage defaulters, Advisory services 487
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 487-8
Mortgage interest rates 187w
Mortgages 106w
Mortgages, Economic regions 106-7w
National income, EC countries 300w
National savings 292w
Official Report, Price increases 572w
Oil revenues, North Sea oil 9w
Personal savings 296w
Productivity, Japan 297w
Retail price index 294w
Retail price index, Harmonisation of standards 494w
Statistics 488w
Statistics, Civil service manpower 490w, 571w
Statistics, Codes of practice 486w
Statistics, Computer applications 491w
Statistics, Departmental coordination 486w, 491w
Statistics, Disclosure of information 489w
Statistics, EC internal trade 104-5w
Statistics, Economic situation 483-4w, 486-7w
Statistics, Efficiency scrutinies 490w
Statistics, Expenditure 571w
Statistics, Government departments 484-5w
Statistics, Government information services 486w
Statistics, Industrial production 296w
Statistics, Ministerial policy advisors 489-90w
Statistics, National income 484-5w
Statistics, Procurement 490w
Statistics, Public expenditure 487w
Statistics, Public opinion 487w
Statistics, Quality control 485w
Statistics, Research 488w
Statistics, Survey 487w
Tax yields, Petroleum production 493w

Marek, Dr John
Questions
Civil servants, Languages 723-4
Civil service recruitment, Pay 5w
Crown suppliers, Privatisation 692w
Dept of Transport, Civil service recruitment 339w
Railway transport, North Wales 717-8
Taxation 491
Theatre, Arts finance 720-1

Marginal land
393w
Agricultural subsidies 393w
Environmentally sensitive areas 647w
Sheep premiums 393w

Marine Accident Investigation Branch
96w, 249w, 317w

Marine Conservation Society
591w

Marine fuels
Fishing vessels 136w

Marine insurance
MV Atlantic Conveyor 626w

Marine nature reserves
Loch Sween 591w

Mark
Exchange rates 10w

Market share
Bicycles 773-4w

Marketing
Companies 558w
NHS 408-9w
Rents to mortgages scheme 466-7w

Markets
Beef premiums 306w
Sunday trading 39-40w, 527w

Marks & Spencer
37w

Marland, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 784-6, 835-6
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1004
Questions
Bus fares 68w

Marlow, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 797
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 276
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Saudi Arabia 287w
Economic policy, Government achievements 499
Iraq, Occupied territories 695w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces casualties 686w, 756w, 856-7
Israel, Iraq 265w
Israel, Ministers' visits abroad 264-5w
Occupied territories, Criminal investigation 264w
Palestine, Self-determination of states 386w, 695w
"Safety on the Move" 66w

Marriage
Rape 315w

Marriage guidance
Government grants 556w

Marshall, Mr David
Questions
AIDS, Scotland 177w
Alzheimer's disease, Scotland 173-4w
Apprentices, Scotland 169w
Bus services, Scotland 173w
Community care, Computer applications 713w
Community development, Urban programme 172-4w
Economic sanctions, Iraq 608-9w
Employment opportunities, Glasgow 170w
Glasgow eastern area renewal, Expenditure 170w
Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Legionnaires' disease 175w
Greater Glasgow Health Board, Offices 327w
Greater Glasgow Health Board, Public appointments 169w
Handicapped, Scotland 175w
Hard core unemployed, Scotland 175w
Intergovernmental conference 217w
Kingston bridge Glasgow, Repairs & maintenance 178w

***Marshall, Mr David**—continued*
Medical equipment, Epilepsy 176w
Motor industry, Buses 173w
Paracetamol, Health warnings 108w
Pensioners, Scotland 169w
Public service vehicles, Scotland 176w
Railway network, Scotland 178w
Road travel, Employment level 177w
Scholarships, Scotland 169w
Scottish Development Agency, Expenditure 170w
Scottish Development Agency, Glasgow 170-1w
Sheltered housing, Scotland 177w
Slums, Glasgow 169-70w
Taxi fares, Oil prices 176w
Transport of radioactive materials, Emergency planning 96w
Travel, Scotland 168w
Unemployment, Scotland 174-6w
Wheel clamps, Scotland 178w
Youth training scheme, Scotland 594w

Marshall, Mr Jim
Questions
Link programme 596w
Nursery schools, School population 158-9w
USA, Foreign relations 318

Marshall, Mr John
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 805
Questions
Arms trade, Iraq 615-6w
Beef, Intervention stocks 133w
British Electricity International, Economic sanctions 441w
Dunsdale Securities, Dept of Trade inquiries 47w
Ford Prison, Disclosure of information 347w
Higher education, Student numbers 166w
Higher education teachers, Educational finance 184
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 337w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Contracts 983
Israel 319-20
London Underground, Investment 7
Matrimonial proceedings, Legal aid 11-2w
National Power, Overseas trade 441w
Net book agreement 779w
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 572w
Ronson, Gerald, Prisoners' rights 553w
Sunday trading 726w
USSR, Emigration 110w, 384w

Marshall, Sir Michael
Debates etc.
Wallace, Colin (31:10:90) 1078-81

Martin, Mr David
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1012
Questions
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison, Security 450w
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison, Video equipment 347w
Navy, Defence review 287w
Overseas trade, Financial markets 973
Science parks, Educational institutions 615w

Martin, Mr Michael J
Questions
Debts, Advisory services 971-2
Planning appeals, Glasgow 478w

Martlew, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 913
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 496-7w
Armed forces married quarters, Housing construction 766w
Cars, Japan 604w

Mates, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 369

Matrimonial proceedings
Legal aid 11-2w

Mature students
Access funds 162w

***Maude, Mr Francis**, Financial Secretary to the Treasury*
Questions
Banks, Directors 107w
Building Societies Association, Interest rates 496-7
Corporation tax, Provident societies 105w
Corporation tax, Tax yields 298w
Disposable income 298w
EC Budget Council 492-3w
EC Finance Council 299w
Family income 570w
Foreign loans, Iraq 8w
Historic buildings, Building repairs 360w
Income 300w
Income tax, Community charge 653w
Income tax, Families 490-1
Income tax, Local government finance 652w
Income tax, Tax avoidance 490
Income tax, Tax burden 295w, 489-90
Income tax, Tax reform 294-5w
Income tax, Tax yields 295w, 490
Income tax assessment, Departmental forms 654w
Inflation, Interest rates 497
Inland Revenue, Tax evasion 7-8w
Interest rates, West Germany 292w
Intergovernmental conference 295w
Investment trusts 300w
Kleinwort Benson, Privatisation 105-6w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 304w
Mortgage relief, Tax rates & bands 360w, 653w
Shareholders 295-6w
Take-home pay, Average earnings 299w
Tax administration, Small businesses 491-2w
Tax allowances, House purchase 492w
Tax burden, Households 651-2w
Tax havens 493w
Tax incentives, Energy conservation 296w
Tax yields, Oil prices 335w
Taxation 491
Taxation, National income 491
Taxation, Public expenditure 491

Mauritius
Diego Garcia 53-4w

***Mawhinney, Dr Brian**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Giant hogweed, Northern Ireland 332w
Giant hogweed, Weed control 332w
Pipelines, Limavady 53w
Rate increases, Northern Ireland 250-2w

Maxton, Mr John
Questions
Average earnings, Scotland 361w
Balance of payments 294w
Capital investment, Scotland 587-8w
Crime, Economic regions 347w
Crime, Strathclyde 475-8w
Dampness, Scotland 587w
Economic sanctions, Iraq 608-9w
Educational finance, Scotland 378w
Educational publications, Scotland 712-3w
Educational qualifications, Scotland 584w
Emigration, Scotland 586w
Employment opportunities, Paisley North 583w
Family income 570w
Foreign investment in UK, South East region 436-8w
Government grants to local authorities, Scotland 588-90w
Hard core unemployed, Economic regions 425w

***Maxton, Mr John**—continued*
Homelessness, Scotland 711-2w
Households, Income 366w
Income support, Social security benefits reductions 668w
Industrial investment 360-2w
Industrial production 361-2w
Industrial production, Scotland 583w
Manpower, Scotland 583w
Manufactured exports, Scotland 583-4w
Manufactured goods, Scotland 585w
Public companies, Scotland 431-2w
Public expenditure, Education 589-90w
Regional aid, Economic regions 430-2w
Regional aid, Scotland 584w
Scottish Development Agency, Finance 586-8w
Scottish Office, Expenditure 476w
Social Fund, Paisley 574w
Supplementary benefits, Paisley 664w
Unemployment, Paisley North 582w
Vacancies, Scotland 583w

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 996
Questions
Children Act 1989, Orders & regulations 681-2w
Orders & regulations 20-1w
Parliamentary constituencies 126w

***Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**, Attorney-General*
Questions
Antisemitism, Criminal proceedings 354w
Antisemitism, Prosecutions 354w
Attendance allowance, Social security appeals 77-8w
Bailiffs, Pay 278w
Churchill, Odette, Disclosure of information 419-20w
Complaints against central government, Attorney General 278w
County courts, Administrative delays 276-8w
Duty solicitors, Mortgage defaulters 274w
Judges, Manpower 353w
Judgment debts 278w
Judgment debts, Judgments enforcement 278w
Judiciary, Road traffic offences 509w
Legal aid, Damages 103w
Legal aid, Expenditure 276w
Legal aid, Greater London 103w
Legal aid, Legal costs 103w
Magistrates, Men 351w
Matrimonial proceedings, Legal aid 11-2w
Mobility allowance, Social security appeals 79w, 285-6w
Prosecutions, Costs 635w
Recorders, Manpower 353-4w
Repossession orders, Rent arrears 353w
Serious Fraud Office, Ashcroft, Michael 354-5w
Social Security Commissioners, Social security appeals 11w

Meacher, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 731-6
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 353-5
Questions
Disability working allowance, Social security benefits rules 224w
Housing standards, Housing improvement 234w
Residential care, Costs 225-6w
Retirement pensions, Index linking 285w
Social security benefits, Pensioners 79w
Social security recipients, Men 482w
Social security recipients, National insurance benefits 482-3w
Social security recipients, Women 483w

Meale, Mr Alan
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 420
Questions
Export promotion 607w
Forestry Commission, Foxes 719w
Foxes, Pest control 719w
Regional arts associations, Public appointments 397w

Meat
Food contamination 134w

Meat (Sterilisation & Staining) Regulations 1982
Questions
306w

Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (23:10:90) 191

Medical appeal tribunals
79w, 285-6w

Medical equipment
Epilepsy 176w
Lung diseases 267w
Scotland 176w

Medical examinations
Attendance allowance 224-5w
Severe disablement allowance 224-5w

Medical malpractice
Childbirth 108w

Medical profession
Professional misconduct (23:10:90) 191
Training 404-5w

Medical rehabilitation
Aids for handicapped 545-6w
Wales 545-6w

Medical research
Arachnoiditis 401w
Radiation hazards 36w
Wales 662-3w

Medical Research Council
372-6w, 401w
AIDS 161w

Medical treatments
Fertility 26-7w, 32-3w, 73-4w, 107w
Heart diseases 34w
Kidney patients 333w
Kidneys 399w
Personal injury compensation (25:10:90) 518

***Mellor, Rt Hon David**, Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)*
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 520-5, 528, 529, 533, 534, 545, 554, 564-6, 569-72, 573, 575, 578, 581-2, 589-96, 601-12, 614, 616-8
Questions
Art works, Objects in lieu of tax 573w
Arts 398w
Arts, Greater London 396w
Arts Council, Finance 396w
Arts finance 398w, 720
Arts finance, Expenditure 652w
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90, Housing associations 449w
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90, Lords amendments 315w
Civil servants, EC institutions 723
Civil servants, Languages 723-4
Civil servants' secondment, EC institutions 724
Civil service, South West region 391w
Civil service agencies 574w, 724
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Defence 725-6
Civil service recruitment, Pay 5w
Civil service unions 391w, 725

***Mellor,Rt Hon David**—continued*
Civil service unions, Cultural heritage 398w
Greater London Arts 396w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 128w
Ministerial policy advisors 726
Next steps initiative 392w, 724
North West & Merseyside Arts Board, Local authorities 398w
Northern Arts, Public appointments 397w
Official hospitality, Office of Arts & Libraries 103w
Opera, Arts finance 719-20
Public lending right 573w, 651w
Public lending right, Expenditure 651w
Public lending right, Inflation 652w
Public libraries, Books 573w
Regional arts associations 397w
Regional arts associations, Arts finance 5w, 396-7w
Regional arts associations, Public appointments 397w
Royal Shakespeare Company, Arts finance 650w
Theatre, Arts finance 720-2
Theatres, Finance 396w
Theatres, Repairs & maintenance 397w
West Midlands Arts, Public appointments 397w
Yorkshire Arts Association, Public appointments 396w

Members
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 589-90

Members' allowances
Bicycles 16-7

Members' conduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 106, (23:10:90) 206, 209, 212, (25:10:90) 539, (30:10:90) 861, (31:10:90) 969, 1057

Members' correspondence
Administrative delays 128w, 304w
Departmental correspondence 654w
Dept of Education & Science 679-80w
Dept of Employment 754w
Dept of Energy 657w
Dept of the Environment 690w
Dept of Trade & Industry 768w
Dept of Transport 708w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 700w
Home Office 741w
Ministry of Defence 766w
Polish Resettlement Act 1947 210w
Scottish Information Office 210w

Members' deaths
Buchan, Norman (23:10:90) 173

Members' facilities
New Parliamentary building 17
Telephones 641-2w

Members' interests
18-9

Members' interventions
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 36, 55, 115, 120, 122, (23:10:90) 280, (24:10:90) 354, 454, (26:10:90) 650, 692, (29:10:90) 712, 736, 759

Members' oath & affirmation
Bellotti, David (23:10:90) 190

Members' pay
France 581w
West Germany 581w

Members' speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 158, (23:10:90) 177, 195, 229, (29:10:90) 753, 754, 756, 757, 813, (30:10:90) 932

Members' staff
Overtime 644w

Members' visits abroad
European Parliament 582w

Men
Headteachers 376w
Magistrates 351w

***Men**—continued*
Social security recipients 482w

Menai Straits
102w

Mental health services
Wirral Health Authority 409w

Mental hospitals
Blind 404w
Hospital admissions 662w, 664w, 683-6w, 723w
Scotland 723w
Wales 662w, 664w

Mental illness
Expenditure 591w
Finance 591w
Scottish health boards 591w

Mentally disadvantaged
Community charge exemptions 231w

Mentally disturbed offenders
Research 739w

Mentally ill
Attendance allowance 224w
Children in care 265-6w
Elderly 443w
Prescription charges exemptions 443w
Severe disablement allowance 224w
Women 265-6w

Mercenaries
Treaties 388w

Merchant ships
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 755-6w
Shipping accidents 341w

Merit awards
Hospital consultants 526w

Mersey Docks & Harbour Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Mersey Regional Health Authority
409w

Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive
Trains 461w

Metal industries
Nuclear safety 87w

Metals
Nuclear safety 86-7w

Methane
EC Agriculture Council 135w
Waste disposal 181w

Metropolitan districts
Standard spending assessments 691w

Metropolitan Police
123w, 348w, 509w, 731w, 741-2w, (30:10:90) 948-59

Mexico
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 562w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Questions
Coastal protection, Towyn 355-6w
Railway electrification, North Wales 718

Michael, Mr Alun
Questions
Carers, Wales 710
Community care 318w
Community care, Finance 420w
Community care, Government grants to local authorities 318-20w
Community care, Local government finance 357-8w, 545w
Community care, Wales 320w, 548w
Hospitals, Sewage 27w
Intensive care, Hospital beds 26w, 102w
Nurses, Career structure 25-6w
Secure accommodation 31-2w

***Michael, Mr Alun**—continued*
Secure accommodation, Wales 25w, 548w
Sewage, Ysbyty Gwynedd 102w
VAT, Tax harmonisation 8w
VAT zero rated goods, Charities 8-9w

Michie, Mr Bill
Questions
Defence review 499w
National Economic Development Council, Industry 601w
NATO, West Germany 215w
Taxation, National income 491

Michie, Mrs Ray
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 921-2, 927
Questions
Alternative energy, Non-fossil fuel obligation 74-5w
Caledonian MacBrayne, Energy costs 473-4w
Electricity supply industry, Non-fossil fuel obligation 13w

Microforms
Company registration 131w

Microwave Modules
204w

Mid Glamorgan Health Authority
709
Hospital waiting lists 710

Middle East
Exports 615w
Human rights 700w
Ministerial statements (24:10:90) 335-47
Nuclear weapons 58w, 696w
Nuclear weapons deployment 410w
Peace negotiations 219-20w, 319-20
UN resolutions 386w
USA 331

Midland main railway line
Railway electrification 68w

Midland Metro
(22:10:90) 71-105

Midland Metro Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 71-105

Midland Metro (Penalty Fares) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Midwives
Baby milks 31w

Military aid
Cambodia 864

Military aircraft
Air accidents 623-4w
Defence equipment 625w
Exercise Green Lanyard 762-3w
Exercise Red Lanyard 762w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 500w
Low flying 622-3w, 626w, 759-62w
Saudi Arabia 500w
USA 758w

Military balance
START talks 861

Military exercises
Defence equipment 624w
Low flying 758w
Shackleton aircraft 764-5w

Miller, Sir Hal
Questions
Art works, Objects in lieu of tax 573w
Government assistance to industry, Environment protection 982
Languages education 157w

Miller, Sir Hal—continued
Languages education, Curriculum 377-8w

Mills, Mr Iain
Debates etc.
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 76-7, 81, 84
Questions
Harmondsworth Detention Centre, Public appointments 128-9w
Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 128w
Tax yields, Listed buildings 360w

Milton Keynes Development Corporation
Re-employment 688w

Mineral resources
Antarctic 264w, 457w

Minerals
204w

Minerals Act 1981
Questions
41w

Minerals Act 1981 Review
41w

Mines
864, 969

Minet Holdings
Audit 201w

Minibuses
Safety belts 96w

Minimum wage
Civil proceedings 627w
Prosecutions 627w
Scotland 627w

Mining
Engineering industries 608w

Minister for the Civil Service
724

Ministerial Group on Women's Issues
273-4w

Ministerial policy advisors
726
Statistics 489-90w

Ministerial powers
Planning authorities 535w

Ministerial speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 497

Ministerial statements
European Council (30:10:90) 869-91
Government departments 642w
Local government finance (31:10:90) 987-1017
Maintenance (29:10:90) 729-49
Middle East (24:10:90) 335-47
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 348-66
Speaker's rulings & statements (26:10:90) 640
Terrorism (24:10:90) 367-74

Ministers
Cambodia 263-4w

Ministers' domestic visits
A19 708w
Educational institutions 517w
Motor industry 613w
Wales 275w

Ministers' visits abroad
Dept of Energy 194w, 522w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 454-6w
Israel 264-5w, 563w
Japan 969
Prime Minister 352w
Security 265w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
423-4w
Civil service dispersal 423w

Ministry of Defence
88-9w, 414w, 506w, (29:10:90) 752-841, 766-7w, (31:10:90) 1078-86
Accounting 89w
Civil service dispersal 725-6, 764w
Disclosure of information 85w
Educational qualifications 91w
Health physics 500w
Members' correspondence 766w

Mink
Transmissible encephalopathies 632-3w

Misleading advertising
Timesharing 598w

Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
Questions
185w, 718-20w

Mitchell, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1014
Questions
NATO 220w
Privatisation, Eastern Europe 612w
Regional airports, Capital investment 67w
Shareholders 295w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 536, 538, 553-5, 556, 562
Questions
Accountants, Company accounts 129w
Accountants, Company investigations 200w
Accountants, Dept of Trade inquiries 199-200w, 328w
Accountants, Disciplinary proceedings 428-9w
Accountants, Disclosure of information 379-80w
Accountants, Press 201w
Accountants, Professional organisations 200w, 327-8w
Accounting 201w
Audit, Company accounts 328w
Audit, Conflict of interests 381w
Audit, Dept of Trade inquiries 201w
Audit, Investor protection 328w
Audit, Licensing 380-1w, 428w
Audit, Public companies 379-80w
Audit, Shareholders 329w
Auditing Practices Committee 201w, 328w
Average earnings 743-4w
Cars, Japan 986
Companies, Environmental policy 130w
Company accounts 130w
Computer industry 769w
Dept of Trade inquiries, Professional organisations 200w
Dept of Trade inquiries, Public appointments 201-2w
Economic situation 5-6w
Electricity supply industry, Accountants 270w
Fixed interest securities, Disclosure of information 203w
House of Fraser, Solicitors 201w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales 200w
International Monetary Fund, Manufactured exports 6w
Minet Holdings, Audit 201w
Oil companies, Official gifts 658-9w
Professional organisations, Students 380w
Public companies, Company accounts 129w
Public companies, Fixed assets 129w
Public companies, Profits 329w
Shareholders, Information 777w

Mitchell, Sir David
Questions
Railway transport, Rolling stock 12
Speed limits, Motorways 69w

Moate, Mr Roger
Questions
Air ambulance services 30w
Green pound 632w
Horses, Export controls 422w

Moate, Mr Roger—continued
Retail price index, Harmonisation of standards 494w
Sheep meat, France 135w

Mobility allowance
Handicapped children 670w
Social security appeals 79w, 285-6w

Mobility of disabled
Public transport 62w

Modernisation
Defence equipment 863
London Underground 66w

Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 875
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 340

Monetary compensatory amounts
632w

Money supply
Inflation 493

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
52w, 770w
Brewing industry 602w
British Coal Corporation 771w
Credit cards 776-7w
Dept of Trade & Industry 770w
London Underground 433w
Publishing 770-1w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 910-2
Questions
Duty free allowances, Whisky 105w
Fishery protection, Aircraft 176w

Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Questions
Business statements 505
Investment, EC countries 298w

Moonie, Dr Lewis
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 61
Questions
Corporation tax, Provident societies 105w
Small businesses, Technology transfer 980
Student accommodation 156w

Moray Firth
Dolphins 724w

Morgan, Mr Rhodri
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 200, 216, 280
Questions
Aids for handicapped, Waiting lists 524w
AWE Cardiff, Emergency planning 502w
Electricity supply industry, Advertising 364w, 441w
Electricity supply industry, Electricity tariffs 655w
Flexi-ownership scheme, Wales 27-8w
Hospital closures, South Glamorgan Health Authority 718-9
Legionnaires' disease, Industrial health & safety 383w
Legionnaires' disease, Power stations 407-8w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 486
Medical rehabilitation, Aids for handicapped 545-6w
National Power, Coal 364-5w
Nuclear safety, Metal industries 87w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Scotland 74w
Serious Fraud Office, Ashcroft, Michael 354-5w

Morley, Mr Elliot
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 821-3, (30:10:90) 899-904, 916, 922-4, 926

Morley, Mr Elliot—continued
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Government department reorganisation 602w
Export credit guarantees, Fishing gear 207w
Industrial investment 497-8
Regional arts associations, Public appointments 397w
School milk 410w

Morocco
Air force 763w

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Questions
Community charge exemptions, Youth training 181w
Handicapped, Data banks 580-1w
Handicapped, Rehabilitation 580w
Invalid care allowances, Judgments 75w
Social Fund, British residents abroad 667w
Tax collection, Luncheon vouchers 493w
Taxable benefits, Tax thresholds 362w
Telecommunications technology, Handicapped 778w

Morris, Mr Michael
Questions
Family doctors, Patients 34w
Family doctors, Property transfer 34w
Hospital closures 35w
NHS, Capital investment 35w
Pregnancy, Vitamin A 36w

Morrison, Sir Charles
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 998

Mortgage defaulters
Advisory services 487
Duty solicitors 274w
Repossession orders 487-8

Mortgage interest rates
187w

Mortgage relief
Tax rates & bands 360w, 653w

Mortgages
106w
Economic regions 106-7w

Moss, Mr Malcolm
Questions
Agricultural Mortgage Corporation 312w
Industrial research, Expenditure 983-4

Motability
(24:10:90) 348-66

Motor industry
Buses 173w
Ministers' domestic visits 613w
Scotland 173w

Motor vehicle parts
Armoured fighting vehicles 88-9w, 421w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 88-9w

Motor vehicle registration
510w
Exhaust emission controls 462w
Pollution control 462w

Motor vehicle testing
64w
Exhaust emissions 245w

Motor vehicle theft
Crime prevention 16w

Motorway service areas
M11 (26:10:90) 630
Public petitions (26:10:90) 630

Motorways
Driving 188w
Road construction 68w
Road traffic control 512w
Speed limits 69w

Mowlam, Ms Marjorie
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 47, 49-52, 61, 66, 69, 152, 153, 157, 159-64
Oral question time intervention (31:10:90) 980

Mowlam, Ms Marjorie—continued
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 140, 146
Questions
Examinations, Primary education 176-7
Insurance companies, EC internal trade 613w

Moynihan, Mr Colin, Under-Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
Alternative energy, EC grants & loans 271w
Alternative energy, Government assistance 271w
Alternative energy, Research finance 441w
Energy, Environmental impact assessment 520-1w
Energy research, Research finance 439-40w
Gas reserves, North Sea 658w
Geothermal power, Energy research 655w
Offshore accidents, East Shetland Basin 272w
Offshore safety, North Sea 272-3w
Offshore structures, Industrial accidents 440-1w
Oil companies, Official gifts 658-9w
Piper Alpha Inquiry 440w
Piper Alpha platform, Safety measures 522w
Wave power, Energy research 439-40w

Mudd, Mr David
Questions
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 304w

Mullin, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Cambodia (26:10:90) 640-66, 668, 669, 681, 683-4, 686, 687, 688, 689-90, 691, 692, 693
Questions
Armed forces officers 90w
Armed forces training, Thailand 286w
British Shipbuilders, Property transfer 595-6w
Cambodia, Ministers 263-4w
Exservicemen, Cambodia 414w
Information technology, Balance of trade 985
Military aid, Cambodia 864
Offshore accidents, East Shetland Basin 272w
Offshore safety, North Sea 272-3w
RELATE, Government grants to voluntary organisations 19w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 150w

Multifibre arrangement
50w, 204w, 610-1w
GATT 610w

Multiple births
26-7w, 32-3w, 73-4w, 107w

Multiple occupation
Scotland (26:10:90) 638

Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre Glasgow
Finance 179w

Multiply handicapped
Disabled workers 427w
Handicapped students 377w
Special education 377w
Training 427w

Murphy, Mr Paul
Questions
Church schools, Wales 660w
Council house waiting lists, Wales 660w
Hazardous wastes, Rhymney Valley 716
Higher education corporations, Manpower 673-4w
Homelessness, Wales 550w
Housing, Wales 356w
Housing construction, Council housing finance 659w
Housing for Wales, Local authorities 659w
Housing starts, Local authorities 659w

Murphy, Mr Paul—continued
Licensed teachers, Educational qualifications 673w
Licensed teachers, Manpower 672-3w
Licensed teachers, Professional qualifications 672w
Licensed teachers, Shortage subjects 673w
M4, Roads 547w
National Library of Wales, Staff inspections 549w
Polytechnics, Student numbers 673w
Road finance, Government grants to local authorities 548w
Roads, Fishguard 547-8w
Sanitation, Wales 661w
School governors, Resignations 549w
Secondary education, Wales 548w
Severn bridge, Accidents 512w
Severn bridge, Automatic ticketing systems 512w
Severn bridge, Repairs & maintenance 511-2w
Severn bridge, Road accidents 512w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 659w
Timesharing, Misleading advertising 598w
UN Security Council, Cambodia 214w
Welsh language, Languages education 660w

Music education
Macmillan City Technology College 513w

MV Atlantic Conveyor
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 755w
Marine insurance 626w
Shipbuilding 755w

MV Derbyshire
Inquiries 96w, 249w, 317w
Shipping accidents 317w

MV Gur Mariner
Arrests 70-1w

Myalgic encephalomyelitis
Health service staff 683-4w

National Audit Office
85w, 88w, 407w
Pay 15
Relocation of employees 15

National Coal Board
see British Coal Corporation

National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group
377-8w

National Deaf Blind & Rubella Association
see SENSE

National Economic Development Council
Industry 601w

National Grid Company
657w

National Health Service & Community Care Act 1990
Questions
318-20w, 399w

National income
300-1w
EC countries 300w
National insurance contributions 491
Public expenditure 298-9w
Statistics 484-5w
Taxation 491

National insurance benefits
Social security recipients 482-3w

National insurance contributions
National income 491
Sub-postmasters 282w

National Library of Wales
Staff inspections 549w

National Peace Council
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 353w

National Power
338w, 441w, 657w
Coal 364-5w
Overseas trade 441w

National Radiological Protection Board
15w, 36w

National Rivers Authority
27w, 538w, 687-8w, 757w
Algae 344w
Manpower 468w

National savings
292w

National territory
European Security Conference 699w

National Theatre
721

National Union of Mineworkers
279w, 741-2w

NATO
220w, 318, 362-3w, 412-3w, 623w, 757-8w
Armed forces deployment 504w
Defence review 858
Europe 854-5
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 855
Nuclear weapons 319
Republic of Ireland 855
West Germany 215w

NATO countries
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 495w

NATO ministerial meetings
500w, 503w
Arms control 498w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 501w

Natural Environment Research Council
372-6w, 405w

Nature Conservancy Council
533w, 591w, (30:10:90) 895-946

Nature conservation
Birds 467w, 533w
Coastal protection 38w
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 344w

Navigation
Professional qualifications 342w
Ships 342w

Navy
Defence review 287w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 410w

Neale, Mr Gerrard
Questions
Guided weapons, Defence contracts 97w
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 297w

Near market research
308-9w
Agricultural research 308w

Needham, Mr Richard, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Action for Community Employment, Finance 453w
Companies, Marketing 558w
Concessionary fares, Northern Ireland 557-8w
Development plans, Castlereagh 638w
Dyslexia, School population 559w
Dyslexia, Teacher training 636w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Integrated schools 637-8w
Fertility, Medical treatments 107w
Food labelling, EC law 558w
Hip replacements, Hospital waiting lists 333w
Hip replacements, NHS & private practice 333w
Hip replacements, Northern Ireland 332-4w
Kidney machines, Northern Ireland 333-4w

Needham, Mr Richard—continued
Kidney patients, Hospital consultants 334w
Kidney patients, Medical treatments 333w
Opencast mining, Northern Ireland 558w
Organ donors, Northern Ireland 334w
Planning permission, Newtownbreda 637w
Radioactive wastes, Northern Ireland 635-6w
Rate rebates, Northern Ireland 638-40w
Rates & rating, Northern Ireland 560w
Roads, Castlereagh 250w
South Eastern Education & Library Board, School governors 453w
TDG, Lear Fan 107w
Teacher training, Northern Ireland 559-60w
University of Ulster, Students 452w

Neighbourhood noise
(31:10:90) 1023-77

Neighbourhood watch schemes
Easington 740w

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 883
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 343
Middle East (23:10:90) 191
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 404, 409
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 365
Questions
Armed forces officers, Community charge 501w
Arms trade, Iraq 606w
Educational finance 177
Inland Revenue, Tax evasion 7-8w
Liability, Community charge 555w
Palestine, Death 457w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 150w
Social security benefits reductions, Community charge 78w

Nelson, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 46, 57-60
European Council (30:10:90) 879
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 198
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 364
Questions
Driving instruction 66w

Nepal
Religious freedom 385w

Net book agreement
607w, 779w

Netherlands
Fishing quotas 136w
Low flying 759-60w

Network SouthEast
61w
Performance indicators 59w
Railway travel 341w

Networker trains
9

Neubert, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 402, 404-5, 408, 416, 422-6
Questions
Capitalism, Eastern Europe 300w

New Building Subcommittee
(24:10:90) 426-55

New clauses
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:10:90) 403, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411

New Forest
645w
Bicycles 645w

New Forest—continued
Blood sports 645-6w
Deer 644-6w

New Parliamentary building
(24:10:90) 426-55
House of Commons staff 17-8
Members' facilities 17
Parliamentary security 18

Newcastle Airport
Airmisses 248-9w

Newham
Educational finance (30:10:90) 947
Eye tests 35w
Social Fund 574w, 668-9w

Newham Borough Council
320w

Newsprint
269w
Radiation hazards 269w

Newton, Rt Hon Tony, Secretary of State for Social Security
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Ministerial statements (29:10:90) 729-49
Social security benefits uprating, Ministerial statements (24:10:90) 348-66

Newtownbreda
Planning permission 637w

Next steps initiative
392w, 574w, 724

NHS
Alternative medicine 30w
Armed forces casualties 526w, 686w
Building repairs 358w
Capital investment 35w
Marketing 408-9w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 98w

NHS & private practice
Hip replacements 333w

NHS charges
Incontinence aids 32w

NHS finance
Capital 444w
VAT repayment 444w

NHS hospital trusts
192w, 409w
Finance 408w
Parliamentary questions 444w
Whittington Hospital 406w

NHS Income Generation Unit
685-6w

NHS Management Executive
192w

NHS review
102w

NHS trusts
Royal Liverpool Hospital 526w

Nicholson, Mr David
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 365
Questions
Boundary Commission for England, European Parliament constituencies 260w
Grant maintained schools, Local education authorities 137-8w
Kidney machines, South West region 399-400w
Kidney patients, Ambulance services 399w
Kidneys, Medical treatments 399w
National insurance contributions, Sub-postmasters 282w
Registered homes, Local government social services 31w
Residential care, Local government social services 30-1w

Nicholson, Mr David—continued
School administration, School meals 180-1
Small businesses, Product development 979-80

Nicholson, Miss Emma
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 995
Questions
Family benefits 489
Road safety, Horse riding 63w

Nitrates
Yorkshire Water 545w

Nitrogen oxides
363w

Nitrous oxide
Greenhouse effect 2w

No-fault compensation
(25:10:90) 518

Noise
(31:10:90) 1023-77

Noise abatement zones
(31:10:90) 1023-77

Noise control
Low flying 501-2w, 625w

Noise Laws Review Group
(31:10:90) 1023-77

Non-contributory benefits
Social security recipients 482-3w

Non-domestic rates
Local government revenue 43-4w, 180w
Rate increases 470-1w
Small businesses 541w

Non-fossil fuel obligation
520w
Alternative energy 74-5w, 441-2w
Electricity supply industry 13w

Non-governmental organisations
22-3w, 358-9w, 387w
Nuclear non proliferation 562-3w, 696w

Non-payment
Community charge 187

Norris, Mr Steve
Debates etc.
British Council (26:10:90) 702-3
European Council (30:10:90) 876
Princess Alexandra Hospital, Capital investment (23:10:90) 308, 311
Questions
British citizenship, Fees & charges 556-7w
Manufactured exports 299w

North British Housing Association
Fees & charges 537w
Seaside & country homes scheme 537w

North Committee
see Road Traffic Law Review Committee

North Devon
Location of industry 597w

North East Drift Net Fishery Inquiry
see Drift Net Fishing Inquiry

North East region
436-8w, 632w
Manufacturing industries 975

North East Thames Regional Health Authority
(23:10:90) 307-14
Capital investment 445w
Land acquisition 318w

North Korea
South Korea 217w

North Sea
Gas reserves 658w
Offshore safety 272-3w

North Sea—continued
Seals 335w, 542-3w

North Sea oil
Oil revenues 9w

North Tyneside
738w

North Wales
Economic planning 356w
Railway electrification 718
Railway transport 717-8
Roads 358w

North West & Merseyside Arts Board
Local authorities 398w

North West region
Channel tunnel 59w
Infrastructure 187-8
Railway network 5
Road construction 707w

North Yorkshire
Crime 727w

North Yorkshire County Council Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Northern Arts
Public appointments 397w

Northern Engineering Industries
195w, 382w

Northern Ireland
Action for Community Employment 453w
Agriculture 559w
Car bombs (24:10:90) 367-74
Companies 558w
Concessionary fares 557-8w
Dyslexia 559w, 636w
EC free food scheme 53w
European Communities 558-9w
Fertility 107w
Food labelling 558w
Freehold land 250w
Giant hogweed 332w
Hip replacements 332-4w
Hospital consultants 334w
Kidney machines 333-4w
Kidney patients 333w
Local government constituencies (26:10:90) 638
Opencast mining 558w
Organ donors 334w
Radioactive wastes 635-6w
Rate increases 250-2w
Rate rebates 638-40w
Rates & rating 560w
Salmon 52w
Sewage 636-7w
Teacher training 559-60w
Terrorism 452w
Trout 52w
UN resolutions 387w
Water supply industry 636-7w

Northern Ireland Centre
Finance 636w

Northern Ireland education & library boards
636w

Northern Ireland government
52w

Northern Ireland health & social services boards
332-4w, 636w

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
53w

Northern Ireland Office
Complaints against central government 365w

Northern line
Criminal statistics 60w
London Underground 8

Northern region
Drinking Water Inspectorate 325w
Hedges & ditches 650w
Industrial disablement benefits 481w
Low flying 624-5w

Northern Regional Health Authority
Hospital beds 681w
Legal costs 680-1w

Northumberland
Police 127w
Police custody 127-8w
Probation & aftercare 127w

Nottingham
7w, 738w

Nottingham City Council
Government grants to local authorities 465w

Nottingham Health Authority
Agency nurses 29w
Temporary staff 29w

Nottinghamshire County Council
Government grants to local authorities 465w

Nuclear Electric
657w

Nuclear free zones
Conferences 348w
Local authorities 696w

Nuclear fuel cycle
Advanced gas-cooled reactors 657w

Nuclear fuel reprocessing
Sellafield 365w

Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive
42w, 73w, 343w, 379w, 467w, 589-90w
Radioactive waste disposal 42w

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Civil service manpower 383w

Nuclear non proliferation
57-8w
Gulf states 387w
Indonesia 655w
International cooperation 561-2w
Non-governmental organisations 562-3w, 696w
Nuclear weapons tests 564-5w

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
562w
Arms control 57w
International conferences 110w, 562w
Local authorities 696w
Mexico 562w
NATO ministerial meetings 501w
Nuclear safeguards 57w
South Africa 57w, 696w

Nuclear physics
Iraq 563w

Nuclear power
Conferences 12w
Iraq 563w

Nuclear reactors
Exports 655w
HMS Vulcan 757w
Iraq 563-4w
Repairs & maintenance 518w

Nuclear safeguards
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 57w
Plutonium 658w
Treaties 13-4w, 655w

Nuclear safety
Armed forces deployment 86-7w
International Atomic Energy Agency 115-6w
Metal industries 87w
Metals 86-7w

Nuclear safety—continued
Nuclear weapons tests 413w, 624w
USSR 86w

Nuclear submarines
Chatham dockyard 862
Decommissioning 765-6w
Health physics 411w, 508w
Radioactive waste disposal 411w

Nuclear test ban
562w
International conferences 387w, 639-40w
Nuclear weapons tests 565w
Parliamentarians' Global Action 639w
Verification 388w

Nuclear weapons
Chemicals 87w
France 518w
Middle East 58w, 696w
NATO 319
South Africa 57w

Nuclear weapons deployment
857
Greenham Common 854
Iraq 857
Middle East 410w
SRAM-T missile 286w

Nuclear weapons tests
388w
Costs 85w, 413w
Exservicemen 861-2
Nuclear non proliferation 564-5w
Nuclear safety 413w, 624w
Nuclear test ban 565w
Radiation hazards 413w
USA 413w

Nuisance
Giant hogweed 74w

Nursery schools
Glasgow 722w
Primary education 417-9w
School population 158-9w

Nurses
Career structure 25-6w
Greenwich Health Authority 405w
Wales 25-6w

Nurses' training
Home births 108-9w

Objects in lieu of tax
Art works 573w

O'Brien, Mr William
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 403, 408, 415
Questions
Defence industries, Unemployment 498w
Prisoners, Suicide 732w
Road works, Public utilities 71w
Textile industry, West Yorkshire 605-6w
Urban development corporations 690w

Obscenity
Telephones 251w

Occidental Petroleum (Caledonia)
522w

Occupational deafness
Coal mining 115w
Equipment 36w
Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985 668w

Occupational pensions
Equal opportunities 282w

Occupied territories
457w
Criminal investigation 264w
Iraq 695w
Israel 328-9

OECD countries
Balance of trade 603w
Electricity generation 520w

Offal
36w, 306w, 395w

Offenders
Electronic surveillance 738-9w

Office of Arts & Libraries
112w
Official hospitality 103w

Office of Fair Trading
51w, 201w, 430w, 433w, (25:10:90) 518-619

Offices
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 767w
Greater Glasgow Health Board 327w
House of Commons broadcasting 641-2w
Public inquiries 257w

Official cars
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 13-4

Official engagements
107-8w, 273w, 422w, 639w

Official gifts
Oil companies 658-9w

Official hospitality
658-9w
Dept of the Environment 46w
Dept of Trade & Industry 51w
Dept of Transport 72w
Office of Arts & Libraries 103w
10 Downing Street 639w
Treasury 106w

Official Report
Price increases 572w

Official secrets
Armed forces training 21-2w, 58w

"Official Statistics Counting with Confidence"
485w

Official visits
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 455w
Malaysia 195w

Offset arrangements
Defence procurement 763w

Offshore accidents
East Shetland Basin 272w

Offshore drilling
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 116w

Offshore safety
North Sea 272-3w

Offshore structures
Industrial accidents 440-1w

Oil companies
Official gifts 658-9w

Oil prices
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 136w
Tax yields 335w
Taxi fares 176w

Oil revenues
492
North Sea oil 9w

Oldbury power station
115-6w

Older workers
Employment discrimination 754w

Oldham
234w

Ondansetron
Cancer 409w

One parent families
Social security recipients 483w

O'Neill, Mr Martin
Questions
Armed forces, Community charge 414-6w
Armed forces housing, Community charge 92w

O'Neill, Mr Martin—continued
Armed forces pay 853
Armed forces retirement, Educational qualifications 91w
Armed forces retirement, Training 101w
Armed forces training, Disclosure of information 92w
Arms exports, Compensation 506w
Defence contracts, Fees & charges 506w
Defence contracts, Information technology 506w
Defence land, Land acquisition 506w
Defence procurement 94w, 507-8w
Defence review 91w, 858-9
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 338w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, International cooperation 756-7w
Ministry of Defence, Educational qualifications 91w
Official secrets, Armed forces training 21-2w, 58w
UK companies abroad, Armed forces training 457w
Wallace, Colin, Disciplinary proceedings 506w
Warrior, Defence procurement 95-6w

Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 876
Questions
Birds, Nature conservation 533w
Brookwood Hospital, Land use 228-9w
Fishing gear, Scotland 592w
Rivers, Water supply industry 322w
Trout, Fish conservation 325-6w, 392w
Water meters, Costs 534w
Water resources, South East region 321-2w
Water supply 534-5w

Open prisons
Prisoners' transfers 553w

Open University
Environmental education 46w

Opencast Executive
342w

Opencast mining
Coal mining 342w, 585-6w
Northern Ireland 558w
Planning permission 530w
Scotland 585-6w

Opening hours
Public libraries 573w

Opera
Arts finance 719-20

Opera North
719-20

Operating costs
Armed forces deployment 338w, 496w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 496w
Palace of Westminster 688w
Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital 98-9w

Operating department assistants
29w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Questions
EC industrial policy 976-7
Graduates, Private sector 184
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 486

Optical charges exemptions
Deaf 406w

Oral questions
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 375-401
Speaker's rulings & statements (29:10:90) 727-8

Order paper
(24:10:90) 375-401

Orders & regulations
20-1w
Animal feed 311w

Orders & regulations—continued
Cattle 650w
Children Act 1989 681-2w
Credit cards 776-7w
Environmental Protection Bill 1989/90 233w
Standard community charge 543-4w

Ordnance Technology
Iraq 609w

Organ donors
Northern Ireland 334w

Organisation International des Epizooties
209w

Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Government department reorganisation 602w
Public sector earnings 188-9

Orthopaedics
Hospital waiting lists 409-10w

Osman, Lorrain Esme
Remand in custody 18w

Osteoporosis
Screening 318w

Outdoor catering
190w

Outer London boroughs
Educational standards 162-4w

Overseas aid
109w
Cambodia 22-3w, 333-4
Eastern Europe 109w, 263w, 324-5
Germany 334

Overseas Development
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Overseas Projects Board
Public appointments 330-1w

Overseas students
Science & technology research 184w

Overseas trade
973
Cambodia 969
East Germany 978
Economic growth 495
Financial markets 973
Germany 985-6
Japan 602w
Manufactured exports 973
National Power 441w
Republic of Ireland 614w
Textiles 432w
United Nations 49-50w
West Germany 610w

Overseas workers
Higher education teachers 676-8w

Over-the-horizon radar
International cooperation 286w, 622w

Overtime
Members' staff 644w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 877

Oxfam
23w

Ozone layer
Refrigerators 188

Page, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Labelling (Environmental Effects & Safety) Bill, 1R (30:10:90) 893-4
Questions
European Parliament, Members' visits abroad 582w
Northern line, Criminal statistics 60w

Paice, Mr James
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Public order offences 727w
Ely RAF Hospital 503w
Ely RAF Hospital, Construction 90w
Horserace Totalisator Board, Privatisation 351w
Income tax, Tax yields 490
London Underground, Efficiency scrutinies 433w
Manufactured exports 299w
Small businesses, Industrial research 601-2w

Paisley
Family benefits 664w
Social Fund 574w
Supplementary benefits 664w

Paisley, Rev Ian
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 47, 53-4

Paisley North
868
Employment opportunities 583w
Unemployment 582w

Pakistan
Elections 390-1w

Palace of Westminster
641-2w
Asbestos 45w
Carpets 41w
Operating costs 688w

Palestine
319-20
Death 457w
Doctors 264w
Prisoners 264w
Refugee camps 329-30
Refugees 328-9
Self-determination of states 386w, 695w
USA 330

Panorama
48w, 779w

Paracetamol
Health warnings 108w

Parachute Regiment
762-3w

Parental responsibility
(29:10:90) 729-49

Paris
Road traffic control 340-1w

Paris Club
24w

Parish councils
536-7w
Commissions for local administration 691w
Local authority powers 537w
Local government finance 544w

Parking
Buses 66-7w

Parking offences
Diplomatic service 700-3w
Fixed penalties (30:10:90) 948-59

Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil, Secretary of State for Transport
Questions
London Underground 8
London Underground, Investment 7-8
London Underground, Northern line 8
Networker trains 9
Northern line, Criminal statistics 60w
Private Bills, Transport 1-3
Railway transport, Grampian 11-2
Railway transport, Rolling stock 12
Railway transport, Urban areas 11-2
Rapid transit systems 10

Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil—continued
Road traffic, Southampton 9-10
Road traffic, Transport policy 8-9
Road works, Public utilities 9
Underground railways, Hackney 9

Parliamentarians' Global Action
Nuclear test ban 639w

Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) (Miscellaneous Changes) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(26:10:90) 638

Parliamentary Works Office
45w

Parliamentary building maintenance & repair
Art works 536w

Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration
242-3w, 245-6w, 255-6w, 266-7w, 278-84w, 290w, 365w, 382w

Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration Select Committee
(31:10:90) 1077

Parliamentary constituencies
126w
Electoral register 446w
Scotland (26:10:90) 638

Parliamentary papers
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 106, 107

Parliamentary privilege
Speaker's rulings & statements (30:10:90) 902

Parliamentary questions
Civil service agencies 581-2w
NHS hospital trusts 444w
Speaker's rulings & statements (31:10:90) 1018

Parliamentary security
New Parliamentary building 18

Parliamentary sovereignty & European community
221w, 864-6
Sterling 867-8

Parole
Life imprisonment 449w
Prison escapes 449w

Parry, Mr Robert
Questions
Afghanistan, Diplomatic relations 565w
Albania, Foreign policy 561w
Business statements 505
Immigration applications, Somalia 556w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 110w, 337w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 90w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 337w, 503w
North Korea, South Korea 217w
Royal Liverpool Hospital, NHS trusts 526w
Somalia, Foreign policy 566w
Tax incentives, Energy conservation 296w

Part-time employment
EC action 2w, 754-5w

Party conferences
Conservative Party 316w, 766-7w
Labour Party 741w
Police 741w
Security 316w, 766-7w

Passenger transport executives
Contracts for services 461w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Defence review 499w
Doctors' list of patients, Barnsley Health Authority 681w

***Patchett, Mr Terry**—continued*
Local government expenditure, Theatres 689w
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 600w
Mobility allowance, Handicapped children 670w
Older workers, Employment discrimination 754w
Planning permission, Property development 691-2w
Repossession orders 691w
Residential care, Elderly 681w
Royal Shakespeare Company, Arts finance 650w
Special constables, South Yorkshire 740-1w
VAT, Theatre 654w

Patients
Family doctors 34w
London Ambulance Service 406-7w

***Patnick, Mr Irvine**, Lord Commissioner to the Treasury*
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1077

***Patten, Rt Hon Chris**, Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 920-1
Local government finance, Ministerial statements (31:10:90) 987-1017
Questions
Civil service dispersal, Dept of the Environment 530-1w
Complaints against central government, Dept of the Environment 267w
Dept of the Environment, Expenditure 691w
EC Environment Council 538-40w
Environment protection, Antarctic 692w
Members' correspondence, Dept of the Environment 690w
Official hospitality, Dept of the Environment 46w

***Patten, Rt Hon John**, Minister of State, Home Office*
Questions
Administration of justice, Costs 730w
Age of consent, Homosexuality 555w
Alcoholic drinks, Public order offences 445-6w, 726-7w
Alternatives to prison, Women 731w
Bombings, Birmingham 19-20w, 255w
Cars, Security 726w
Civil defence, County councils in Wales 120w
Civil defence, Local authorities 120w
Community service orders 736w
Courts, Buildings 727-8w
Crime, Economic regions 347w
Crime, North Yorkshire 727w
Crime prevention, Cheshire 730w
Crimes of violence 450w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 119-20w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Administrative costs 120w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Manpower 118-9w
Dog fighting, Convictions 348w
Domestic violence, Committal proceedings 251-2w
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency, Police 251w
Drug abuse, Chemicals 185w
Drug seizures 736w
Emergency planning, Conferences 17w
Emergency planning, Manpower 123w
Evidence, Electrostatic data analysis test 735w
Fire regulations 739w
Fire Service College, Fees & charges 729-30w
Homicide, Convictions 727w
Liability, Community charge 555w
Magistrates' Courts Review 741w

***Patten, Rt Hon John**—continued*
Marriage guidance, Government grants 556w
Motor vehicle theft, Crime prevention 16w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Easington 740w
Nuclear free zones, Conferences 348w
Offenders, Electronic surveillance 738-9w
Pornography, Research 727w
Probation, Ethnic monitoring 734w
Probation & aftercare, Northumberland 127w
Prosecutions, Telephones 251w
Rape, Marriage 315w
Rape, Prison sentences 743w
RELATE, Government grants to voluntary organisations 19w
Remand in custody 737w
Rights of accused, Police interrogation 729w
Security, Royal residences 742w
Security industry 732w
Security industry, Departmental publications 347w
Sentencing 729w
Sentencing, Alternatives to prison 557w
Sentencing, Magistrates' courts 729w
Sexual offences, Evidence 736w
Sportsgrounds, Safety measures 351w
"Supervision & Punishment in the Community Consultation Paper" 728w
Tickets, Touting 450-1w
Trials, Crown courts 737w
United Nations, Drugs 728w
Vagrancy, Prosecutions 251w

Pawsey, Mr James
Debates etc.
Special constables (30:10:90) 960-5, 966, 967
Questions
A45, Road works 189w
Airmisses, Complaints 244w
Airmisses, Information 244w
Archery 472-3w
Archery, EC law 472-3w
Bailiffs, Pay 278w
Class sizes, Primary education 165-6w
County courts, Administrative delays 276-8w
Coventry Airport, Air accidents 244w
Coventry Airport, Airmisses 244w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 119-20w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Administrative costs 120w
Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, Manpower 118-9w
Electoral register, Disclosure of information 118w
Grant maintained schools 138-9w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 496w
Judgment debts 2[illegible]w
Judgment debts, Judgments enforcement 278w
Local education authorities, Budgeting 152-4w
M1, Road traffic 189w
M40, Road construction 189w
Palestine, Refugees 328-9
Poland, Frontiers 54w
Primary education, Cost per pupil 165w
Public expenditure, National income 298-9w
Rent arrears, Local authorities 228w
School discipline 165w
Schools, Fires 164-5w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 166w
Standard assessment tasks, Primary education 281w
Sunday trading, Markets 39-40w, 527w
Truancy 164w, 193w

Pax Christi
353w

Pay
Bailiffs 278w
Civil service recruitment 5w

***Pay**—continued*
Manufacturing industries 487
National Audit Office 15
Productivity 975
Teachers 3w, 155w, 173-5, 369w
Unemployment 495

Pay review bodies
Teachers 369-70w

Pay settlements
Directors 492-3
Inflation 111w
Productivity 867

Peace
Science & technology 517w, 565w

Peace camps
Greenham Common 854

Peace negotiations
Cambodia 214w, 561w
Foreign aid 326
Israel 219w
Middle East 219-20w, 319-20

Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty
388w

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 362

Pedestrian crossings
Bigrigg 249w
Road accidents 6-7

Peers
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 549

Penal reform
Management 447w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 811-3
Questions
Fireworks, Safety 777-8w
Income support, Pupils 480w
Infrastructure, North West region 187-8
Public order policing, Football 731w
Sportsgrounds, Safety measures 351w

Pension funds
Local government pensions 181-2w

Pensioners
Concessionary television licences 347w, 725-6w
EC free food scheme 53w
Scotland 169w
Social security benefits 79w

Pentland Firth
Shipping accidents 342w

Per capita costs
Prisoners 211w
Prisons 17-8w

Performance indicators
316-7w
British Rail 65w
Network SouthEast 59w

Personal income
Farmers 288w

Personal injury compensation
Medical treatments (25:10:90) 518

Personal records
Disclosure of information 444w
Local government social services 444w

Personal savings
296w
Debts 972
Residential care 319w

Personal social services
Alzheimer's disease 524w

Personnel management
Health service staff 399w

Perth & Kinross District Council
213w

Pest control
Foxes 719w
Herons 473w

Pesticide residues
Prosecutions 649-50w

Peterborough
Explosions 339w

Peterlee
Police 740w
Social Fund 669w

Petrochemicals
VAT 362-3w, 653-4w

Petrol
Energy consumption 13w
Prices 13w, 521w

Petroleum exploration
Falkland Islands 454w

Petroleum production
116w
Tax yields 493w

Phoenix missiles
507-8w

Physical education
Curriculum 674w

Physiotherapists
Student numbers 30w

Physiotherapy
Scotland 73w
Student numbers 73w

Pigmeat
Germany 631w

Pike, Mr Peter L
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 780-1, 783-4, (30:10:90) 937-8, 941-2
Local government finance (31:10:90) 995-6
Questions
British nationality, Administrative delays 733w
Channel tunnel, Transport policy 60w
Magistrates, Public appointments 14-5
North West & Merseyside Arts Board, Local authorities 398w
Official engagements 107-8w, 422w
School administration, Village schools 180
South Africa, Apartheid 110w
Textile industry 131w
Trident 499w

Pipelines
Limavady 53w

Piper Alpha Inquiry
15w, 440w

Piper Alpha platform
Pollution monitoring 522w
Safety measures 522w

Planning appeals
Glasgow 478w
Swansea 420w

Planning authorities
Access to buildings 343-4w
Ministerial powers 535w

Planning blight
Bury 706w

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Questions
471w

Planning permission
536w
Aerials 692-3w

Planning permission—continued
Demolition 687w
Estuaries 321w
Farm buildings 229w
Golf 321w
Greater London 37-8w
Local authority powers 346w, 535-6w
Newtownbreda 637w
Opencast mining 530w
Property development 691-2w
Twickenham 37w

Plant Breeding Institute
675-6w

Plessey
195w, 382w

Plutonium
Exports 658w
Nuclear safeguards 658w

Points of order
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 21, (23:10:90) 191, 217, (24:10:90) 399, 402-3, (31:10:90) 1018

Pol Pot
Cambodia 333

Poland
220-1w
Frontiers 54w

Poland Hungary assistance for economic restructuring
111w
EC staff 55w
UK contributions 111w

Police
734w
Career structure 254-6w
Cost effectiveness 730w
Crimes of violence 735-6w
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency 251w
East Germany 325
International cooperation 336w
Management 185-6w
Manpower 127w, 254-6w, 590-1w, 728w
Northumberland 127w
Party conferences 741w
Peterlee 740w
Port of London Authority 462w
Ports 70w, 704w
Scotland 590-1w
Shift work 728w
Special constables 313w

Police Complaints Authority
348w
Public appointments 186w

Police custody
Northumberland 127-8w
Prisoners 737w

Police interrogation
Audio recordings 450w
Rights of accused 729w
Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry 53w

Police powers
Athletics 256-7w
Disclosure of information 256-7w

Police records
AIDS 19-20w

Police stations
Domestic violence 252w
Rape 255w

Polish Resettlement Act 1947
Questions
Members' correspondence 210w

Political doctrines
Higher civil servants 726

Political education
Complaints 166w

Political parties
South Africa 220w

Political prisoners
Jordan 221w
Kenya 263w

Political refugees
Haslar Young Offenders' Institution 118w
Immigration 452w
Immigration applications 451-2w

Politicians
Prime Minister 352w

Pollution
Company disclosure of information 616w
London docklands 324w

Pollution control
(29:10:90) 752-841, (30:10:90) 895-946
Defence land 414w
Motor vehicle registration 462w
Sea pollution 335w
Upper Waiting Hall 232w

Pollution Inspectorate
see HM Inspectorate of Pollution

Pollution monitoring
Piper Alpha platform 522w

Polly Peck
Company accounts 621w
Company investigations 381-2w

Polychlorinated biphenyl
Waste disposal 180w

Polygamy
Retirement pensions 670w

Polytechnics
Student numbers 673w

Polytechnics & Colleges' Funding Council
673-4w

PONI
558w

Poop-scoops
257-60w

Population
Commonwealth 694w
Hong Kong 695w

Pornography
Research 727w

Port Glasgow
77w, 117-8w, 211-2w, 223-4w

Port of London Act 1968
Questions
462w

Port of London Authority
342w
Police 462w
Privatisation 188w

Port of Tyne Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep* & 3R* (29:10:90) 707
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Porter, Mr Barry
Questions
EC internal trade, Legal opinion 606w
Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering, Defence contracts 503w

Porter, Mr David
Questions
Access funds, Students 167w
Accounting, Professional qualifications 433w
Common fisheries policy 80-1w
Common fisheries policy, UK contributions to EC budget 80w
Curriculum, History education 4w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 109w
EC Fisheries Inspectorate 80w
Educational finance, EC countries 370-1w
Educational finance, Primary education 370w

***Porter, Mr David**—continued*
Fish, EC action 309-10w
Fishing quotas, Fishery agreements 136w
Fishing quotas, Netherlands 136w
Fishing vessels, Marine fuels 136w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Oil prices 136w
Languages education 3-4w
Languages education, Teachers 3w
Local authorities, Access to buildings 343w
Overseas aid 109w
Planning authorities, Access to buildings 343-4w
Recycling, EC countries 40w
Teacher training, Student numbers 369w
Teacher training, Teachers 367-8w
Teachers, Manpower 371w
Teachers, Pay 369w
Teachers, Pay review bodies 369-70w

***Portillo, Mr Michael**, Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities*
Questions
Community charge 181w
Community charge, Appeals 180w
Community charge, Electoral register 228w
Community charge benefits, Government grants to local authorities 43w
Community charge exemptions 231-2w
Community charge exemptions, Departmental publications 232w
Community charge exemptions, Mentally disadvantaged 231w
Community charge exemptions, Youth training 181w
Crown suppliers 38w
Crown suppliers, Privatisation 692w
Government grants to local authorities, Community charge benefits 43w
Local authorities, Competition 469w, 691w
Local authorities, Contracts 470w
Local authorities, Contracts for services 541-2w
Local government expenditure, Magistrates' courts 471-2w
Local government finance, Transitional relief 465w
Local government pensions, Pension funds 181-2w
London docklands, Roads 540w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Community development 320w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Community work 320-1w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Infrastructure 320w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Location of industry 267w
London Docklands Development Corporation, Resignations 342w
Non-domestic rates, Local government revenue 43-4w, 180w
Non-domestic rates, Rate increases 470-1w
Property Services Agency, Privatisation 533w
Sheffield Development Corporation 267w
Sheffield Development Corporation, Inquiries 227-8w, 469w
Standard community charge 231w
Standard community charge, Orders & regulations 543-4w
Standard spending assessments, Metropolitan districts 691w
Uniform business rate 43w
Urban development corporations, Expenditure 471w

Ports
Coal 710w
Police 70w, 704w

Post codes
Electoral register 449w

Post Office
329w
Investment 614w

Postage stamps
International cooperation 775w

Postal services
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 695w

Poultry
Salmonella 649w

Powell, Mr Ray
Debates etc.
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 431, 443-5
Questions
Mid Glamorgan Health Authority 709
Trades Union Congress, Child benefit 296w
Trident 498-9w

Powell, Mr William
Questions
East Germany, Police 325

Power stations
Legionnaires' disease 383w, 407-8w

PowerGen
657w
Privatisation 15w

Pregnancy
Vitamin A 36w

Pregnant women
EC law 112-5w
HIV infection 443w

Pre-school education
Educational finance 158w

Prescott, Mr John
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Merchant ships 755-6w
MV Atlantic Conveyor, Marine insurance 626w
MV Atlantic Conveyor, Shipbuilding 755w
Railway network, North West region 5

Prescription charges
Income 682w, 723-4w
Scotland 723-4w
Wales 661-2w

Prescription charges exemptions
Low incomes 682w
Mentally ill 443w

Press
Accountants 201w

Preussag
47-8w

Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989
Questions
128w

Preventive medicine
Spinal injuries 400w

Price, Sir David
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 740
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 358
Questions
Retirement pensions 665w

Price differences
Coal 364-5w

Price increases
Official Report 572w

Price Waterhouse
225-6w

Prices
Agricultural chemicals 424w
Audio recordings 775w
Petrol 13w, 521w
Sheep meat 394w

Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 739
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 496-7w

***Primarolo, Ms Dawn**—continued*
Dept of Trade & Industry, Government department reorganisation 602w
Israel 319-20
Repossession orders, Rent arrears 353w
Social security claims, Single homeless 224w

Primary education
Class sizes 165-6w
Cost per pupil 165w
Denny 178-9w
Educational assessment 161w, 243-4w
Educational finance 370w
Examinations 176-8
Nursery schools 417-9w
Staffordshire 159w
Standard assessment tasks 281w

Prime Minister
Heads of State 352w
Ministers' visits abroad 352w
Politicians 352w

Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit
20w

Prime Minister's questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (25:10:90) 499

Princess Alexandra Hospital
Capital investment (23:10:90) 307-14

Princess of Wales Hospital
709-10

Printing industry
Air pollution 323-4w
Cancer hazards 111w
Hazardous wastes 324w
Water treatment 269w

Priorities Board for R & D in Agriculture & Food
Agricultural research 423-4w
Food Safety & Applied Nutrition Research Committee 424w

Priority routes
340-1w

Prison employment
731w

Prison escapes
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison 450w
Parole 449w

Prison hospitals
Agency nurses 555w

Prison medical services
Belmarsh Prison Woolwich 447-8w
Complaints 739w

Prison Officers' Association
18w

Prison population
EC countries 314-5w
Haslar Young Offenders' Institution 118w
Prison staff 17w
Young offenders 314-5w

Prison riots
Manchester Prison 734w

Prison sentences
Crimes of violence 168w
Rape 743w
Ronson, Gerald 866
Scotland 168w, 717w

Prison staff
Belmarsh Prison Woolwich 447w
Greater London 742w
Housing 448w
Manpower 733w
Prison population 17w
Recruitment 448w
Wakefield Prison 18w
Widows 448w
Yorkshire & Humberside 18w

Prison visits
Prisoners 554w

Prisoners
Business 553w
Children in care 738w
Death 349-52w, 738w
Health 449w
Palestine 264w
Per capita costs 211w
Police custody 737w
Prison visits 554w
Scotland 211w
Suicide 120w, 732-3w

Prisoners' home leave
449w

Prisoners on remand
Durham 740w
Young people 732w

Prisoners' release
Life imprisonment 123w

Prisoners' rights
Education 732w
Ronson, Gerald 552-3w

Prisoners' transfers
Manchester Prison 734-5w
Open prisons 553w

Prisons
Budgeting 448w
Construction 553-4w
Food 448w
Long term prisoners 554w
Manpower 553-4w
Per capita costs 17-8w
Privatisation 730w
Sanitation 553w
Sewers 554w

Prisons Inspectorate
see HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Private Bills
House of Commons standing orders (24:10:90) 315-7
Sharpe Pritchard 642-4w
Transport 1-3
Underground railways 97w

Private education
Child care 178w
Scotland 178w

Private hospitals
Hospital beds 717w
Scotland 717w

Private sector
Graduates 184

Privatisation
Accountants 640w
Consultants 616w
Crown suppliers 692w
Docklands light railway 61w
Eastern Electricity 658w
Eastern Europe 612w
Electricity supply industry 13w, 75w, 270w, 363-4w, 441w, 519w, 655-7w
Horserace Totalisator Board 351w
Kleinwort Benson 105-6w
Port of London Authority 188w
PowerGen 15w
Prisons 730w
Property Services Agency 533w
Tote Bookmakers 733w

Probation
Ethnic monitoring 734w

Probation & aftercare
Northumberland 127w

Procedure Select Committee
(24:10:90) 375-401

Procurement
Baby milks 31w
Computers 89w

Procurement*—*continued
Statistics 490w

Product development
Small businesses 979-80

Productivity
Japan 297w
Manufacturing industries 296-7w, 572w, 981
Pay 975
Pay settlements 867

Professional misconduct
199-201w, 328w, 428-9w
Medical profession (23:10:90) 191

Professional organisations
Accountants 200-1w, 327-8w
Dept of Trade inquiries 200w
Directors 200w
Students 380w

Professional qualifications
Accounting 433w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales 433-4w
Licensed teachers 672w
Navigation 342w

Profile Training
Finance 629w

Profitability
Companies 296w, 568w
Manufacturing industries 568w

Profits
Aid financed trade 195-6w
Electricity supply industry 657w
Public companies 329w

Project Al Yamamah
100w, 204w

Property development
Bradford 235w, 535w
London Docklands Development Corporation 527w
Planning permission 691-2w

Property Holdings
533w

Property Services Agency
Air force bases 346w
Privatisation 533w

Property transfer
Armed forces housing 506w
British Shipbuilders 595-6w
County Hall 687w
Family doctors 34w
Health centres 34w

Prorogation
Queen's speech (01:11:90) 1088-90

Prosecutions
Antisemitism 354w
Channel tunnel 627-8w
Companies 627w
Computer Misuse Act 1990 598w
Costs 635w
Giant hogweed 74w
Holocaust News 12w
Hong Kong 566w
Insider trading 381w
Minimum wage 627w
Pesticide residues 649-50w
Telephones 251w
Vagrancy 251w

Provident societies
Corporation tax 105w

PSA Services
533w

Psychiatry
523w

Psychogeriatrics
Geriatric patients 679w

Public Accounts Commission
15

Public Accounts Committee
85w

Public appointments
Advisory Board for the Research Councils 375-6w
British Overseas Trade Board 330-1w
Dept of Trade inquiries 201-2w
Doncaster Health Authority 525-6w
Greater Glasgow Health Board 169w
Harmondsworth Detention Centre 128-9w
Local enterprise companies 725w
London Residuary Body 323w
Magistrates 14-5
Northern Arts 397w
Overseas Projects Board 330-1w
Police Complaints Authority 186w
Regional arts associations 397w
Research councils 372-6w
Royal Liverpool Hospital 526w
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority 248w
Training & enterprise councils 748-50w
Wakefield Health Authority 33-4w
West Midlands Arts 397w
Yorkshire Arts Association 396w

Public bodies
Audit 199-200w

Public buildings
Induction loops 681w

Public companies
Audit 379-80w
Company accounts 129w, 430w
Company management 430w
Fixed assets 129w
Profits 329w
Scotland 431-2w

Public expenditure
Computer applications 487w
Economic regions 571-2w
Education 589-90w, 677w
Health services 681w
Housing 654w
Industry 772w
Local government expenditure 492
National income 298-9w
Roads 654w, 710-2w
Scotland 725w
Statistics 487w
Taxation 491
Trade 772w
Transport 710-2w
Wales 660w

Public holidays
Low flying 761w

Public houses
Security of tenure (22:10:90) 39-44

Public inquiries
A6(M) 460w
Birmingham 257w
Offices 257w

Public interest
Evidence 687w, 742w

Public lavatories
191w

Public lending right
573w, 651w
Expenditure 651w
Inflation 652w

Public libraries
Books 573w
Opening hours 573w

Public opinion
Statistics 487w

Public order offences
Alcoholic drinks 445-6w, 726-7w

Public order policing
Football 731w

Public participation in planning
A487 547w
Greater Manchester relief road 705w

Public petitions
Antarctic (26:10:90) 630
Dog registration scheme (26:10:90) 629
Educational finance (30:10:90) 947
Motorway service areas (26:10:90) 630

Public Records Act 1958
Questions
419-20w

Public sector
Graduates 184

Public sector earnings
188-9

Public sector housing
Building repairs 533-4w
Housing starts 344w

Public service vehicles
Scotland 176w

Public transport
Mobility of disabled 62w

Public utilities
(25:10:90) 620-8
Road works 9, 71w, 95w, 317w

Public Utilities Street Works Act 1950 Review
(25:10:90) 620-8

Publicity
Road safety 245w
School boards 179-80w
Student loans 179-80

Publishing
Company investigations 620w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 770-1w
Restrictive trade practices 433w
Statistics 489w

Punishment
Saudi Arabia 703w

Punjab
699-700w
India 699w

Pupil records
Assisted places scheme 194w

Pupils
Income support 480w

Pupil-teacher ratios
City technology colleges 516w

Purdie & Kirkpatrick
Company investigations 616w

Quality control
Statistics 485w

Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital
Hospital beds 99-100w
Hospital patients 100w
Manpower 98w
NHS 98w
Operating costs 98-9w

Queen's speech
Prorogation (01:11:90) 1088-90

Queen's University Belfast
Students 452w

Quin, Ms Joyce
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 59, 60
European Council (30:10:90) 876
Questions
Defence review 499w
EC Industry Council 132-3w
EC Industry Council, Government assistance to industry 769w
EC Industry Council, Iron & steel industry 769-70w

Quin, Ms Joyce—continued
Industry, Environment protection 982
Manchester Prison, Prisoners' transfers 734-5w
Police, Northumberland 127w
Police custody, Northumberland 127-8w
Probation & aftercare, Northumberland 127w
School population 159w
Trade fairs, Environment protection 771-2w

Radar
Low flying 758-9w

Radiation hazards
861-2
Medical research 36w
Newsprint 269w
Nuclear weapons tests 413w

Radice, Mr Giles
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 884
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Manufacturing industries 600w
Interest rates, Unemployment 296w

Radio Authority
(25:10:90) 518-619

Radio programmes
Environmental policy 42w

Radioactive fallout
Health physics 15w

Radioactive Substances Act 1960
Questions
101w

Radioactive waste disposal
Dounreay 73w
Drigg 42w
Hospitals 101w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 42w
Nuclear submarines 411w
Scotland 379w
Sea pollution 343w
Wales 101w

Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee
42w

Radioactive wastes
467-8w
Containers 459w
Imports 458-9w
Northern Ireland 635-6w
Scotland 589-90w

Radnor
275w

RAF Bentwaters
766w

RAF Lossiemouth
764-5w

RAF Machrihanish
Low flying 760w

RAF St Mawgan
Construction 346w

RAF Spadeadam
624-5w
Armed forces training 625w
Low flying 625w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Questions
Factories, Empty property 717
Salmonella, Flint 714

Raghip, Engin
727w

Railway electrification
East coast railway line 61-2w
Edinburgh-Glasgow railway 65w, 704-5w

Railway electrification—continued
Leeds-Bradford railway 61w
Midland main railway line 68w
North Wales 718
Scotland 65w

Railway fares
Bus fares 703w

Railway freight transport
63w, 509w
Channel tunnel 59w
Scotland 723w

Railway network
Channel tunnel 245w
EC action 4
Investment 4
Lancaster 5
North West region 5
Scotland 178w

Railway property
Children 460-1w
Death 460-1w

Railway stations
Greater London 61w
Gwent 356w
Jubilee line 95w

Railway transport
Bristol 11
East Midlands 62w
Grampian 11-2
North Wales 717-8
Rolling stock 12
Scotland 378w
Urban areas 11-2

Railway travel
Bus services 703w
Network SouthEast 341w

Rain forests
Brazil 24w

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 303
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 363
Questions
War pensions, Social security claims 117w

Raleigh Industries
Manufactured imports 975

Rankin, Robert
527w

Rape
Marriage 315w
Police stations 255w
Prison sentences 743w

Rapid transit systems
10

Rate increases
Non-domestic rates 470-1w
Northern Ireland 250-2w

Rate rebates
Handicapped 663-4w, 688-9w
Northern Ireland 638-40w
Wales 663-4w

Rateable value
Appeals 472w

Rates & rating
Northern Ireland 560w

Rathbone, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 462-4
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 742
Questions
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 325
Official engagements 639w
Psychiatry 523w
United Nations, Drugs 728w

Ravenscraig steelworks
Factory closures 970

Reading
Educational standards 178

Rechem International
227w
Hazardous wastes 186-7w

Recorders
Manpower 353-4w

Recruitment
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 286w
Prison staff 448w
Special constables 348w
Teachers 149w, 175-6

Recycling
Conferences 41w
EC countries 40w
House of Commons stationery 19-20
Industrial wastes 609-10w

Red Flag Exercises
Buccaneer aircraft 759w

Redbridge Borough Council
(24:10:90) 402-27

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill 1988/89
Debates etc.
Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 402-27
Order for resuming adjourned consideration of Lords amendts read (25:10:90) 485, (30:10:90) 851

Redmond, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 938-9
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1001
Parking offences, Fixed penalties (30:10:90) 950-1, 952, 953, 957
Questions
Age of consent, Homosexuality 555w
Child abuse, Satanism 400w
Coal fired power stations, Research finance 363w
Community charge benefits, Doncaster 666-7w
Containers, Radioactive wastes 459w
Doncaster Education Authority, Teachers 674w
Doncaster Health Authority 525w
Doncaster Health Authority, Public appointments 525-6w
Energy research, Research finance 439-40w
HMS Vulcan, Nuclear reactors 757w
Home Office, Secrecy 687w, 742w
Hospital consultants, Merit awards 526w
Hospital patients 680w
Lorries, Spot checks 458w
Merchant ships, Shipping accidents 341w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 383w
Nuclear reactors, Repairs & maintenance 518w
Offshore structures, Industrial accidents 440-1w
Opencast mining, Coal mining 342w, 585-6w
Opencast mining, Northern Ireland 558w
Opencast mining, Planning permission 530w
Parish councils 536-7w
Parish councils, Local authority powers 537w
Parish councils, Local government finance 544w
Police interrogation, Audio recordings 450w
Public interest, Evidence 742w
Radioactive waste disposal, Sea pollution 343w
Radioactive wastes 467w
Radioactive wastes, Imports 458-9w
Radioactive wastes, Northern Ireland 635-6w

Redmond, Mr Martin—continued
Radioactive wastes, Scotland 589-90w
Rape, Marriage 315w
Regional health authorities, Community health councils 524-5w
Roads, Thursby 459w
Security, Royal residences 742w
Social Fund, Doncaster 575w
Social Fund, Social security claims 479w
Social security claims, Doncaster 580w
South Yorkshire Residuary Body, History 537w
Straw burning, Safety measures 633-4w
Wave power, Energy research 439w
Yorkshire Water, Nitrates 545w
Zoonoses Order 1989 646w

Redundancy
Astra Training Services 629-30w
Bradford 629w
Clothing industry 238w, 426-7w
Computers in government departments 283w
Textile industry 238w, 426-7w

***Redwood, Mr John**, Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs*
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 45-9, 51, 52, 164-5
Landlord & Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 39, 43-4
Questions
Accountants, Company accounts 129w
Accountants, Company investigations 200w
Accountants, Dept of Trade inquiries 199-200w, 328w
Accountants, Disciplinary proceedings 428-9w
Accountants, Disclosure of information 379-80w, 429w
Accountants, Press 201w
Accountants, Professional organisations 200w, 327-8w
Accounting 201w
Accounting, Professional qualifications 433w
Accounting Standards Board, Standards specifications 429w
Astra Holdings, Dept of Trade inquiries 49w
Audit, Company accounts 328w
Audit, Conflict of interests 381w, 429w
Audit, Dept of Trade inquiries 201w
Audit, Investor protection 328w
Audit, Licensing 380-1w, 428w
Audit, Public companies 379-80w
Audit, Shareholders 329w
Auditing Practices Committee 201w, 328w
Brewing industry, Competition 430w
Caird Development, Company investigations 428w
Chemical industries, Industrial health & safety 50w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge 599w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge capping 777w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Finance 972
Companies 609w
Companies, Consumer protection 774w
Companies, Environmental policy 130w
Companies Act 1985, Shares 381w
Companies House Users' Group 130-1w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Expenditure 620-1w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Fees & charges 767w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales), Offices 767w
Company accounts 130w, 621w
Company disclosure of information, Pollution 616w
Company investigations, Publishing 620w
Company registration, Information 131w
Company registration, Microforms 131w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Trade & Industry 382w
Confederation of British Industry, Industrial wastes 779w

Redwood, Mr John—continued
Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies, Departmental correspondence 429w
Coopers & Lybrand Associates, Consultants 621w
Debts, Advisory services 598w, 971-2
Debts, Personal savings 972
Dept of Trade & Industry, Civil servants' business appointments 382w
Dept of Trade inquiries, Professional organisations 200w
Dept of Trade inquiries, Public appointments 201-2w
Directors, Disqualifications 618-20w, 779-80w
Directors, Fees & charges 434w
Domestic accidents, Statistics 330w
Dunsdale Securities, Dept of Trade inquiries 47w
EC internal trade, Environment protection 50w
EC internal trade, Legal opinion 606w
Environment, Conferences 434w
Environment protection, Advertising 182-3w
Environment protection, Conferences 775w
Environment protection, Departmental publications 47w
Eurocopy, Company investigations 616w
European Commission, Accountants 619w
Exchange rates, Disclosure of information 50-1w
Exhibitions, Upper Waiting Hall 777w
Financial markets 611-2w
Financial Reporting Council, Disclosure of information 382w
Financial services 608w
Financial services, EC law 613-4w,
Financial services, Investor protection 131-2w, 607-8w, 612w
Financial Services Tribunal 776w
Fireworks, Festivals & special occasions 778w
Fireworks, Safety 777-8w
Fixed interest securities, Disclosure of information 203w
GATT, Environment protection 768-9w
Genn Group, Company investigations 616w
Government assistance to industry, Environment protection 982
Grand Metropolitan, Elders IXL 52w, 770w
Hazardous wastes, Advisory services 51w
House of Fraser, Solicitors 201w
Industrial wastes, Recycling 609-10w
Industry, Environment protection 981-2
Insider trading, EC law 381w
Insider trading, Prosecutions 381w
Insolvency practitioners, Codes of practice 432-3w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales 200w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales, Professional qualifications 433-4w
Insurance companies, EC internal trade 613w
London Underground, Efficiency scrutinies 433w
Lowndes Queensway, Company investigations 619w
Mailing lists, Unsolicited goods & services 774-5w
Management 610w
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 600w
Minet Holdings, Audit 201w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Brewing industry 602w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, British Coal Corporation 771w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Credit cards 776-7w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Publishing 770-1w
Net book agreement 607w, 779w

Redwood, Mr John—continued
Official hospitality, Dept of Trade & Industry 51w
Polly Peck, Company accounts 621w
Polly Peck, Company investigations 381-2w
Post Office 329w
Post Office, Investment 614w
Postage stamps, International cooperation 775w
Privatisation, Consultants 616w
Professional organisations, Students 380w
Public companies, Company accounts 129w, 430w
Public companies, Company management 430w
Public companies, Fixed assets 129w
Public companies, Profits 329w
Public companies, Scotland 431-2w
Publishing, Restrictive trade practices 433w
Retail trade, Bankruptcy 207-8w
Retail trade, Company liquidations 205-6w
Royal Mail 329w
Share certificates, Computer applications 617-8w
Shareholders 132w
Shareholders, Information 777w
Stoy Hayward, Consultants 621w
Takeovers, EC internal trade 613w
Timesharing 51w
Timesharing, Misleading advertising 598w
Trade fairs, Environment protection 771-2w
Trading standards departments, Consumer protection 595w
Unit trusts, EC internal trade 611w
Uruguay round, Environment protection 768w

Re-employment
Milton Keynes Development Corporation 688w
Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation 688w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 543-6, 565
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 372-3

Refrigerators
Ozone layer 188

Refugee camps
Palestine 329-30

Refugees
735w
Child care 469w
Local authorities 469w
Palestine 328-9

Refuges
Government grants 480w
Housing benefits 480-1w

REG(EEC)2242/87
269w

Reg(EEC)3906/89
(24:10:90) 456-75

REG(EURATOM/EEC)1588/90
486-7w

Regional aid
EC grants & loans 132-3w
Economic regions 430-2w
Scotland 584w

Regional airports
Air traffic 67-8w
Capital investment 67w

Regional arts associations
397w, 652w
Arts finance 5w, 396-7w
Public appointments 397w

Regional enterprise grants
312w

Regional health authorities
Community health councils 524-5w

Regional planning & development
603w
Government department reorganisation 602w

Regional rates
250-2w

Regional selective assistance
312w

Registered homes
Local government social services 31w

Registrar of Public Lending Right
651w

Rehabilitation
Handicapped 580w

Rehabilitation engineering sections
545-6w, 663-4w

Reid, Dr John
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 746-7
Questions
Iron & steel industry, Clydesdale 970
NATO, Defence review 858

RELATE
Government grants to voluntary organisations 19w

Religious freedom
Nepal 385w

Religious persons
Islam 265w

Relocation of employees
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England 236w
National Audit Office 15

Remand in custody
19w, 737w
Osman, Lorrain Esme 18w

Renfrew
Air pollution control 477-8w
Social Fund 574w

Rent arrears
Local authorities 228w
Repossession orders 353w

Rented housing
Congleton 344-5w

Rents
Armed forces deployment 765w

Rents to mortgages scheme
27-8w, 466w
Basildon 183-4w, 466w
Gloucester 466w
Marketing 466-7w
Scotland 74w
Wales 287w

Repair grants
236w
Church buildings 346-7w

Repairs & maintenance
Big Ben 268w
Dept Social Security local offices 365w
Kingston bridge Glasgow 178w
Nuclear reactors 518w
School buildings 150-1w
Severn bridge 511-2w
Theatres 397w

Repossession orders
691w
Building societies 7w
Mortgage defaulters 487-8
Rent arrears 353w

Republic of Ireland
NATO 855
Overseas trade 614w
Travel allowances 557w
USA 330-1

Research
Greenhouse effect 648-9w
Mentally disturbed offenders 739w
Pornography 727w
Road accidents 189w
Statistics 488w

Research councils
Public appointments 372-6w
Research finance 158w

Research Development & Investments (Building)
Company investigations 616w

Research finance
Agricultural research 308-9w
Alternative energy 441w
Coal fired power stations 363w
Coal gasification 12-3w
Energy research 439-40w
Fluidised bed combustion 12-3w
Industrial research 984
Research councils 158w
Water pollution 405w

Resettlement
Diego Garcia 217w

Residential care
Costs 225-6w
Easington 670w
Elderly 681w
Hostels 75-6w
Housing benefits 366-7w
Income support 500
Local government functions 681w
Local government social services 30-1w
Personal savings 319w
Social security benefits 77w
Social security benefits rules 76w

Residuary bodies
Annual reports 537w

Resignations
Headteachers 376-7w
Higher education teachers 676-8w
London Docklands Development Corporation 342w, 529w
School governors 549w
Scottish Development Agency 721-2w
Training & enterprise councils 747w

Restrictive trade practices
Publishing 433w

Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976
Questions
433w

Retail price index
294w
Harmonisation of standards 494w

Retail trade
Bankruptcy 207-8w
Company liquidations 205-6w
Economic situation 330w

Retirement age
Bus permits 71w

Retirement pensions
665w
Easington 666w
Index linking 285w
Polygamy 670w

Revenue support grant
Bournemouth 38w

Rhymney Valley
Hazardous wastes 716

Richardson, Ms Jo
Questions
Abortion, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 402-4w
Deportation, Women's prisons 186w
Domestic violence, Committal proceedings 251-2w
Home Office, Day care of children 252-3w
Home Office, Women's employment 314w

Richardson, Ms Jo*—*continued
Judges, Manpower 353w
Magistrates, Men 351w
Police, Manpower 254-6w
Police stations, Domestic violence 252w
Police stations, Rape 255w
Prosecutions, Telephones 251w
Recorders, Manpower 353-4w
Sexual offences, Evidence 736w

Riddick, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 536-40, 564
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 798
Landlord & Tenant (Licensed Premises) Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 41
Roads, Kirklees (25:10:90) 620-2
Questions
British Rail, Performance indicators 65w
British Telecom 604w
Community charge, Non-payment 187
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 336w
Minerals 204w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission, Credit cards 776-7w
NHS, Marketing 408-9w
Rights of accused, Police interrogation 729w
School administration, Budgeting 151-2w

Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas,
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 873

***Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm**, Secretary of State for Scotland*
Questions
Average earnings, Scotland 211-2w
Cleveland Fuels, Industrial wastes 477-8w
Complaints against central government, Scottish Office 242-3w
Crime, Scotland 720w
Drug crimes, Glasgow 718-20w
Drug crimes, Scotland 718w
Fishery protection, Aircraft 176w
Health insurance, Scotland 720w
Hospital beds, Scottish health boards 713-6w
Hospital closures, Scotland 474-6w
Housing association grant, Scotland 720-1w
Housing support grants, Scotland 717-8w
Physiotherapy, Student numbers 73w
Police, Manpower 590-1w
Primary education, Educational assessment 243-4w
Prison sentences, Scotland 717w
Private hospitals, Scotland 717w
Public expenditure, Scotland 725w
Scottish Development Agency, Resignations 721-2w
Scottish Information Office, Members' correspondence 210w
Scottish Office, Expenditure 476w
Scottish Office, Transport 241-2w

Right of repair
533-4w

Rights of accused
Police interrogation 729w

Rights of way
Greenham Common 854

Riot control weapons
Army stores 261-2w

River pollution
Industrial wastes 530w
River Rother 687-8w

River Rother
River pollution 687-8w

River Tweed Commissioners
622w

Rivers
Water supply industry 322w

Road accidents
Bridges 96w
Children 711w
Greater London 6
M1 462-4w, 511w
Macclesfield 247w
Pedestrian crossings 6-7
Research 189w
Road traffic control 246-7w
Roundabouts 66w
Scotland 325w
Severn bridge 512w
Young people 188-9w, 325w

Road construction
65-6w
Bury 706-9w
Bypasses 68w
Cost benefit analysis 189-90w, 240-2w
Egremont bypass 249w
Greater Manchester relief road 705-7w
M11 709w
M20 71w
M40 189w
M66 3, 709-10w
Malaysia 672w
Motorways 68w
North West region 707w
Scotland 240-2w
South Wales 186w
Wales 547w

Road finance
Government grants to local authorities 548w

Road freight transport
Spain 191w

Road safety
A1 61w
Horse riding 63w
Publicity 245w
Road signs 708w

Road signs
Ferries 72w
Road safety 708w
Rural areas 63w

Road traffic
A1 60-1w, 705w
Greater London 64w
M1 189w
M62 709-10w
Severn bridge 248w
Shard bridge 460w
Southampton 9-10
Transport policy 8-9
Urban areas 97w

Road traffic control
Greater London 340w
M1 462-4w
Motorways 512w
Paris 340-1w
Road accidents 246-7w

Road Traffic Law Review Committee
461w

Road traffic offences
Cycling 509w
Judiciary 509w

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
Questions
190w

Road travel
Employment level 177w
London Ambulance Service 407w
Scotland 177w

Road works
A1 705w
A7 212w
A19 708w
A45 189w
A470 546w
A487 546-7w
A595 461w
Bypasses 547w

Road works*—*continued
Contracts 707w
Greater Manchester relief road 705w
Information 707w
Llanidloes 548w
M1 709w
M4 547w
Public utilities 9, 71w, 95w, 317w
Wales 546-7w

Roads
Castlereagh 250w
Catering 190w
Fishguard 547-8w
Kirklees (25:10:90) 620-8
London docklands 540w
London Docklands Development Corporation 529w
M4 547w
North Wales 358w
Public expenditure 654w, 710-2w
Thursby 459w
Wales 355w, 548w, 661w

Robbery
Belfast 559w
Inquiries 559w

***Roberts, Sir Wyn**, Minister of State for Wales*
Questions
A470, Road works 546w
A487, Public participation in planning 547w
A487, Road works 546-7w
Bus services, Wales 187w
Church schools, Wales 660w
Economic planning, North Wales 356w
Educational psychology, Wales 291w
Grant maintained schools, Wales 28w, 356w
Lorries, Gwent 25w
M4, Road works 547w
M4, Roads 547w
National Library of Wales, Staff inspections 549w
Railway electrification, North Wales 718
Railway stations, Gwent 356w
Railway transport, North Wales 717-8
Road construction, South Wales 186w
Road finance, Government grants to local authorities 548w
Road works, Llanidloes 548w
Roads, Fishguard 547-8w
Roads, North Wales 358w
Roads, Wales 355w, 661w
School governors, Resignations 549w
School population 420w
Schools, Construction 419-20w
Secondary education, Wales 548w
Sixth form education, Age participation rates 659w
Teachers, Educational qualifications 661-2w
Welsh language, Languages education 660w
Welsh Office, Civil service manpower 289-90w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc.
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 458-62, 473
Questions
Eastern Europe, Know-how Fund 325
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund, Tobacco 209-10w

Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
Questions
National Economic Development Council, Industry 601w

Rogers, Mr Allan
Questions
Balance of trade, Information technology 605w
Primary education, Educational assessment 161w

Rolling stock
Railway transport 12

Roll-on roll-off ships
Safety standards 316w

Romania
Adoption 32w, 56w
AIDS 56w
Child health 20w
Democracy 213-4w, 321-2
Economic policy 213-4w
Human rights 322
Television channels 56w

Ronson, Gerald
Prison sentences 866
Prisoners' rights 552-3w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 217
Local government finance (31:10:90) 996
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 734, 745-6
Questions
Business statements 514
Rapid transit systems 10
Retail price index 294w
Teachers, Recruitment 149w

Rookwood Hospital
545-6w
Aids for handicapped 663-4w
Handicapped children 663-4w

Ross, Mr Ernie
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 811
Questions
Israel, Occupied territories 329
Manufacturing industries, Trade competitiveness 600w

Ross, Mr William
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 231-3
Questions
Giant hogweed, Northern Ireland 332w
Giant hogweed, Weed control 332w
IRA, Bombings 560w
Pipelines, Limavady 53w
Rate increases, Northern Ireland 250-2w
Rate rebates, Northern Ireland 638-40w
Rates & rating, Northern Ireland 560w
Salmon, Fish farming 52w
Trout, Fish conservation 52w

Rossi, Sir Hugh
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 772, 781-2, 796, 801, 805
Questions
Non-domestic rates, Rate increases 470-1w
Property Services Agency, Privatisation 533w

Roundabouts
Road accidents 66w

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 31
Questions
Chatham dockyard, Nuclear submarines 862
Crown suppliers 38w

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 576-7
Questions
Coal mining, Occupational deafness 115w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Educational standards 163-4w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 600w
Occupational deafness, Equipment 36w
Road construction, South Wales 186w

Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England—continued
see Historical Monuments of England Royal Commission

Royal docks
320w

Royal Liverpool Hospital
NHS trusts 526w
Public appointments 526w

Royal Mail
329w

Royal Marine Reserve
Armed forces strength 338w

Royal Military School of Music
868

Royal Ordnance
505w
Defence contracts 99-100w

Royal ordnance factories
Explosions 411w

Royal residences
Security 742w

Royal Shakespeare Company
720-1
Arts finance 650w

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
533w, 633w

Royal Statistical Society
485w, 488w

Royal Ulster Constabulary
53w, 452w, 559w

Royal Yachting Association
72w

Ruddock, Mrs Joan
Debates etc.
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 440-3, 452
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 128-30
Questions
CFE talks, Defence review 862-3
Child benefit 189-90
City technology colleges, Government grants 515-6w
City technology colleges, Pupil-teacher ratios 516w
City technology colleges, School population 516w
Haberdashers' Aske's School, City technology colleges 516-7w
Interest rates, West Germany 292w
London docklands, Roads 540w
London Underground 8

Rumbold, Mrs Angela, Minister of State, Home Office
Questions
Belmarsh Prison Woolwich, Prison medical services 447-8w
Belmarsh Prison Woolwich, Prison staff 447w
Brixton Prison, Suicide 252w
Custodial treatment, Young people 737w
Dogs, Local authority powers 257-60w
Electoral register 120-2w, 185w
Electoral register, British residents abroad 446w
Electoral register, Costs 733w
Electoral register, Disclosure of information 118w
Electoral register, Finchley 16-7w, 256w, 739w
Electoral register, Parliamentary constituencies 446w
Electoral register, Post codes 449w
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 123-6w
Fine defaulters, Income support 738w

Rumbold, Mrs Angela—continued
Ford Prison, Disclosure of information 347w
Ford Prison, Telephones 552w
Haslar Young Offenders' Institution, Prison population 118w
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison, Security 450w
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison, Video equipment 347w
Life imprisonment, Parole 449w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners' release 123w
Long term prisoners, Prisons 554w
Manchester Prison, Prison riots 734w
Manchester Prison, Prisoners' transfers 734-5w
Mentally disturbed offenders, Research 739w
Osman, Lorrain Esme, Remand in custody 18w
Parliamentary constituencies 126w
Penal reform, Management 447w
Police custody, Northumberland 127-8w
Prison employment 731w
Prison escapes, Parole 449w
Prison hospitals, Agency nurses 555w
Prison medical services, Complaints 739w
Prison population, Young offenders 314-5w
Prison staff, Greater London 742w
Prison staff, Housing 448w
Prison staff, Manpower 733w
Prison staff, Prison population 17w
Prison staff, Recruitment 448w
Prison staff, Yorkshire & Humberside 18w
Prison visits, Prisoners 554w
Prisoners, Business 553w
Prisoners, Children in care 738w
Prisoners, Death 349-52w, 738w
Prisoners, Health 449w
Prisoners, Police custody 737w
Prisoners, Suicide 120w, 732-3w
Prisoners on remand, Durham 740w
Prisoners on remand, Young people 732w
Prisoners' rights, Education 732w
Prisoners' transfers, Open prisons 553w
Prisons, Budgeting 448w
Prisons, Construction 553-4w
Prisons, Food 448w
Prisons, Per capita costs 17-8w
Prisons, Privatisation 730w
Prisons, Sanitation 553w
Prisons, Sewers 554w
Remand in custody 19w
Ronson, Gerald, Prisoners' rights 552-3w
Summertime 315-6w
Sunday trading 726w
Wakefield Prison, Industrial disputes 18w
Wakefield Prison, Prison staff 18w

Rural areas
Curriculum 160w
Road signs 63w

Rural planning
Countryside 499

Ryder, Mr Richard, Paymaster General
Questions
Civil service, Career structure 360w
Civil service dispersal, Government departments 301-3w
Civil service dispersal, Treasury 655w
Departmental correspondence, Members' correspondence 654w
Duty free allowances, EC internal trade 7w, 103-4w
Duty free allowances, Whisky 105w
Official hospitality, Treasury 106w
Tax yields, Listed buildings 360w
VAT, Charities 299w
VAT, Petrochemicals 362-3w, 653-4w
VAT, Tax harmonisation 8w
VAT, Theatre 654w
VAT zero rated goods, Charities 8-9w

Safety
Fireworks 777-8w
Hazardous wastes 766w

Safety belts
Minibuses 96w

Safety measures
Piper Alpha platform 522w
Sportsgrounds 351w
Straw burning 633-4w
Transport of hazardous materials 509-10w

"Safety on the Move"
66w

Safety standards
Roll-on roll-off ships 316w

Sailing boats
Light dues 72w

Sainsbury, Mr Tim, Minister of State for Trade
Questions
Aid financed trade, Contracts 203-4w
Arab boycott, Israel 329-30w
Arms exports, Iraq 983
Arms exports, Saudi Arabia 204w
Arms trade, Iraq 239-40w, 606w, 615-6w
Arms trade, Television programmes 48w, 779w
Balance of trade 597w
Balance of trade, Europe 597w
Balance of trade, Information technology 239w
Balance of trade, Japan 597w
Balance of trade, OECD countries 603w
Balance of trade, UK trade with EC 239w, 602w
Bicycles, Market share 773-4w
British Aerospace, Export licensing 204w
British Overseas Trade Board, Public appointments 330-1w
Contracts, Iraq 982-3
Cosmetics, Exports 609w
EC external trade, Iraq 48w
EC industrial policy 976-7
EC internal trade 208w, 604w, 775w
EC internal trade, Legislation 599w
Economic sanctions, Iraq 608-9w
Energy, Malaysia 208w
European Commission, EC internal trade 208w
Export controls, Vietnam 203w
Export credit guarantees, Fishing gear 207w
Export licensing, Administrative delays 599-600w
Export licensing, Computers 610w
Export licensing, Vietnam 203w
Export promotion 607w
Exports 607w
Exports, Furs 132w
Exports, Middle East 615w
Exports, Surveillance 204w
GATT, Multifibre arrangement 610w
High technology, Government assistance to industry 976
Import controls, Giant hogweed 240w
Import duties, Spirits 199w
Import of live animals, Birds 613w
International trade, Iraq 47-8w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Contracts 983
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Economic sanctions 48-9w
Manufactured exports, ERM 976
Manufactured exports, Scotland 604-5w
Manufactured goods, UK trade with EC 975-6
Manufacturing industries, Foreign investment in UK 976
Ministers' visits abroad, Japan 969
Multifibre arrangement 50w, 204w, 610-1w
Ordnance Technology, Iraq 609w
Overseas trade, Cambodia 969
Overseas trade, Germany 985-6
Overseas trade, Japan 602w
Overseas trade, Republic of Ireland 614w
Overseas trade, Textiles 432w
Overseas trade, West Germany 610w
Textile industry, West Yorkshire 605-6w
Trade promotion, USSR 608w
United Nations, Overseas trade 49-50w

St James' Hospital Leeds
Self-governing hospitals 192w

St Paul's School Staffordshire
177

Salmon
Dichlorvos 632w
Drift nets 632w
Fish conservation 589w
Fish farming 52w
Greenwich Hospital Estates 622w
Northern Ireland 52w
Scotland 589w

Salmond, Mr Alex
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 249-51
Questions
Arms exports 494w
Channel tunnel, Scotland 4
Manufactured exports, Scotland 604-5w

Salmonella
Flint 714
Poultry 649w

Sanitation
Health hazards 191w
Prisons 553w
Wales 661w

Satanism
Child abuse 400w

Satellite broadcasting
Aerials 692-3w

Saudi Arabia
Armed forces deployment 287w
Arms exports 88w, 204w
Arms trade 100w
Iraq 563w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 186
Military aircraft 500w
Punishment 703w

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 799, 804, 814
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 210
Questions
Day surgery, District health authorities 501-2
Defence land, Pollution control 414w
Road works, Public utilities 9

Scargill, Arthur
Fraud 741-2w

Schengen Agreement
336w

Schmiedemeccanica
47-8w, 239w

Scholarships
Scotland 169w

School administration
Budgeting 151-2w, 673w
School governors 181
School meals 180-1
Special education 155-6w, 377w, 513w
Village schools 180

School admission
City technology colleges 514-5w
Judgments 159w

School boards
Publicity 179-80w

School buildings
Bradford 151w
Capital investment 150w
Land acquisition 243w
Repairs & maintenance 150-1w
Scotland 243w

School closures
193w
School population 193-4w

School discipline
165w

School Discipline Inquiry
165w

School governors
Haberdashers' Aske's School 516-7w
Resignations 549w
School administration 181
South Eastern Education & Library Board 453w
Wales 549w

School libraries
513-4w

School meals
School administration 180-1

School milk
410w

School population
159w, 420w
City technology colleges 516w
Dyslexia 559w
Nursery schools 158-9w
School closures 193-4w

School transport
Church schools 149w

Schools
Construction 419-20w
Fires 164-5w
Land acquisition 267w
Solvents 162w
Wales 419-20w, 548w

Schools & parents
City technology colleges 156w

Science & Engineering Research Council
372-6w

Science & technology
Advisory Board for the Research Councils 159w
Peace 517w, 565w

Science & technology research
Glynn Research Institute 372w
Overseas students 184w

Science parks
983-4
Educational institutions 615w

Scientists
Agricultural research 280w, 675-6w

Scope of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 34, 38, 42, 55, 56, 57, 76, 91, 146, (24:10:90) 441, 442

Scotland
A7 212w
Advanced gas-cooled reactors 725w
AIDS 177w
Alternative energy 74-5w
Alzheimer's disease 173-4w
Apprentices 169w
Average earnings 211-2w, 361w
Breathalysers 179w
Bus services 173w
Capital investment 587-8w
Carbon 725w
Channel tunnel 4-5, 59-60w
Coastal areas 591w
Community care 713w, 724w
Community charge 668w
Community charge exemptions 211-2w
Crime 720w
Dampness 587w
Dental services 326w
Dichlorvos 724w
Drug abuse 177w
Drug crimes 718w
EC grants & loans 73w
EC internal trade 479w
Education 589-90w
Educational assessment 243-4w
Educational equipment 712-3w
Educational finance 149-50w, 378w

Scotland—continued
Educational publications 712-3w
Educational qualifications 584w
Electorate 721w
Electricity supply industry 75w
Electronic equipment 585w
Emigration 586w
Eye tests 241w
Family credit 77w
Fertility 73-4w
Fisheries 421w
Fishery protection 176w
Fishing gear 592w
Fishing vessels 379w
Foxes 719w
Giant hogweed 74w, 213w
Government grants to local authorities 588-90w
Handicapped 175w
Hard core unemployed 175w
Health insurance 720w
Health service ancillary staff 168w
Heart diseases 327w
Herons 473w
Homelessness 711-2w
Hospital closures 474-6w
Housing association grant 720-1w
Housing standards 721w
Housing support grants 717-8w
Income support 575-6w
Industrial disablement benefits 670w
Industrial production 583w
Junior hospital doctors 326-7w
Local government expenditure 588-90w
Low flying 624-5w, 759w
Manpower 583w
Manufactured exports 583-4w, 604-5w
Manufactured goods 585w
Manufacturing industries 981
Medical equipment 176w
Mental hospitals 723w
Minimum wage 627w
Motor industry 173w
Multiple occupation (26:10:90) 638
Opencast mining 585-6w
Parliamentary constituencies (26:10:90) 638
Pensioners 169w
Physiotherapy 73w
Police 590-1w
Prescription charges 723-4w
Prison sentences 168w, 717w
Prisoners 211w
Private education 178w
Private hospitals 717w
Public companies 431-2w
Public expenditure 725w
Public service vehicles 176w
Radioactive waste disposal 379w
Radioactive wastes 589-90w
Railway electrification 65w
Railway freight transport 723w
Railway network 178w
Railway transport 378w
Regional aid 584w
Rents to mortgages scheme 74w
Road accidents 325w
Road construction 240-2w
Road travel 177w
Salmon 589w
Scholarships 169w
School buildings 243w
Sequestration of assets 593-4w
Sheltered housing 177w
Sheltered placement scheme 626-7w
Social Fund 223w
Speedlink 723w
Sports 722-3w
Storms 213w
Student numbers 181-2
Taxi fares 176w
Travel 168w
Trout 325-6w
Unemployment 174-6w, 583w
Vacancies 583w
Wheel clamps 178w
Youth training 479w
Youth training scheme 594w
Youth unemployment 594w

ScotRail
65w, 378w

Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas, Minister of State, Dept of Social Security
Questions
Attendance allowance, Administrative delays 284w
Attendance allowance, Computer applications 77w
Attendance allowance, Medical examinations 224-5w
Attendance allowance, Mentally ill 224w
Disability working allowance, Social security benefits rules 223-4w
Handicap benefits, Social security reform 575-6w
Handicapped, Community charge 670w
Handicapped, Data banks 580-1w
Handicapped, Rehabilitation 580w
Housing benefits, Residential care 366-7w
Independent Living Fund, Social security benefits rules 283w
Industrial disablement benefits, Northern region 481w
Industrial disablement benefits, Scotland 670w
Invalid care allowances, Judgments 75w
Mobility allowance, Handicapped children 670w
Occupational deafness, Equipment 36w
Severe disability premium, Social security claims 117w
Social Fund, British residents abroad 667w
Social Fund, Doncaster 575w
Social Fund, Newham 574w, 668-9w
Social Fund, Paisley 574w
Social Fund, Seaham 669w
Social Fund, Social security benefits rates 222-3w
Social Fund, Social security benefits reductions 117-8w, 222-3w, 669w
Social Fund, Social security claims 117w, 223w, 479w
Social security benefits, Handicapped students 579-80w
Social security claims, Doncaster 580w
Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985, Occupational deafness 668w
Vibration white finger, Social security claims 481w

Scottish Arts Council
652w

Scottish Development Agency
170w, 722w, 970
Expenditure 170w, 586-8w
Finance 586-8w, 722w
Glasgow 170-1w
Resignations 721-2w

Scottish Development Department
212w

Scottish Enterprise
593-4w, 725w

Scottish Grand Committee
(24:10:90) 374

Scottish health boards
Acute beds 713-6w
Heart diseases 592w
Hospital beds 713-6w
Mental illness 591w
Senile dementia 595w

Scottish Homes
170w, 720-1w

Scottish Information Office
Members' correspondence 210w

Scottish Islands
211-2w

Scottish Licensed Trade Association
179w

Scottish Nuclear
96w

Scottish Office
589-90w
Civil servants 379w
Complaints against central government 242-3w
Expenditure 476w
Transport 241-2w

Scottish Special Housing Association
170w

Scottish Sports Council
722-3w

Screening
Ear disorders 680w
Osteoporosis 318w

Sea Fisheries Inspectorate
379w

Sea pollution
Chemical weapons 82w
Pollution control 335w
Radioactive waste disposal 343w

Sea transport
Transport of radioactive materials 62-3w

Seaham
Social Fund 669w

Seals
Fish conservation 335w
North Sea 335w, 542-3w

Seaside & country homes scheme
North British Housing Association 537w

Seating
Air safety 70w

Secondary education
Class sizes 165-6w
Cost per pupil 165w
Educational finance 370w
Wales 548w

Secrecy
Home Office 687w, 742w

Secure accommodation
31-2w
Wales 25w, 548w

Securities & Investments Board
131-2w

Security
AWE Aldermaston 497w
Cars 726w
Defence industries 501w
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison 450w
Ministers' visits abroad 265w
Party conferences 316w, 766-7w
Royal residences 742w

Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry
Police interrogation 53w

Security industry
732w
Departmental publications 347w

Security of tenure
Public houses (22:10:90) 39-44

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 239-41
Questions
Educational finance, Hackney 157-8w
Underground railways, Private Bills 97w

Select Committee reports
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 632w

Select Committees
Disclosure of information 15

Select registration scheme
510w

Self-determination of states
Palestine 386w, 695w

Self-employed
Advisory services 426w

Self-governing hospitals
Leeds Infirmary 192w
St James' Hospital Leeds 192w

Self-governing schools
Holm School Orkney 725w

Sellafield
Industrial health & safety 753-4w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 365w

Semiconductor devices
Information technology 985

Senile dementia
Scottish health boards 595w

SENSE
377w

Sentencing
729w
Alternatives to prison 557w
Magistrates' courts 729w

Sequestration of assets
Costs 593-4w
Scotland 593-4w

Serious Fraud Office
381-2w
Ashcroft, Michael 354-5w
Trade union finances 279w

Set-aside schemes
Housing 647w

Severe disability premium
Social security claims 117w

Severe disablement allowance
Medical examinations 224-5w
Mentally ill 224w

Severn bridge
Accidents 512w
Automatic ticketing systems 512w
Repairs & maintenance 511-2w
Road accidents 512w
Road traffic 248w

Sewage
Hospitals 27w
Northern Ireland 636-7w
Slaughterhouses 46w
Ysbyty Gwynedd 27w, 102w

Sewers
Prisons 554w

Sexual offences
Evidence 736w

Shackleton aircraft
Air accidents 765w
Low flying 765w
Military exercises 764-5w

Shai, Patrick
740w

Shard bridge
Bridges 460w
Road traffic 460w

Shard Bridge Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
3R* (24:10:90) 315
Order to proceed in next Session (30:10:90) 852

Share certificates
Computer applications 617-8w

Shareholders
132w, 295-6w
Audit 329w
Information 777w

Shares
Companies Act 1985 381w

Sharpe Pritchard
Private Bills 642-4w

Shaw, Mr David
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 997
Questions
Grant maintained schools 137w
Small businesses, Innovation 603-4w

Shaw, Sir Giles
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 610-1
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 341
Roads, Kirklees (25:10:90) 621

Sheep
European Commission 355w
Farmers' Union of Wales 355w

Sheep meat
Compensation 135w
France 135w
Green pound 394w
Prices 394w

Sheep premiums
306-7w
Marginal land 393w

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Questions
Crime prevention, Greater London 731w
European Development Bank 359w
European Development Bank, Kirklees Borough Council 359w
European Development Bank, Manpower 359w
Occupational pensions, Equal opportunities 282w
Osman, Lorrain Esme, Remand in custody 18w
Prisoners, Death 349-52w
Remand in custody 19w
Sentencing, Alternatives to prison 557w

Sheffield Development Corporation
267w
Inquiries 227-8w, 469w

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 244-7
Questions
Arts finance 720
Inflation, Interest rates 493

Sheltered housing
Scotland 177w

Sheltered placement scheme
Scotland 626-7w

Shelton, Sir William
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 819-21
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1011

***Shephard, Mrs Gillian**, Under-Secretary of State for Social Security*
Questions
Child benefit 79-80w, 576w
Child benefit, Low incomes 282w
Child support, Expenditure 670-1w
Christmas bonus, Costs 75w
Community charge benefits, Doncaster 666-7w
Complaints against central government, Dept of Social Security 283-4w
Dept of Social Security, Welsh language 580w
Disposable income, Leeds 366w
Dept Social Security local offices, Repairs & maintenance 365w
Family credit, Community charge 544w
Family credit, Social security recipients 77w
Hostels, Government grants 480w
Households, Income 366w
Housing benefits, Council tenants 576-8w
Housing benefits, Government grants to local authorities 76-7w
Housing benefits, Students 579w

***Shephard, Mrs Gillian**—continued*
Income support, Availability for work 575w, 663-6w
Income support, Children 576w
Income support, Earnings rules 667w
Income support, Hostels 76w
Income support, Pupils 480w
Income support, Social security benefits reductions 668w
Income support, Social security benefits rules 76w
Income support, Social security claims 575w
Income support, Social security payments 75w
Income support, Transitional arrangements 668w
Industrial diseases benefits, Blackpool 78-9w
Invalidity benefits, Earnings rules 284w
National insurance contributions, Sub-postmasters 282w
Occupational pensions, Equal opportunities 282w
Refuges, Government grants 480w
Refuges, Housing benefits 480-1w
Residential care, Costs 225-6w
Residential care, Easington 670w
Retirement pensions 665w
Retirement pensions, Easington 666w
Retirement pensions, Index linking 285w
Retirement pensions, Polygamy 670w
Social security appeals, Administrative delays 669w
Social security benefits, Computers in government departments 283w
Social security benefits, Elderly 77w
Social security benefits, Hostages 481w
Social security benefits, Hostels 76w
Social security benefits, Pensioners 79w
Social security benefits, Students 579w
Social security benefits reductions, Community charge 78w, 224w, 232w
Social security claims, Single homeless 224w
Social security payments, Hostels 75-6w
Social security recipients, Men 482w
Social security recipients, National insurance benefits 482-3w
Social security recipients, Women 483w
Supplementary benefits, Paisley 664w
War pensions, Administrative delays 367-8w
War pensions, Social security claims 117w

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Questions
Commonwealth 221w
Education Reform Act 1988, Local authority associations 163w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 615w

Shepherd, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 542-3, 557
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 760-1
Questions
Business statements 518
M1, Road traffic control 462-4w

Sheri, Patrick
Work permits 317-8w

Shersby, Mr Michael
Questions
Antarctic, Environment protection 565w
Antarctic, Mineral resources 264w, 457w
Ethiopia, Entry clearances 457w
Local authorities, Refugees 469w
Ports, Police 70w

Shettleston
169w, 174-6w, 594w

Shift work
Police 728w

Ship chartering
755-6w

Shipbuilding
Defence contracts 503w
EC countries 597w
EC law 614w
MV Atlantic Conveyor 755w
Trade competitiveness 597w

Shipping accidents
Death 341w
Fishing vessels 379w
Merchant ships 341w
MV Derbyshire 317w
Pentland Firth 342w

Shipping safety
Hovercraft (25:10:90) 619

Ships
Navigation 342w

Shoeburyness
Armed forces housing 504w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 202, 224-9
Questions
Bank of England, Exchange rates 9-10w
Exchange rates, European monetary system 9w
Exchange rates, Mark 10w
Regional aid, EC grants & loans 132w

Short, Ms Clare
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 733-5, 748
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 355
Questions
Attendance allowance, Social security appeals 77-8w
Employment training 745w, 750w
Employment training, Finance 745w
Employment training, Industrial accidents 745w
Employment training, Skill shortages 745w
Employment training, Take-up 745w
Employment training, Take-up of employment 751-2w
Greenham Common, Rights of way 854
Income support, Availability for work 663-6w
Income support, Earnings rules 667w
Industrial health & safety, Training 753w
Local enterprise companies 593-4w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial production 596w
Mobility allowance, Social security appeals 79w, 285-6w
Social Security Commissioners, Social security appeals 11w
Take-up of employment, Advisory services 752-3w
Training & enterprise councils, Finance 746-7w
Training & enterprise councils, Public appointments 748-50w
Training & enterprise councils, Resignations 747w
Unemployment benefits, Availability for work 753w
Youth training, Contracts of employment 745-6w
Youth training, Managing agents 746w
Youth training, Social Security Act 1975 747-8w
Youth training, Take-up 746w

Shortage subjects
Licensed teachers 673w

Silcott, Winston
727w

Sillars, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 878-9
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 362
Questions
Arms exports 501w

Sillars, Mr Jim—continued
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90, Housing associations 449w
Business statements 510
Channel tunnel, Scotland 60w
ERASMUS, Student numbers 159-60w
Intergovernmental conference, EC integration 326-7
Light aircraft, Insurance 459w
Manufactured exports, Scotland 604-5w
Nursery schools, Glasgow 722w
Sheltered placement scheme, Scotland 626-7w
Southern General Hospital Glasgow, Spinal injuries 593w
Sri Lanka, Human rights 384w

Sims, Mr Roger
Questions
Health service staff, Personnel management 399w
Import duties, Spirits 199w
Planning permission, Estuaries 321w

Single homeless
Social security claims 224w

Sixth form education
Age participation rates 166w, 368w, 659w, 678w
County councils in Wales 659w
Educational qualifications 137w

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Questions
Air pollution control 181w
Eyesight, Computer terminals 191-2w
Motor vehicle testing, Exhaust emissions 245w
Road works, Public utilities 95w, 317w

Skill shortages
Employment training 745w

Skillcentres
Building industry 532w
Canary Wharf 532w

Skills Training Agency
629-30w

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 618
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 25, 28-31, 36, 37, 38
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 757, 758-9
European Council (30:10:90) 890
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 199-200, 216
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 347
Local government finance (31:10:90) 999-1000, 1003
Oral questions (29:10:90) 727, 728
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, Lords amendts adjourned (24:10:90) 404, 406, 407, 411, 413-4, 415, 417
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 365-6
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 3R (22:10:90) 106, 114-5, 116, 118, 119-20, 122, 124
Questions
Armed forces, Community charge 853
Arts 398w
Business statements 505-6
Carers 710
Civil service unions 725
Concessionary television licences, Pensioners 725-6w
District health authorities, Company cars 444w
Germany, Treaties 334
Members' interests 18-9
Private Bills, Transport 2
Teachers, Pay 3w
Voting methods 3°4

Slaughterhouse (Hygiene) Regulations 1977
Questions
306w

Slaughterhouses
Certification 306w
Government grants 312w
Licensing 311-2w
Sewage 46w

Sleeping rough
Census of population 230w

Slums
Glasgow 169-70w

Small businesses
Advisory services 426w
Financial services 426w
Freight transport 460w
Government assistance 979-80
Industrial production 980
Industrial research 601-2w
Innovation 603-4w
Interest rates 980
Non-domestic rates 541w
Product development 979-80
Tax administration 491-2w
Technology transfer 980
Training & enterprise councils 426w

Small farms
Agricultural subsidies 712

Small Firms Service
383w, 426w

Small Mines Association of South Wales
364-5w

SMART awards
434w, 979-80

Smith, Mr Andrew
Questions
Dept of Energy, Ministers' visits abroad 194w
EC internal relations 216w
Food standards, Government grants to local authorities 39-40w
Import penetration 595w
Student loans, Student numbers 179

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 998
Questions
Arts, Greater London 396w
Life imprisonment, Prisoners' release 123w
Police records, AIDS 19-20w

Smith, Sir Cyril
Questions
NHS hospital trusts, Parliamentary questions 444w
School administration, School governors 181

Smith, Sir Dudley
Questions
Structure plans, Warwickshire 342w
Wheel clamps 190w

Smith, Rt Hon John
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 216, 269-77, 283
Questions
Income tax, Tax avoidance 490

Smith, Mr John P
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 795
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1010-1
Questions
Countryside, Rural planning 499
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 713

Smith, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 52
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 377, 381
Questions
Tax allowances, House purchase 492w

Smoke & chimney gases
EC law 235-6w

Smyth, Rev Martin
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 360
Questions
Business statements 507
European Security Conference, Treaties 421w
Student loans, Publicity 179-80

Snape, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 72, 76, 85, 86-7
Questions
Balance of trade 569-70w
Railway transport, Urban areas 12
Road traffic, Urban areas 97w

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Exports 607w
Germany, Intergovernmental conference 324
Horserace Totalisator Board, Privatisation 351w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, NATO 855

Social Fund
British residents abroad 667w
Doncaster 575w
Newham 574w, 668-9w
Paisley 574w
Peterlee 669w
Renfrew 574w
Scotland 223w
Seaham 669w
Social security benefits rates 222-3w
Social security benefits reductions 117-8w, 222-3w, 669w
Social security claims 117w, 223w, 479w

Social Security Act 1975
Questions
Youth training 747-8w

Social security appeal tribunals
669w

Social security appeals
Administrative delays 669w
Attendance allowance 77-8w, 285-6w
Mobility allowance 79w, 285-6w
Social Security Commissioners 11w

Social security benefits
Computers in government departments 283w
Elderly 77w
Handicapped students 579-80w
Hostages 481w
Hostels 76w
Pensioners 79w
Residential care 77w
Students 579w

Social security benefits rates
Social Fund 222-3w

Social security benefits reductions
Community charge 78w, 224w, 232w
Income support 668w
Social Fund 117-8w, 222-3w, 669w

Social security benefits rules
Disability working allowance 223-4w
Income support 76w
Independent Living Fund 283w
Residential care 76w

Social security benefits uprating
Hostels 76w
Ministerial statements (24:10:90) 348-66

Social security claims
Doncaster 580w
Income support 575w, 663-6w
Severe disability premium 117w
Single homeless 224w
Social Fund 117w, 223w, 479w

Social security claims—continued
Vibration white finger 481w
War pensions 117w
War widows' pensions 117w

Social Security Commissioners
79w, 117w
Social security appeals 11w

Social Security (Industrial Injuries & Diseases) Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations 1986
Questions
481w, 670w

Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations 1985
Questions
Occupational deafness 668w

Social security payments
Hostels 75-6w
Income support 75w

Social security recipients
EC free food scheme 81w
Family credit 77w
Men 482w
National insurance benefits 482-3w
Non-contributory benefits 482-3w
One parent families 483w
Women 482-3w

Social security reform
Handicap benefits 575-6w

Social services
Aids for handicapped 403-4w

Social Services Inspectorate
404-5w, 522-3w

Societas Europaea(SE)
(22:10:90) 45-70, 150-65

Soil Survey & Land Research Centre
675-6w

Solar power
Buildings 229w

Solent
Tidal power 72w

Solent Protection Society
72w

Soley, Mr Clive
Questions
Development plans, Energy conservation 693w
Housing action trusts, Expenditure 546-7w
Housing benefits, Council tenants 576-8w
Mortgage relief, Tax rates & bands 360w, 653w
North British Housing Association, Seaside & country homes scheme 537w
Public sector housing, Building repairs 533-4w
Trading standards departments, Consumer protection 595w

Solicitors
Audit 201w
House of Fraser 201w

Solvents
Schools 162w

Somalia
Foreign policy 566w
Immigration applications 556w

Sound Broadcasting Select Committee
(25:10:90) 619

South Africa
Apartheid 110w
Foreign policy 220w, 331-2
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 57w, 696w
Nuclear weapons 57w
Political parties 220w
Sports boycotts 332

South Africa—continued
Violence 331-2
Voting rights 331
Walvis Bay 699-700w

South America
24w
EC external relations 336w

South East region
Average earnings 361w
Foreign investment in UK 436-8w
Teachers 175
Water resources 321-2w

South East Thames Regional Health Authority
Abortion 402-4w

South Eastern Education & Library Board
School governors 453w

South Glamorgan Health Authority
28-9w
Hospital closures 718-9

South Hams
420w

South Korea
North Korea 217w

South Tyneside
738w

South Wales
Road construction 186w

South West region
Civil service 391w
Kidney machines 399-400w

South Yorkshire
Special constables 740-1w

South Yorkshire County Council
537w

South Yorkshire Residuary Body
History 537w

Southampton
Road traffic 9-10

Southampton Rapid Transit Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (25:10:90) 485

Southern General Hospital Glasgow
Spinal injuries 593w

Southwark
City technology colleges 514-5w
Housing estates 528-9w

Sovereignty
EC countries 866
Falkland Islands 565w

Spain
Iraq 387w
Lorry drivers 109-10w
Road freight transport 191w

Speaker and his deputies. For rulings & statements see separate heading Speaker's rulings & statements
Debates etc.
Amendments & new clauses (22:10:90) 22, 23, (23:10:90) 195, (25:10:90) 520, 569, 587, 592, 595, 607, 609, 617, (29:10:90) 763, 765, 779, 780, 783, 794, 795, 835, 839, (30:10:90) 895, 899, 904, 931, 935
Buchan, Norman, Members' deaths (23:10:90) 173
Business motions (24:10:90) 426
Disallowed questions (22:10:90) 17
Oral questions, Speaker's rulings & statements (29:10:90) 727-8
Procedure (22:10:90) 106, 107, (23:10:90) 177, 186, 187, 188, 190, 205, 356, (24:10:90) 375, (25:10:90) 495, (29:10:90) 744, 755, (30:10:90) 873, 874, (31:10:90) 1011, 1012

Speaker and his deputies*—*continued
Queen's speech, Prorogation (01:11:90) 1088-90
Royal Assent notified (01:11:90) 1087
Standing Order No 20 applications, Iraq (29:10:90) 750
Standing Order No 20 applications, Walsh, Craig (29:10:90) 751

Speaker's rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (25:10:90) 622-3
Business questions (25:10:90) 517
Calling of members (24:10:90) 339, 347, 366, 374, 404, 405, 406, 413, 414, 417, 422, (29:10:90) 744, 755, 756, (30:10:90) 890, 891, 892, (31:10:90) 1011, 1016-7, 1018-9
House of Commons debates (25:10:90) 619
House of Commons motions (24:10:90) 375
House of Commons procedure (22:10:90) 109-10, (24:10:90) 402, 403, (30:10:90) 946
Lords amendments (25:10:90) 601, 604, 611, 612
Members (25:10:90) 589-90
Members' conduct (22:10:90) 106, (23:10:90) 206, 209, 212, (25:10:90) 539, (30:10:90) 861, (31:10:90) 969, 1057
Members' interventions (22:10:90) 36, 55, 115, 120, 122, (23:10:90) 280, (24:10:90) 354, 454, (26:10:90) 650, 692, (29:10:90) 712, 736, 759
Members' speeches (22:10:90) 158, (23:10:90) 177, 195, 229, (29:10:90) 753, 754, 756, 757, 813, (30:10:90) 932
Ministerial speeches (25:10:90) 497
Ministerial statements (26:10:90) 640
New clauses (24:10:90) 403, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411
Oral questions (29:10:90) 727-8
Parliamentary papers (22:10:90) 106, 107
Parliamentary privilege (30:10:90) 902
Parliamentary questions (31:10:90) 1018
Peers (25:10:90) 549
Points of order (22:10:90) 21, (23:10:90) 191, 217, (24:10:90) 399, 402-3, (31:10:90) 1018
Prime Minister's questions (25:10:90) 499
Scope of debate (22:10:90) 34, 38, 42, 55, 56, 57, 76, 91, 146, (24:10:90) 441, 442
Supplementary questions (24:10:90) 340, 342, 356, 363, 366, 371, (25:10:90) 494, (30:10:90) 864, 865, 880, 887, (31:10:90) 969, 994, 1001, 1006, 1012
Ten minutes rule (23:10:90) 195, 229
Unparliamentary expressions (22:10:90) 102, (24:10:90) 370, (29:10:90) 733, 734, 735, 748, 749, (30:10:90) 883, 892

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Educational finance, Public petitions (30:10:90) 947
European Council (30:10:90) 877-8
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 225
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 375, 376, 383-4
London Underground Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (24:10:90) 441, 448-51
Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Bill, 1R (23:10:90) 191
Questions
EC Foreign Affairs Council 218-9w
European Council, Documents 639w
Navigation, Professional qualifications 342w
Port of London Authority, Privatisation 188w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Safety standards 316w

Special care baby units
28-9w

Special constables
(30:10:90) 960-8
Manpower 185w, 313w
Police 313w
Recruitment 348w
South Yorkshire 740-1w

Special education
Multiply handicapped 377w
School administration 155-6w, 377w, 513w

Special schools
Budgeting 377w

Special training needs
181w

Speed, Mr Keith
Questions
M20, Road construction 71w

Speed limits
Motorways 69w

Speedlink
723w
Scotland 723w

Speller, Mr Tony
Questions
Agricultural chemicals, Prices 424w
Agricultural land, Lime 424w
Army 494w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, EC countries 632w
Civil service, South West region 391w
Food, EC external trade 424w
Food imports, EC internal trade 648w
Location of industry, North Devon 597w
Prison employment 731w
Road signs, Rural areas 63w
Water pollution, Bristol Channel 690-1w

Spicer, Sir Jim
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence equipment 864
Public sector housing, Building repairs 533-4w

Spicer, Mr Michael, Minister for Housing and Planning
Questions
Brookwood Hospital, Land use 228-9w
Council housing, Congleton 344-6w
Council housing, Empty housing 345w
Development plans, Energy conservation 693w
Golf, Planning permission 321w
Homelessness 235w
Homelessness, British residents abroad 468w
Homelessness, Cheshire 343w
Homelessness, Codes of practice 342-3w
Homelessness, Congleton 322w
Homelessness, Leeds 46-7w
Housing action trusts, Expenditure 546-7w
Housing revenue accounts, Housing subsidies 44-5w
Housing standards, Housing improvement 234w
John Groom's Housing Association, Housing & handicapped 39w
North British Housing Association, Seaside & country homes scheme 537w
Planning permission, Aerials 692-3w
Planning permission, Greater London 37-8w
Planning permission, Local authority powers 535w
Planning permission, Twickenham 37w
Rents to mortgages scheme, Basildon 183-4w
Structure plans, Warwickshire 342w
Sunday trading, Markets 39-40w
Wheelchair housing, Housing construction 233-4w

Spinal injuries
400w
Preventive medicine 400w
Southern General Hospital Glasgow 593w

Spinal Injuries Association
400w

Spirits
Import duties 199w

Sponsorship
City technology colleges 514w

Sports
Scotland 722-3w
Teachers 722-3w

Sports boycotts
South Africa 332

Sportsgrounds
Safety measures 351w

Spot checks
Lorries 458w
Yorkshire & Humberside 458w

SPUR
979-80

Squire, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 874
Local government finance (31:10:90) 994
Noise control (31:10:90) 1030
Questions
Cyprus 218w
Hostels, Government grants 480w
Industrial wastes, Recycling 609-10w
Investment, Consumption 300w

SRAM-T missile
Nuclear weapons deployment 286w

Sri Lanka
EC aid 384w
Human rights 383-4w
International aid from international bodies 383-4w

Staff inspectors
National Library of Wales 549w

Staffordshire
Primary education 159w

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Questions
Business statements 507
Hong Kong, Civil service pensions 672w

Standard assessment tasks
161w, 176-8
Primary education 281w

Standard community charge
231w, 234w, (31:10:90) 987-1017
Community charge 550w
Orders & regulations 543-4w

Standard Life Assurance Company Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order to proceed in next Session (29:10:90) 708

Standard spending assessments
Harrogate Borough Council 692w
Metropolitan districts 691w

Standards specifications
Accounting Standards Board 429w

Standing Order No 143
(24:10:90) 420-1

Standing Order No 20 applications
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (29:10:90) 750
Walsh, Craig (29:10:90) 751

Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1038-41

START talks
57w, 89w, 498w
Military balance 861
Trident missiles 860-1

Statistical Office of the European Communities
see EC Statistical Office

Statistics
488w
Civil service manpower 490w, 571w
Codes of practice 486w
Computer applications 491w

Statistics*—*continued
Departmental coordination 486w, 491w
Disclosure of information 489w
Domestic accidents 330w
EC internal trade 104-5w
EC Statistical Office 488w
Efficiency scrutinies 490w
Environment 268-9w
Expenditure 571w
Family expenditure survey 484w
Government departments 484-5w
Government information services 486w
Industrial production 296w
Ministerial policy advisors 489-90w
National income 484-5w
Procurement 490w
Public expenditure 487w
Public opinion 487w
Publishing 489w
Quality control 485w
Research 488w
Surveys 487w

Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Questions
Average earnings, Scotland 211-2w
Economic & monetary union 297w
Haemophilia, AIDS 29w
South Africa, Political parties 220w

Steen, Mr Anthony
Questions
Armed forces training, Licensing 503w
South Hams 420w

Steinberg, Mr Gerry
Questions
Audio recordings, Prices 775w
Bus services, Railway travel 703w
Debts, Advisory services 598w
Departmental correspondence, Members' correspondence 654w
Educational psychology, Student numbers 679w
Electoral register, Electorate 408w
Electorate, Scotland 721w
Extortion, Food industry 446-7w
Foreign companies in UK, Manpower 569-70w
Gas fired power stations, Construction 656w
Gas reserves, North Sea 658w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Insurance 495w
Mailing lists, Unsolicited goods & services 774-5w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Education & Science 679-80w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Employment 754w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Energy 657w
Members' correspondence, Dept of the Environment 690w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Trade & Industry 768w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Transport 708w
Members' correspondence, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 700w
Members' correspondence, Home Office 741w
Members' correspondence, Ministry of Defence 766w
National Rivers Authority, Manpower 468w
Overseas trade, Textiles 432w
Prisoners, Health 449w
River pollution, Industrial wastes 530w
Teachers, Vacancies 160w

Sterling
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 867-8

Stern, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1014
Special constables (30:10:90) 960-1, 963
Questions
Child protection registers, Children 523w

Stern, Mr Michael*—*continued
Child protection registers, Codes of practice 522-3w
Children in care 523w
Children in care, Adoption 523w
Judiciary, Road traffic offences 509w
Official engagements 107-8w, 273w, 422w, 639w
Piper Alpha platform, Safety measures 522w
Railway transport, Urban areas 11
Royal Marine Reserve, Armed forces strength 338w
Special constables, Recruitment 348w
Sri Lanka, Human rights 383-4w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Questions
Productivity, Japan 297w

Stevens Inquiry
see Security Forces Collusion with Loyalist Terrorists Inquiry

Stewart, Mr Allan
Questions
Foreign languages, Departmental correspondence 723w
Primary education, Educational assessment 243-4w
Storms, Compensation 213w
Student numbers, Scotland 182

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
Corporation tax, Tax yields 298w
Dogs, Local authority powers 257-60w
Private Bills, Transport 1-2
Serious Fraud Office, Trade union finances 279w

Stewart, Rt Hon Ian
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 261-5

Stewart, Jamie Lloyd
Death 348w

Stock Exchange
50-1w, 607-8w

Stockport
460w

Stokes, Sir John
Questions
Education & industry 183

Storms
Compensation 213w
Scotland 213w

Stott, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1011-2
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge 599w
Intergovernmental conference 295w

Stoy Hayward
Consultants 621w

Strang, Mr Gavin
Debates etc.
European Council (30:10:90) 890
Questions
British Steel Corporation 596w
Dept of Energy, Electric lighting 521w
Energy, Environmental impact assessment 520-1w
Energy Efficiency Ministerial Committee 519w
India, Development aid 568w
Industrial investment 298w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 210w
Medical Research Council, AIDS 161w
Mexico, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 562w
Nuclear non proliferation, Non-governmental organisations 562-3w

Strang, Mr Gavin*—*continued
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 562w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 562w
Nuclear test ban 562w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear non proliferation 564-5w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear safety 624w
Nuclear weapons tests, Nuclear test ban 565w
Official engagements 422w
Science & technology, Peace 517w, 565w

Strategic nuclear weapons
Arms control negotiations 89w

Strathclyde
Community development 179w
Crime 475-8w

Straw, Mr Jack
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Pupil records 194w
City technology colleges, Sponsorship 514w
Educational institutions, Ministers' domestic visits 517w
School closures 193w
School closures, School population 193-4w
Teachers, Pay 174-5
Teachers, Vacancies 517w

Straw burning
Safety measures 633-4w

Structure plans
Warwickshire 342w

Student accommodation
156w

Student grants
677w

Student loans
157w
Access funds 157w
Publicity 179-80
Student numbers 179-80
University finance 178-9

Student numbers
Educational psychology 679w
ERASMUS 159-60w
Higher education 166w
Physiotherapists 30w
Physiotherapy 73w
Polytechnics 673w
Scotland 181-2
Student loans 179-80
Teacher training 369w

Students
185
Access funds 167w
Community charge 181-3
Housing benefits 579w
Professional organisations 380w
Queen's University Belfast 452w
Social security benefits 579w
University of Ulster 452w

Submarines
Fishing gear 412-3w
Fishing vessels 412w
Health physics 508w

Sub-postmasters
National insurance contributions 282w

Subsidies
Iron & steel industry 971

Suckler cow premiums
393w

Sudan
Food 650w

Suffolk
Housing finance 532-3w

Suicide
Brixton Prison 252w
Prisoners 120w, 732-3w

Sulphur dioxide
116w

Sumberg, Mr David
Questions
Business statements 512
Channel tunnel, Railway freight transport 59w
Greater Manchester relief road, Environmental impact assessment 706w
Greater Manchester relief road, Road construction 705-7w
Greater Manchester relief road, Road works 705w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 495w
Lebanon 320
M62, Road traffic 710w
M66, Road construction 3
Road construction, Bury 708-9w
Romania, Economic policy 213-4w
Schools, Solvents 162w
VAT, Charities 299w

Summerson, Mr Hugo
Debates etc.
British Council (26:10:90) 701-2
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 467-8
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 796, (30:10:90) 919-20
Noise control (31:10:90) 1036, 1043, 1062-4, 1066
Questions
Local government pensions, Pension funds 181-2w
Network SouthEast, Railway travel 341w
Road traffic control, Greater London 340w

Summertime
315-6w

Sunday trading
726w
Markets 39-40w, 527w

Sunderland
Car industry 866

Sunderland Health Authority
680w

"Supervision & Punishment in the Community Consultation Paper"
728w

Supplementary benefits
Earnings rules 667w
Paisley 664w

Supplementary questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:10:90) 340, 342, 356, 363, 366, 371, (25:10:90) 494, (30:10:90) 864, 865, 880, 887, (31:10:90) 969, 994, 1001, 1012, 1006, 1012

Supply teachers
3w

Surgeon General
98-9w

Surgery
Heart diseases 592w
Hospital consultants 101w
Hospital waiting lists 102w

Surveillance
Exports 204w

Surveys
487w
Coastal areas 181w
Food additives 393w
Statistics 487w

Swansea
British Urban Development 291w
Planning appeals 420w

Sweets
Food hygiene 631w

Syrian Arab Republic
389w

Tai Cymru
see Housing for Wales

Take-home pay
Average earnings 299w

Takeovers
EC internal trade 613w

Take-up
Employment training 745w
Youth training 746w
Youth training scheme 746w

Take-up of employment
Advisory services 752-3w
Employment training 751-2w

Tanks
Defence procurement 87-8w, 766w

Tanzania
Debts 9w

Tax administration
Small businesses 491-2w

Tax allowances
House purchase 492w

Tax avoidance
17, 185
Income tax 490

Tax burden
Households 651-2w
Income tax 295w, 489-90

Tax collection
Community charge 501w
Luncheon vouchers 493w

Tax evasion
Inland Revenue 7-8w

Tax exempt special savings accounts
296w

Tax harmonisation
VAT 8w

Tax havens
493w

Tax incentives
Energy conservation 296w

Tax rates & bands
Mortgage relief 360w, 653w

Tax reform
Income tax 294-5w

Tax thresholds
Taxable benefits 362w

Tax yields
Corporation tax 298w
Income tax 295w, 490
Listed buildings 360w
Luncheon vouchers 493w
Oil prices 335w
Petroleum production 493w

Taxable benefits
Tax thresholds 362w

Taxation
491
National income 491
Public expenditure 491

Taxi fares
Oil prices 176w
Scotland 176w

Taylor, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 765-8, 776, 800-3
Questions
Drinking Water Inspectorate, Consultants 321w
Exhaust emission controls, Law enforcement 512-3w
Exhaust emission controls, Motor vehicle registration 462w

Taylor, Mrs Ann—continued
HM Inspectorate of Pollution, Annual reports 230w
Motor vehicle registration, Pollution control 462w

Taylor, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 219-20, 268-9
Questions
Inflation, Money supply 493
Manufacturing industries, Foreign investment in UK 976
Marriage guidance, Government grants 556w
Network SouthEast, Performance indicators 59w
Teachers, Recruitment 175

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 812, 817
European Council (30:10:90) 889
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (24:10:90) 370-1
Questions
Airlines, East Germany 979
Channel tunnel, Scotland 4-5
Development plans, Castlereagh 638w
Dried milk, Trade barriers 209w
Freehold land, Northern Ireland 250w
Planning permission, Newtownbreda 637w
Roads, Castlereagh 250w
Travel allowances, Republic of Ireland 557w
University of Ulster, Students 452w
USA, IRA 318-9

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Debates etc.
Courts & Legal Services Bill (HL), Lords amendts (26:10:90) 635-6
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 752-5, 758
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 208-9, 279
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 386-8
Questions
Agricultural policy, EC countries 395w
Agriculture, EC budget 392w
Agriculture, European Communities 82-3w
Armed forces housing, Shoeburyness 504w
Attendance allowance, Administrative delays 284w
European Council, Agricultural surpluses 421w
European Economic Community, GATT 319
Export of live animals, France 631w
Food surpluses, EC budget 395-6w
Overseas trade, Germany 985-6
Port of London Authority, Police 462w

Taylor Inquiry
see Hillsborough Stadium Inquiry

TDG
47-8w, 239w
Lear Fan 107w

Teacher training
161w
Dyslexia 636w
Northern Ireland 559-60w
Student numbers 369w
Teachers 367-8w

Teachers
174
Doncaster Education Authority 674w
Easington 680w
Educational qualifications 661-2w, 674w
Languages education 3w
Manpower 371w
Pay 3w, 155w, 173-5, 369w
Pay review bodies 369-70w
Recruitment 149w, 175-6
South East region 175

Teachers—continued
Sports 722-3w
Teacher training 367-8w
Vacancies 149w, 160w, 517w, 680w
Wales 661-2w

Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Debates etc.
British Nationality (Hong Kong) (Selection Scheme) Order 1990 (23:10:90) 297-8, 303-4, 305
European Council (30:10:90) 875
Exchange rate mechanism (23:10:90) 272, 279

Technical assistance
Cambodia 23w

Technology & Development Group
239-40w, 615-6w

Technology Development Group
see TDG

Technology transfer
Iraq 563w
Small businesses 980

Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority
(22:10:90) 106-49
Public appointments 248w

Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
3R (22:10:90) 106-49
Order to proceed in next Session (30:10:90) 852

Telecommunications technology
Handicapped 778w

Telephone services
Wales 719

Telephones
Ford Prison 552w
Members' facilities 641-2w
Obscenity 251w
Prosecutions 251w

Televising Proceedings of the House Select Committee
(23:10:90) 306, (25:10:90) 619

Television channels
Romania 56w

Television licences
Consultants 555-6w

Television programmes
Arms trade 48w, 779w
Wave power 12w

Telford city technology college
Headteachers 193w

Temporary employment
2w

Temporary immigrants
550-2w

Temporary staff
EC action 2w, 754-5w
Nottingham Health Authority 29w

10 Downing Street
Official hospitality 639w

Ten minutes rule
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:10:90) 195, 229

Tenant eviction
Council tenants 101w
Wales 101w

Territorial Army
261-3w

Terrorism
Crime prevention 90-1w
Criminal investigation 763w

Terrorism—continued
Ministerial statements (24:10:90) 367-74
Northern Ireland 452w

Testing in Primary Schools (Scotland) Regulations 1990
Questions
243-4w

Textile industry
131w
EC industrial policy 605w
Factories 421w
Manpower 427-8w
Redundancy 238w, 426-7w
West Yorkshire 605-6w

Textiles
Overseas trade 432w

Thailand
Armed forces training 90w, 286w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service
Debates etc.
European Council, Ministerial statements (30:10:90) 869-91
Questions
Association of British Chambers of Commerce, Economic situation 502
By elections 868
Car industry, Sunderland 866
Child benefit 186-7, 189-90
Child health, Romania 20w
Children, Departmental coordination 274-5w
Children, Departmental responsibilities 274-5w
Common agricultural policy 502
Community charge, Non-payment 187
Countryside, Rural planning 499
Day surgery, District health authorities 501-2
EC countries, Sovereignty 866
Economic policy, Government achievements 499
Electronic equipment, Departmental coordination 273w
Environment protection, Conferences 20w
European Commission 640w
European Council, Agricultural surpluses 421w
European Council, Documents 639w
European currency unit 187
European Security Conference, Treaties 421w
Exchange rates, Disclosure of information 21w
Fisheries, Scotland 421w
France, Nuclear weapons 518w
GCE A level, Educational standards 187
Germany, Fisheries 640w
Hill farming, Agricultural subsidies 499-501
Hospitals 273w
Howe, Geoffrey, European communities 865
Infrastructure, North West region 187-8
Intergovernmental conference 273w
Iraq, Economic sanctions 518w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 362-3w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armoured fighting vehicles 421w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 498-9, 867
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, National Peace Council 353w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Saudi Arabia 186
Local authorities, Contracts for services 189
Maintenance, Fathers 500
Ministerial Group on Women's Issues 273-4w
Ministers' domestic visits, Wales 275w
Nuclear test ban, International conferences 639-40w
Official engagements 107-8w, 273w, 422w, 639w
Official hospitality, 10 Downing Street 639w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret—continued
Official secrets, Armed forces training 21-2w
Orders & regulations 20-1w
Ozone layer, Refrigerators 188
Parliamentarians' Global Action, Nuclear test ban 639w
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community 864-6
Parliamentary sovereignty & European community, Sterling 867-8
Pay settlements, Productivity 867
Prime Minister, Heads of State 352w
Prime Minister, Ministers' visits abroad 352w
Privatisation, Accountants 640w
Public sector earnings 188-9
Residential care, Income support 500
Ronson, Gerald, Prison sentences 866
Royal Military School of Music 868
South Hams 420w
Tax avoidance 185
Textile industry, Factories 421w
Trade unions, Cultural heritage 421w

Theatre
Arts finance 720-2
VAT 654w

Theatres
Finance 396w
Local government expenditure 689w
Repairs & maintenance 397w

Therapeutic earnings allowance
284w

"This Common Inheritance White Paper"
42w, 46w, 693w, 715-6
Conferences 688w

"This Week"
12w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Questions
Air force, Morocco 763w
Aircraft noise 758w
Alternative energy, Research finance 441w
Cannock Chase 763w
Chemical weapons, Army stores 262-3w
Chemical weapons, Hazardous wastes 757w
Civil defence, County councils in Wales 120w
Civil defence, Local authorities 120w
Confederation of British Industry, Industrial wastes 779w
Diego Garcia, Air routes 54w
Diego Garcia, Mauritius 53-4w
Diego Garcia, US bases 53w
Emergency planning, Manpower 123w
Environment protection, Advertising 182-3w
Environment protection, Departmental publications 47w
Exercise Green Lanyard, Military aircraft 762-3w
Exercise Red Lanyard, Military aircraft 762w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Ministers' visits abroad 454-6w
Hill farming, Agricultural subsidies 500-1
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 362-3w
Low flying, Borders region 623w
Low flying, Military aircraft 622-3w
Low flying, Military exercises 758w
Low flying, Radar 758w
Low flying, Urban areas 623w
Low flying, USA 758w
Middle East, Nuclear weapons 58w
Nuclear non proliferation 57-8w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Arms control 57w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Nuclear safeguards 57w
Nuclear safeguards, Treaties 13-4w
Nuclear weapons tests, Costs 85w
Official visits, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 455w
Prime Minister, Heads of State 352w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis—continued
Prime Minister, Ministers' visits abroad 352w
Radioactive wastes 467-8w
Research councils, Research finance 158w
Riot control weapons, Army stores 261-2w
South Africa, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 57w
South Africa, Nuclear weapons 57w
SRAM-T missile, Nuclear weapons deployment 286w
Teachers, Pay 3w
"This Common Inheritance White Paper" 715-6
Tibet, China 54w

Thompson, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Company law, EC action (22:10:90) 68
Eastern Europe, EC aid (24:10:90) 460-1
Questions
Corporation tax, Tax yields 298w

Thompson, Mr Jack
Questions
Interest rates, Unemployment 494
Trading standards departments, Consumer protection 595w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1007
Questions
Income tax, Tax reform 295w
Regional airports, Air traffic 67-8w
Teachers 174

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Adoption, Aliens (29:10:90) 842-5
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 738
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 364
Questions
Baltic republics of USSR 216w
Family credit, Community charge 544w
Hospital waiting lists, Eye disorders 265w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 99w
Local government constituencies, Bolton 13
Overseas trade, Manufactured exports 973
Ozone layer, Refrigerators 188
Police, Cost effectiveness 730w
Pollution control, Upper Waiting Hall 232w

3D
535w
City grants 235w

Thursby
Roads 459w

Tibet
China 54w

Tickets
Touting 450-1w

Tidal power
Solent 72w

Tilbury
462w

Time limits
543-4w

Timesharing
51w
Misleading advertising 598w

Tobacco
European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund 209-10w, 305w

Toll bridges
190w

Tornado aircraft
88w, 94w, 505-6w, 622-3w, 761w
Lasers 757w

Torness power station
96w

Tote Bookmakers
351w
Privatisation 733w

Tourism
Harrogate Borough Council 692w

Touting
Tickets 450-1w

Tower Hamlets
Cancer 108w
London Docklands Development Corporation 528w

Town & Country Planning Act 1971
Questions
535w

Townend, Mr John
Questions
Seals, Fish conservation 335w

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Defence expenditure 856
Middle East, Peace negotiations 219-20w
Teachers, Pay 173-4
USA, Palestine 330
VAT, Charities 299w

Towyn
Coastal protection 355-6w

Tracey, Mr Richard
Questions
Business statements 508-9

Trade
Public expenditure 772w

Trade barriers
Dried milk 209w
Invisible exports 973

Trade competitiveness
Manufacturing industries 600w
Shipbuilding 597w

Trade fairs
Arms exports 87-8w
Environment protection 771-2w

Trade promotion
USSR 608w

Trade union finances
Serious Fraud Office 279w

Trade unions
Cultural heritage 421w
Local education authority training grant scheme 167w

Trades Union Congress
Child benefit 296w

Trading standards departments
Consumer protection 595w

Trafalgar House
24-5w, 195w, 199w, 382w

Traffic Director for London
341w

Traffic lights
Buses 246w
Driving offences 461w

Training
Armed forces retirement 101w
Industrial health & safety 753w
Medical profession 404-5w
Multiply handicapped 427w

Training Agency
629w

Training agents
745w, 750w

Training & enterprise councils
281-2w, 426-7w, 747-8w, 751-2w
Finance 115w, 746-7w

Training & enterprise councils—continued
Public appointments 748-50w
Resignations 747w
Small businesses 426w

Training managers
629w, 745w, 750w

Trains
Channel tunnel 191w
Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive 461w

Trams
Greater London 245w

Transfer & automated registration of uncertificated stock
617-8w

Transitional arrangements
Income support 668w

Transitional relief
(31:10:90) 987-1017
Local government finance 465w

Translink JV
627-8w

Transmissible encephalopathies
Agricultural research 392w
London Zoo 644w
Mink 632-3w

Transport
Civil service manpower 241-2w
Investment 63w
Private Bills 1-3
Public expenditure 710-2w
Scottish Office 241-2w

Transport Act 1985
Questions
71w

Transport & Road Research Laboratory
246w

Transport of animals
Animal welfare (23:10:90) 192-4

"Transport of Delight"
704w

Transport of hazardous materials
Industrial safety 629w
Safety measures 509-10w

Transport of radioactive materials
Channel tunnel 60w
Emergency planning 96w
Sea transport 62-3w

Transport policy
Channel tunnel 60w
London Docklands Development Corporation 528w
Road traffic 8-9

Travel
Scotland 168w

Travel allowances
Republic of Ireland 557w

Travel restrictions
EC countries 336w

Treasury
107w
Civil service dispersal 655w
Official hospitality 106w

Treasury & Civil Service Select Committee
(26:10:90) 639

Treaties
Environment 454w, 700w
European Security Conference 421w
Germany 334
Mercenaries 388w
Nuclear safeguards 13-4w, 655w

Treaty of Rome
694w, 699w

Tredinnick, Mr David
Questions
AIDS, Heterosexuality 323
Berlin, Armed forces deployment 222w
Defence land, Pollution control 414w
European Development Bank 22w
Greenham Common, Nuclear weapons deployment 854
House of Commons stationery, Recycling 19-20
NATO ministerial meetings 503w
Railway transport, East Midlands 62w

Trent Regional Health Authority
Hospital consultants 526w

Trespass
Greenham Common 500w

Trevi Group
736w

Trials
Crown courts 737w

Trident
388w, 498-9w
Defence expenditure 624w

Trident missiles
Defence procurement 857
START talks 860-1

Trimble, Mr David
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 557
Questions
Business statements 513-4
Evidence, Electrostatic data analysis test 735w
Germany 324
Overseas trade, Republic of Ireland 614w

Trippier, Mr David, Minister for the Environment and Countryside
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 761-2, 763-5, 767, 774-80, 782, 794, 831-5, 837-8, (30:10:90) 895, 897-8, 903-4, 907-8, 909, 912, 914, 920, 925-8, 933-4, 938-42
Noise control (31:10:90) 1023-32
Questions
Air pollution, Printing industry 323-4w
Air pollution control 181w
Birds, Nature conservation 467w, 533w
Church buildings, Repair grants 346-7w
Coastal areas, Surveys 181w
Development plans, Energy conservation 693w
Drigg, Radioactive waste disposal 42w
Drinking Water Inspectorate, Consultants 321w
EC Environment Council, EC law 689-90w
EC Environment Council, Greenhouse effect 324w
Energy conservation, Departmental publications 229-30w
Environment, Statistics 268-9w
Environment protection, Building industry 46w
Environment protection, Conferences 38w, 41-2w, 182w
Environment protection, EC grants & loans 269w, 689w
Environment protection, EC law 269w
Environmental policy, Conferences 41w
Environmental policy, Radio programmes 42w
Environmental Protection Bill 1989/90, Orders & regulations 233w
European Investment Bank, Environment protection 539-41w
Greenhouse effect, International conferences 531w, 690w
Greenpeace 230w
Halons, Fire extinguishers 324-5w
Hazardous wastes, Printing industry 324w
Historic buildings 465w
Historic buildings, Local government expenditure 323w

Trippier, Mr David—continued
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England, Government grants 236w
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England, Historic buildings 465-6w
HM Inspectorate of Pollution, Annual reports 230w
Listed buildings 471w
Listed buildings, Computer applications 470w
National Rivers Authority, Manpower 468w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Radioactive waste disposal 42w
Open University, Environmental education 46w
Planning permission, Estuaries 321w
Pollution, London docklands 324w
River pollution, Industrial wastes 530w
Rivers, Water supply industry 322w
Seals, North Sea 542-3w
Slaughterhouses, Sewage 46w
Smoke & chimney gases, EC law 235-6w
Solar power, Buildings 229w
"This Common Inheritance White Paper", Conferences 688w
Water distribution 228w
Water meters, Costs 534w
Water resources, South East region 321-2w
Water supply 534-5w
Wild animals, Cornwall 323w

Trotter, Mr Neville
Questions
Channel tunnel, Trains 191w
Police, Manpower 127w
Road accidents, Bridges 96w

Trout
Fish conservation 52w, 325-6w, 392w
Northern Ireland 52w
Scotland 325-6w

Truancy
164w, 193w

Trust ports
(22:10:90) 106-49, 458w

Tuberculosis
Deer 644-6w

Turbines
Gas fired power stations 656w
Malaysia 672w

Turkey
Cyprus 703w
Human rights 387w

Turner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 99-102
Questions
CFE talks, Civil service manpower 499w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Community charge 599w
Sixth form education, Educational qualifications 137w
South Africa, Walvis Bay 699-700w
Telford City Technology College, Headteachers 193w

Twickenham
Planning permission 37w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
Grant maintained schools 137w
London Underground, Modernisation 66w
Management 610w

Uganda
Debts 9w

UK companies abroad
Armed forces training 457w
East Germany 978

UK contributions
Poland Hungary assistance for economic restructuring 111w

UK contributions to EC budget
Common fisheries policy 80w

UK Environmental Law Association
41w

UK trade with EC
Balance of payments 653w
Balance of trade 239w, 602w
Manufactured goods 975-6

Ulster Defence Regiment
53w
Convictions 559w

UN environment programme
538-40w

UN General Assembly
564-5w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 222w

UN Institute for Disarmament Research
564w

UN resolutions
Middle East 386w
Northern Ireland 387w

UN Security Council
48-9w, 386w
Cambodia 214w

Underground railways
Hackney 9
Private Bills 97w

Unemployed
Adult education 674w

Unemployment
Defence industries 498w
Interest rates 296w, 494-5
Lancashire 237w
Paisley North 582w
Pay 495
Scotland 174-6w, 583w

Unemployment benefits
Availability for work 753w

Uniform business rate
43w
Appeals 693w
Easington District Council 693w

Unit trusts
EC internal trade 611w

Unitary development plans
Bury 706w

United Arab Emirates
Arms exports 86w

United Nations
20w, 22-3w, 303-4w, 358-9w, 517w, 565w, (26:10:90) 640-94, 699w
Cambodia 333
Drugs 728w
Overseas trade 49-50w

Universal Postal Union
775w

Universal Studios
364w, 441w, 519w

University finance
Edinburgh University 184
Student loans 178-9

University of Ulster
559w
Students 452w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:10:90) 102, (24:10:90) 370, (29:10:90) 733, 734, 735, 748, 749, (30:10:90) 883, 892

Unruly children
Local government social services 687w

Unsolicited goods & services
Mailing lists 774-5w

Upper Waiting Hall
Exhibitions 777w
Pollution control 232w

Uranium
Iraq 564w

Urban areas
Low flying 623w
Railway transport 11-2
Road traffic 97w

Urban development corporations
690w
Codes of practice 531-2w
Conferences 531w
Expenditure 471w

Urban programme
Community development 172-4w
Glasgow 722w

Urban railways
Manchester 60w

Uruguay round
84w, 199w, 768-70w, (30:10:90) 869-91
Environment protection 768w

US bases
Diego Garcia 53w

USA
Armed forces deployment 496-7w
Armed forces married quarters 766w
British Aerospace 504w
EC external relations 214w, 330
F111 aircraft 505w
Foreign relations 318
IRA 318-9
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 263w
Low flying 758w
Middle East 331
Military aircraft 758w
Nuclear weapons tests 413w
Palestine 330
Republic of Ireland 330-1
Warships 97w

USSR
Emigration 110w, 384w
Export credit guarantees 207w
International aid from international bodies 220w
Nuclear safety 86w
Trade promotion 608w

Vacancies
Scotland 583w
Teachers 149w, 160w, 517w, 680w

Vagrancy
Prosecutions 251w

Vagrancy Acts (Repeals & Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (31:10:90) 1020-2

Vale of Glamorgan
499

Vale of Glamorgan (Barry Harbour) Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (25:10:90) 485

Valleys initiative
186w

Valuation & community charge tribunals
180w, 187-8w

Varroasis
631w

VAT
Charities 299w
Petrochemicals 362-3w, 653-4w
Tax harmonisation 8w
Theatre 654w

VAT repayment
NHS finance 444w

VAT zero rated goods
Charities 8-9w

Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Questions
Planning permission, Local authority powers 535w

Vaz, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Noise control (31:10:90) 1051, 1053-6
Questions
Drug seizures 736w
Dept Social Security local offices, Repairs & maintenance 365w
Footwear industry, Government assistance to industry 614-5w
Footwear industry, Manpower 427-8w
Hospital waiting lists, Leicestershire 442-3w
Immigration, Administrative delays 260-2w
Indian subcontinent, Entry clearances 54-5w
Methane, Waste disposal 181w
Waste disposal, Leicester 233-4w

Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency
462w

Verification
Nuclear test ban 388w

Veterinary medicine
Licensing 422w

Veterinary Medicines Directorate
422w

Vibration white finger
British Coal Corporation 657w
Social security claims 481w

Vickers Shipbuilding & Engineering
763w
Defence contracts 503w

Victoria Barracks Windsor
90-1w

Video equipment
Kingston-Portsmouth Prison 347w

Video recordings
Arms trade 412w

Vietnam
Export controls 203w
Export licensing 203w

Viggers, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Iraq-Kuwait conflict (24:10:90) 341
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 744-5
Questions
Armed forces, Community charge 853-4
Defence review 626w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 456w
Postage stamps, International cooperation 775w
Shipbuilding, Trade competitiveness 597w

Village schools
School administration 180

Violence
South Africa 331-2

Visas
Eastern Europe 58-9w

Vitamin A
Health warnings 36w
Pregnancy 36w

Volatile organic compounds
323-4w

Voluntary organisations
Wales 8-9w

Voluntary restraint agreements
986

Voting methods
324
Council of Ministers 561w

Voting methods*—*continued
Grant maintained schools 138w

Voting rights
South Africa 331

Waddington, Rt Hon David, Secretary of State for the Home Office
Questions
Boundary Commission for England, European Parliament constituencies 260w
British citizenship, Fees & charges 556-7w
Complaints against central government, Home Office 255-6w
Harmondsworth Detention Centre, Public appointments 128-9w
Home Office, Day care of children 252-3w
Home Office, Secrecy 687w, 742w
Home Office, Women's employment 314w
Members' correspondence, Home Office 741w
Police Complaints Authority, Public appointments 186w
Police powers, Athletics 256-7w
Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 128w
Public interest, Evidence 742w
Special constables, South Yorkshire 740-1w

Wages councils
(22:10:90) 166-72

Wages Inspectorate
(22:10:90) 166-72, 627w

Waiting lists
Aids for handicapped 524w

Wakefield Health Authority
Public appointments 33-4w

Wakefield Prison
Industrial disputes 18w
Prison staff 18w

Wakeham, Rt Hon John, Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
Advanced gas-cooled reactors, Nuclear fuel cycle 657w
Coal gasification, Research finance 12-3w
Dept of Energy, Electric lighting 521w
Dept of Energy, Ministers' visits abroad 194w, 522w
Eastern Electricity, Privatisation 658w
Electricity, Imports 14w
Electricity consumption 14w
Electricity generation, Fuels 15w, 521-2w
Electricity supply industry, Consultants 655-6w
Electricity supply industry, Debts 657w
Electricity supply industry, Non-fossil fuel obligation 13w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 13w, 519w, 657w
Electricity supply industry, Profits 657w
Electricity tariffs, Discounts 521w
Energy Efficiency Ministerial Committee 271-2w
International Atomic Energy Agency, Nuclear safety 115-6w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Offshore drilling 116w
Members' correspondence, Dept of Energy 657w
Nuclear reactors, Exports 655w
Nuclear safeguards, Treaties 13-4w
Petrol, Energy consumption 13w
Petrol, Prices 13w, 521w
Petroleum production 116w
Piper Alpha Inquiry 15w
PowerGen, Privatisation 15w
Wave power, Television programmes 12w

Waldegrave, Rt Hon William, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Questions
Albania, EC external relations 216w
Baltic republics of USSR 216w
Bulgaria, Know-how Fund 222w

Waldegrave, Rt Hon William—continued
Commonwealth 221w, 694w
Commonwealth, Population 694w
Coordinating Committee on Export Controls, East Germany 54w
Diego Garcia, Air routes 54w
Diego Garcia, Mauritius 53-4w
Diego Garcia, Resettlement 217w
Diego Garcia, US bases 53w
East Germany, Police 325
Eastern Europe, EC aid 324
Eastern Europe, Know-how Fund 325
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 263w, 324-5
Ethiopia 326
European Security Conference 56-7w
European Security Conference, International conferences 328
Iraq, Human rights 217w
Iraq, Occupied territories 695w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict 110w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Economic sanctions 55-6w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Human rights 700w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, USA 263w
Islam, Religious persons 265w
Israel, Foreign policy 221w
Israel, Iraq 265w
Israel, Ministers' visits abroad 264-5w
Israel, Occupied territories 329
Israel, Peace negotiations 219w
Jordan, Political prisoners 221w
Kenya, Civil rights 215w
Kenya, Political prisoners 263w
Lebanon, Hostages 58w
Middle East, Human rights 700w
Middle East, Nuclear weapons 58w, 696w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 219-20w
NATO 220w
NATO, West Germany 215w
Nuclear non proliferation 57-8w
Nuclear non proliferation, Non-governmental organisations 696w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Arms control 57w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, International conferences 110w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Local authorities 696w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, Nuclear safeguards 57w
Occupied territories, Criminal investigation 264w
Official secrets, Armed forces training 58w
Palestine, Refugee camps 329-30
Palestine, Refugees 328-9
Palestine, Self-determination of states 695w
Peace negotiations, Foreign aid 326
Poland 220-1w
Poland, Frontiers 54w
Romania, Adoption 56w
Romania, AIDS 56w
Romania, Democracy 321-2
Romania, Economic policy 213-4w
Romania, Human rights 322
Romania, Television channels 56w
Saudi Arabia, Punishment 703w
South Africa, Apartheid 110w
South Africa, Foreign policy 220w, 331-2
South Africa, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 57w, 696w
South Africa, Nuclear weapons 57w
South Africa, Political parties 220w
South Africa, Sports boycotts 332
South Africa, Violence 331-2
South Africa, Walvis Bay 699-700w
USSR, Emigration 110w

Walden, Mr George
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Lords amendts (25:10:90) 551-3, 580-1

Wales
Agriculture 357w
Animal husbandry 711
Bus services 187w
Car allowances 288w
Carers 710
Childbirth 27w
Church schools 660w

Wales—continued
Civil defence 120w
Civil service 360w
Community care 319-20w, 357-8w, 420w, 545w, 548w
Community charge capping 549-50w
Community health councils 102w
Construction costs 548w
Cot deaths 28-9w
Council house waiting lists 660w
Council housing 289w
Educational psychology 291w
Emergency planning 123w
Employment 356w
Environmental policy 715-6
European Regional Development Fund 27w
Farmers 288w
Fertility 26-7w
Flexi-ownership scheme 27-8w
Foreign investment in UK 357w, 712-4
Grant maintained schools 28w, 356w
Homelessness 550w
Hospices 29w
Hospital consultants 101w
Hospital waiting lists 102w, 714-5
Hospitals 358w, 715
Housing 356w
Housing construction 659w
Housing revenue accounts 291-2w
Housing starts 659w
Intensive care 26w, 102w
Local government finance 549w
Low flying 89w
Manual workers 288w
Medical rehabilitation 545-6w
Medical research 662-3w
Mental hospitals 662w, 664w
Ministers' domestic visits 275w
Nurses 25-6w
Prescription charges 661-2w
Public expenditure 660w
Radioactive waste disposal 101w
Rate rebates 663-4w
Rents to mortgages scheme 287w
Road construction 547w
Road works 546-7w
Roads 355w, 548w, 661w
Sanitation 661w
School governors 549w
Schools 419-20w, 548w
Secondary education 548w
Secure accommodation 25w, 548w
Teachers 661-2w
Telephone services 719
Tenant eviction 101w
Voluntary organisations 8-9w

Walker, Mr Bill
Questions
Agricultural subsidies 712
British Steel Corporation 970-1
Holm School Orkney, Self-governing schools 725w
Low flying 858

Walker, Mr A Cecil
Questions
Police powers, Athletics 256-7w

Walker Committee
see Food Safety & Applied Nutrition Research Committee

Wallace, Colin
88w, (31:10:90) 1078-86
Disciplinary proceedings 506w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 26-7, 29, 34-5
Questions
Antarctic, International conferences 696-7w
Educational finance, Scotland 149-50w
Transport of radioactive materials, Sea transport 62-3w

Waller, Mr Gary
Questions
Leeds-Bradford railway, Railway electrification 61w

Walley, Ms Joan
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 839-40, (30:10:90) 895-8, 935-6, 942, 943-4, 945
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1005
Noise control (31:10:90) 1032-8, 1072-3, 1074
Questions
Business statements 511
Curriculum, Active citizenship 2-3w
Domestic accidents, Statistics 330w
Low flying, Noise control 501-2w
School administration, Budgeting 152w
Sea pollution, Pollution control 335w

Walsh, Craig
Standing Order No 20 applications (29:10:90) 751

Walters, Sir Dennis
Questions
Middle East, Peace negotiations 219-20w

Walvis Bay
South Africa 699-700w

War pensions
Administrative delays 367-8w
Social security claims 117w

War service
672w

War widows' pensions
Social security claims 117w

Ward, Mr John
Questions
National income, EC countries 300w
Retail price index, Harmonisation of standards 494w

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
Property Services Agency, Air force bases 346w
Timesharing, Misleading advertising 598w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Questions
Armed forces deployment, USA 497w
Cambodia, Foreign policy 214w
European Security Conference, International conferences 328
MV Derbyshire, Inquiries 249w
Regional arts associations, Public appointments 397w
Sixth form education, Educational qualifications 137w

Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation
Re-employment 688w

Warrior
94w
Defence procurement 95-6w

Warships
USA 97w

Warwickshire
Structure plans 342w

Waste disposal
Animals 306w
Conferences 235w
Leicester 181w, 233-4w
Local authorities 689w
Methane 181w
Polychlorinated biphenyl 180w
Water pollution 690-1w

"Waste Management"
235w

Wastes
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 136-7w

Water charges
Water meters 468w

Water distribution
228w

Water Engineering Trading
47-8w

Water meters
Costs 534w
Water charges 468w

Water pollution
Bristol Channel 690-1w
Research finance 405w
Waste disposal 690-1w

Water resources
South East region 321-2w

Water sports
Local authority powers 260w

Water supply
534-5w

Water supply industry
Northern Ireland 636-7w
Rivers 322w

Water treatment
Printing industry 269w

Watson, Mr Mike
Questions
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces pay 859
Manufactured goods, UK trade with EC 975-6
Middle East, Peace negotiations 219-20w
Official engagements 273w
Student loans, Access funds 157w

Watts, Mr John
Questions
Personal savings 296w

Wave power
Energy research 439-40w
Television programmes 12w

Weed control
Giant hogweed 332w
Scotland 213w

Weed Research Organisation
675-6w

Welfare Food Regulations 1988
Questions
410w

Wells, Mr Bowen
Debates etc.
Antarctic, Public petitions (26:10:90) 630
House of Commons procedure (24:10:90) 378-9, 385-6
Motorway service areas, Public petitions (26:10:90) 630
Princess Alexandra Hospital, Capital investment (23:10:90) 309, 310, 314

Welsh, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 772-3, (30:10:90) 912-4
Questions
Channel tunnel, Scotland 59-60w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Armed forces deployment 496w
Manufactured exports, Scotland 604-5w

Welsh Arts Council
652w

Welsh Development Agency
716-7

Welsh language
Dept of Social Security 580w
Languages education 660w

Welsh Office
420w
Civil service manpower 289-90w
Complaints against central government 290w

Welsh Water
102w

West coast railway line
378w

West Essex Health Authority
(23:10:90) 307-14

West Germany
Foreign companies in UK 979
Interest rates 292w
Low flying 502w, 622w
Members' pay 581w
NATO 215w
Overseas trade 610w

West Midlands Arts
Public appointments 397w

West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive
(22:10:90) 71-105

West Midlands Police
19-20w

West Midlands Regional Health Authority
Hospital beds 524w

West Midlands Residuary Body
537w

West Yorkshire
Crime prevention 728w
Textile industry 605-6w

West Yorkshire County Council
537w

West Yorkshire Residuary Body
537w
History 537w

Western European Union
362-3w

Westminster City Council
(30:10:90) 948-59

Wheel clamps
190w
Scotland 178w

Wheelchair housing
Housing construction 233-4w

Wheelchairs
London Ambulance Service 406w

Wheeler, Sir John
Questions
Coinage 334-5w
Diplomatic service, Parking offences 700-3w

Whisky
Duty free allowances 105w

Whitney, Mr Ray
Questions
Geriatric patients, Psychogeriatrics 679w
Mentally ill, Elderly 443w

Whittington Hospital
NHS hospital trusts 406w

Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Debates etc.
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 359
Questions
Alternative energy, Non-fossil fuel obligation 441-2w
Disposable income 298w
Motor industry, Ministers' domestic visits 613w

Widows
Prison staff 448w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (30:10:90) 931-3
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 358
Questions
A470, Road works 546w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd—continued
A487, Public participation in planning 547w
A487, Road works 546-7w
Aids for handicapped, Inventions 403w
Aids for handicapped, Social services 403-4w
Blind, Deaf 405w
Cars, Local authorities 288w
Childbirth 33w
Childbirth, Wales 27w
Civil service, Career structure 360w
Dept of Social Security, Welsh language 580w
Disability working allowance, Social security benefits rules 223-4w
Educational institutions, Access to buildings 162w
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 123-6w
Farmers' Union of Wales, Sheep 355w
Fertility, Medical treatments 26-7w, 32-3w, 73-4w, 107w
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 713-4
Industrial development, ERM 329w
Iraq, Economic sanctions 518w
M4, Road works 547w
Mental hospitals, Blind 404w
Optical charges exemptions, Deaf 406w
Road works, Llanidloes 548w
Roads, Wales 661w
Severe disability premium, Social security claims 117w
Social Fund, Social security benefits rates 222-3w

Wigton
459w

Wild animals
Cornwall 323w

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
Questions
38w, 74w
Nature conservation 344w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Questions
Airport & Airspace Capacity Working Group 510w
Defence equipment, Modernisation 863

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Questions
British Urban Development, Swansea 291w
Cambodia, China 333
Educational psychology, Wales 291w
Land acquisition, School buildings 243w
Land acquisition, Schools 267w
Planning appeals, Swansea 420w
School population 420w
Schools, Construction 419-20w

Williams, Mr Alan W
Debates etc.
Environmental Protection Bill, Lords amendts (29:10:90) 771-2
Questions
Defence industries, Security 501w
Engineering industries, Industrial production 977
Over-the-horizon radar, International cooperation 622w

Wilshire, Mr David
Questions
Profitability, Manufacturing industries 568w

Wilson, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 747
Questions
Balance of trade, UK trade with EC 602w
Dichlorvos, Agricultural research 724w
East-West crossrail line, Cost benefit analysis 704w
Edinburgh-Glasgow railway, Railway electrification 704-5w
Ford Prison, Telephones 552w

Wilson, Mr Brian—continued
Prisoners, Business 553w
Railway freight transport, Scotland 723w
Ronson, Gerald, Prisoners' rights 552w
Shard bridge, Bridges 460w
Shard bridge, Road traffic 460w
Shipping accidents, Pentland Firth 342w
Speedlink, Scotland 723w
Sports, Teachers 722-3w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc.
Employment Bill, Lords amendts (22:10:90) 31-3, 37
European Council (30:10:90) 887
Midland Metro Bill, Order to proceed in next Session (22:10:90) 75, 80-1
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Written questions 16
Confederation of British Industry, Honours 615w
Crimes of violence 450w
Housing starts, Public sector housing 344w
Interest rates 292w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Departmental publications 566w
Iraq-Kuwait conflict, Hostages 389-90w
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 487-8
Tax havens 493w

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Questions
Council housing, Congleton 344-6w
Council housing, Empty housing 345w
Homelessness, Cheshire 343w
Homelessness, Congleton 322w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Local government finance (31:10:90) 1002
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 361
Questions
Cambodia, Pol Pot 333
GATT, Multifibre arrangement 610w
Green pound, Sheep meat 394w
Hill livestock allowances 394w
Inflation, Interest rates 496
Marginal land 393w
Marginal land, Agricultural subsidies 393w
Multifibre arrangement 204w
Road accidents, Macclesfield 247w
Sheep meat, Prices 394w
Sheep premiums, Marginal land 393w
Textile industry, Redundancy 238w, 426-7w

Wirral Health Authority
HIV infection 409w
Mental health services 409w

Wise, Mrs Audrey
Debates etc.
Maintenance, Children (29:10:90) 743
Social security benefits uprating (24:10:90) 358-9
Questions
Defence industries, Unemployment 498w

Wolfson, Mr Mark
Questions
Take-home pay, Average earnings 299w

Women
Alternatives to prison 731w
Headteachers 376w
Magistrates 351w
Mentally ill 265-6w
Social security recipients 482-3w

Women's employment
Home Office 314w

Women's prisons
Deportation 186w

Woodcock, Dr Mike
Questions
Road construction 65-6w

Work permits
740w
Actors 755w
Domestic service 735w
Sheri, Patrick 317-8w

Working hours
Junior hospital doctors 31w, 326-7w

World Bank
383-4w, 568w

World Health Organisation
AIDS 323

World Meteorological Organisation
538-40w

World Wide Fund for Nature
567w

Worthington, Mr Tony
Questions
Companies, Prosecutions 627w
Engineering industries, Industrial production 596w
Minimum wage, Civil proceedings 627w
Minimum wage, Prosecutions 627w

Wray, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Balance of payments 296w
Balance of trade, UK trade with EC 602w
British Rail, Departmental responsibilities 316-7w
Dental services, Scotland 326w
EC countries, Travel restrictions 336w
EC internal trade, Financial services 479w
EC internal trade, Scotland 479w
Eye tests, Scotland 241w
Heart diseases, Scotland 327w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 326-7w
Pre-school education, Educational finance 158w
Railway transport, Scotland 378w
South America, EC external relations 336w
Youth training, Finance 479w

Written questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 16
Costs 641w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Questions
Assisted places scheme 14
Balance of trade, Japan 597w
Housing Corporation, Budgeting 532-3w

Yeo, Mr Tim—continued
Teachers, Pay 155w

Yorkshire & Humberside
Prison staff 18w
Spot checks 458w

Yorkshire Arts Association
Public appointments 396w

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
192w

Yorkshire Water
Nitrates 545w

Young offenders
Prison population 314-5w

Young people
Complaints against central government 242-3w, 245-6w, 255-6w, 266-7w, 278-84w, 290w, 365w, 382w
Custodial treatment 737w
Prisoners on remand 732w
Road accidents 188-9w, 325w

Youth training
281-2w, 746-7w
Community charge exemptions 181w
Contracts of employment 745-6w
Educational qualifications 751-2w
Finance 479w
Managing agents 746w
Scotland 479w
Social Security Act 1975 747-8w
Take-up 746w

Youth training scheme
Contracts of employment 745-6w
Industrial accidents 1w
Managing agents 746w
Scotland 594w
Take-up 746w

Youth unemployment
Scotland 594w

Ysbyty Gwynedd
Sewage 27w, 102w

Zetland Masonic Sick & Widows & Orphans' Fund
(23:10:90) 173

Zetland Masonic Sick & Widows & Orphans' Fund Order Confirmation Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep* (23:10:90) 173
3R* (24:10:90) 317
Royal Assent (01:11:90) 1087

Zimbabwe
Computers 610w

Zoonoses Order 1989
Questions
646w